A third reason for McGee's ever dwelling on such civic virtues as *loyalty* before an Irish audience was his particular anxiety to work out in Canada a strong moral argument for Great Britain giving just and generous treatment to his native land. He felt Canada offered Irishmen the fairest field in the world, therefore it was possible for them there to show, by the exercise of those virtues upon which the welfare of society mainly depended, that if the condition of their brethren across the Atlantic was an unhappy one, if Ireland lagged behind the rest of the world in respect for law and order, in education and in prosperity, the fault did not rest with the Irish race, but with the unfortunate circumstances of its past history and the injustice under which it still suffered. If just treatment produced loyalty in Canada it was the strongest argument that could be offered for just treatment in Ireland. Besides, McGee was ever solicitous to build up the Irish race, politically, intellectually, educationally, and morally, in Canada. He did not wish them to shun their civic responsibilities as some had done in the United States. There, either through a feeling of exile and of being mere sojourners in the land while their thoughts and works were all with the old home land, or through their inexperience of the greater responsibilities thrust upon the individual citizen and his political conscience by the more highly developed democratic form of government, many Irishmen in his day had not measured up successfully to their opportunity. In Canada he would ward off all such dangers. He exhorted his countrymen to have a living, habitual sense of partnership in the government of the country, in the defence of the country, in the maintenance of its laws and its general wellbeing. When D'Arcy McGee preached *loyalty* to his fellow Irish-Canadians, and his words were not wrested from their context, this was the sense that lay behind them. But in the mind of many an Irishman in Canada as in the old land, the word *loyalty* had other connotations, as it had in Ireland, and called up bitter memories of that truckling to alien rulers, that unworthy acceptance of arrogant pretensions, against which every Irishman of spirit had struggled for centuries.

Such was the nature of the issue between the two parties when the challenge of Fenianism brought their dispute to a complete rupture.

A very brief survey of the Fenian Brotherhood will make clear its connection and importance for Irish-Canadians. After the failure of '48, the famine, the "clearances," and the great emigration, Ireland lay prostrate. For such a land, particularly when the Nationalist revolt on the Continent was being repressed and reaction everywhere in the saddle, resistance by force to England's rule was hopeless. Even the constitutional movement for Repeal of the Union was abandoned for a generation. The few Young Ireland spokesmen who remained in the country had come to feel there was no solution but to try to induce the British Parliament to pass some reform measures. In this depression, the active, aggressive national agitation passed into the hands of the men who had been exiles from their native land. It became a movement outside of Ireland, carried on by a new generation which had matured chiefly in American exile. This resulted in many differences in their tactics and demands. They were, as is the way with political exiles, more irresponsible, less controlled by leaders, more prone to divisions and corruption, and inspired by more radical ideals. The Fenians were from the outset avowedly republican, and saw but one method, armed revolution.

This Fenian organization had from the beginning two branches, the Irish and the American. In Ireland James Stephen, one of the men of '48, put the half-literary, half-political Phoenix Clubs on a military basis in 1858, and looked for success for his cause by obtaining help from America.

At the same time, another man who had been out in '48, John O'Mahony, was bringing about a similar organization in New York. O'Mahony[1] had translated Keating's Irish History and been greatly interested in the militia of ancient Ireland, called the Fianna, so after it he named his

[1] A Fenian appreciation tells us that O'Mahony was "one of the greatest enthusiasts that ever drank music from a moth-eaten manuscript in the Celtic tongue."

new society *The Fenian Brotherhood.* Both in Ireland and in New York the Brotherhood met with amazing success. The Irish exiles were ready and eager to return to free their native land and wreak their long-nursed vengeance on the author of their misery and their woe. At the end of the Civil War thousands of young Irish-Americans were pledged to the cause.

However, the American Fenians could not agree on their plans of campaign. O'Mahony's idea for freeing Ireland was to send men and money from the United States to wage war directly on Great Britain. The immense difficulties of sending their men and supplies such a distance and evading the British fleet made an alternative suggestion, proposed by Roberts and Sweeney, two other important officials, appear the more feasible. The Roberts-Sweeney section maintained that the true road to Ireland lay through Canada. Following that path, they would attack England and England's Empire at the weakest point, through a region far removed from the Imperial base of supplies and where there was a frontier of great length to be guarded. Besides, in attacking Canada, they could bring into action all their own men at once, and in all probability, judging by the feeling of sympathy some of the citizens of the United States had shown for them, they could look for many non-Irish recruits. Indeed, many recruiting officers during the Civil War had induced the Irishmen to enlist by the hope of assistance in return to the Irish cause, when the American war was over. If the Fenians were successful in getting a footing in Canada, they intended to establish there a government friendly to the United States, and, in return for assistance on a national scale from the Federal Government, it would, when their objective was gained, hand over Canada as payment to the Americans. Further, the English being so fully occupied in Canada, the branch of the Brotherhood in Ireland, in the meantime, would have a free field to carry all before them.

As far as the American attitude to this programme was concerned, the Government and the people as a whole looked upon it as utterly impossible and fantastic. But

they were not inclined to suppress it in any way, because by so doing they might lose the Irish vote. D'Arcy McGee calculated, in an official paper he prepared for the Governor-General, that the whole number of electors in the United States likely to be influenced by the Fenians did not fall short of a million. And there were not lacking countless straws—votes, speeches, and deeds—at the time to show that President Johnson was much more anxious to conciliate that large vote than to bother over neutrality laws between his country and England. He felt they had already been violated when the British allowed a Southern cruiser, the Alabama, to be fitted out and sail from one of their ports. Thus the idea of invading Canada was allowed to ripen.

In Canada, again, the feeling as to the Fenians varied. Like the Government and people of the United States, Canadians for a long time could not look upon the movement seriously. Then events forced them to recognize the real danger in the campaign, danger not merely of foreign attack but of dissension at home. In the United States generally, or at least in the triumphant North, Canadians could not but observe, there was still widespread hostility toward England, and incidentally toward any colony supposed to be under England's rule, because of the strong sympathy shown by the English ruling classes, during the Civil War, for the aristocratic, slave-holding, cotton-growing South. Moreover, the Irish peoples in Canada and in the United States were too closely related and had too many common memories deep in their hearts for one not to have a lively interest in what the other was about. There was no insurmountable wall between Montreal and New York, or between Toronto and Buffalo. Fenianism was a secret force, and once it established a flourishing life in the American cities the contagion of the movement was bound to infect the northern ones also.

When Canadians in general awoke to the reality of the danger, they determined, quietly but resolutely, to crush any attempt to strike at England through their own land. As regards the Irish section of the Canadian people, and particularly those of strong nationalist sympathies, opinion

was divided, owing to the dual aspect of the Fenian movement. For Fenianism in its incidental anti-Canadian phase, there was of course no sympathy save among a very few newcomers who knew nothing of their adopted land. But for Fenianism as a militant anti-English movement, the most assertive and aggressive upholder of the traditions of '98 and '48, there was naturally much support. The Fenian Brotherhood secured members in Canada, and at the Fenian Congress held in Philadelphia in October, 1865, an Irish banner was presented to the chairman by Canadian delegates. In Montreal and Toronto banquets were given in halls decorated by the portraits of Fenian leaders and by Fenian flags and banners. It was not until after McGee's campaign and until after the invasion of Canada became a definite part of the Fenian programme, that sympathy in advanced Irish nationalist quarters in Canada turned against the scheme.

Even when the possible danger of the movement was becoming apparent, the Canadian Government considered it well to move slowly, in the hope that it would kill or cure itself. They were diplomatically blind to anything short of actual violation of the law. A letter written by McGee to J. A. Macdonald on December 19th, 1866, is significant of this attitude and also of how little it satisfied McGee:

> ....As to the Fenians, we still continue to receive the average number of "startling rumours," but no one seems to put much faith in them. It may be that we are in danger of running into the extreme opposite to credulity; and when you write Campbell you might give him a fillip on that score. Inertia is all very well in its way—but it may be carried too far

No. Inertia regarding the Fenians could not be McGee's course. His whole mind became possessed and on fire with them. In all its aspects, its United States origin, its Irish programme, its Canadian consequences, Fenianism to him was anathema.

The Fenian movement, in the first place, rekindled the smouldering embers of McGee's Irish-American conflicts. He felt it was the old policy of *The Citizen* and *The Irish*

American blossoming anew. Instead of emancipating the Ireland enslaved at their door in the Fourth and Sixth Ward slums of New York, its leaders were arousing and unsettling and robbing the people to put into motion a hopeless, impracticable scheme to free an Ireland across the sea. Demagogues such as had fought him in his New York and Boston days would take advantage of the false hopes aroused to fleece credulous and ignorant folk out of hard-earned savings contributed to secret and unaudited funds. Moreover, failure would react on themselves and arouse against them the scorn of the practical Americans.

With the Fenian programme for Ireland he had no more sympathy. At no time, even in Young Ireland days, did he want Ireland to become a republic, and since his experience of the American Republic and the Canadian form of government he had become much more firmly convinced that limited monarchy was the better, and particularly so for his country and his countrymen. As for bringing about the change at this time by an armed revolution, he considered it absolutely certain to fail, and therefore wicked and bound to do the people more harm than good. All the forces of his Church were arrayed against Fenianism, and McGee now saw eye to eye with them. In this conviction of the futility of force, time proved him right. Not until a long half-century had passed, not until Ireland had in some measure recovered from its post-famine exhaustion and a wave of nationalist revolt had once more swept over the world, and in Ireland itself leaders had arisen more practical than the men of '48, better organized than the Fenians of the sixties, was an appeal to arms to have a chance of success. Indirectly, perhaps, force or the threat of force proved of more avail, in compelling concession and reform.

But when it came to be a matter touching Canada, McGee was inspired by yet greater wrath. Fenians from the United States who planned to come over and "free" Canada were, of course, enemies of Canada in the first place and enemies of England only second, and were to be dealt with by every Canadian who loved his home and his country accordingly. But it was the spread of their pernicious

doctrines among his countrymen in Canada which McGee feared and strove against as the most destructive of all evils for the whole Irish race. Here, in Canada, the Irish had the grand opportunity, as he once said, "to lift the country and rise with its elevation." He saw in Fenianism the menace which would snatch this from them for all time. If they showed themselves unworthy of the equal rights and just government there accorded them, if they were traitors to it, no matter by what garb of Irishism they were so misled, the respect and confidence of mankind would be lost to them forever. And for another purely Canadian reason, quite unconnected with Ireland, he feared the movement. It was said that the Americans were giving the Fenians countenance and pecuniary aid with a view to harassing the Canadian provinces, increasing their militia outlays beyond their means, and so indirectly preparing the way for the rise of a formidable annexation movement. This might in the end lead to the overthrow of the limited monarchy system of government on this continent and the establishment of one vast republic. From McGee's point of view, this result, if really to be anticipated, appeared a calamity which would rob the whole world of valuable constitutional experience and knowledge.

Then there was a personal aspect of Fenianism which preyed upon McGee and was utilized against him most diabolically. Its power as a secret society of threatening and intimidating people was focused on him from the outset. It was not only that he was unusually sensitive to the general considerations that the real extent of the order was unknown, that it was a secret mine any one at any moment might explode to his own destruction, and that the very vagueness of the threat created distrust and suspicion on every side. Beyond all this, the weapon of its secrecy was wielded unceasingly, whether by members of the order or by personal enemies using it as a cloak, for the individual terrorizing of McGee. He was deluged with hundreds of threatening letters, crossbones and death-heads were hurled at him in mysterious ways, while unknown, evil-looking men dogged his footsteps and watched his house. *The*

Irish Canadian, a most scurrilous Fenian sheet, of which men named Boyle and Hynes were the proprietors, emphasized the intended effect of all this, by frequently printing "tramp," "tramp," "tramp," after McGee's name. It was implied that he was a coward who was pretending, in order to cast ignominy on the Fenians, that it was unsafe for him to move without police protection. As seen across the intervening space of years, the methods resorted to in order to discomfort, exasperate and blacken McGee appear nothing short of fiendish. The way he stood up under them, for practically four years, and never flinched from his attack or cut out one sentence of warning or denunciation he felt it his duty to give, calls to mind forcibly Gavan Duffy's verdict that of "all the Young Ireland band Thomas D'Arcy McGee possessed the greatest courage." Moral courage, physical courage, neither was lacking when he saw a danger-fraught work he ought to perform. There is no doubt, of course, his mind became wrought up to a pitch of sensitiveness which was excessive and morbid and which explained a great deal of what he considered necessary and what others felt would have been better unsaid or undone; or in other words explained the impossibility of "inertia" being his watchword in the fray. But the words Bright once used of Gladstone when some of his friends felt he was talking and writing too much and wished he would show more moderation, are fully as applicable to McGee at this time: "Think of the difference between a great cart horse and the highest bred, most sensitive horse you can imagine, and then under lashing of a whip think of the difference between them again."

Such were McGee's reasoning and views about Fenianism when in the spring of 1865 the Canadian Government sent him, their Minister of Immigration, as the leading member of their delegation to the International Exhibition at Dublin. This appointment to bear witness, as they looked upon it, to the might of the British Empire, enraged Fenian forces on both sides of the Atlantic. While the Exhibition was being opened in Dublin with royal éclat the Fenians held a counter-demonstration at Clontarf—"where no one of any particular

rank was present, but the might of the people was there in acknowledged grandeur."[1] This counter-demonstration gave an excuse for *The Irish Canadian* to write up both and depreciate McGee as the man of '48 who made his way to Canada, but "returned to Ireland in British harness." This was followed by a poem on *The Renegade* in the next issue.

D'Arcy McGee on his side felt the full importance of his official position, and his conscience was most active to have him do and say all the occasion demanded. Not only did he attend the Exhibition, but in his home town, Wexford, he delivered a speech on *Twenty Years' Experience in America.* This was an occasion fraught with grave responsibility. It was essential that he should be moderate and tell only the sober truth. McGee himself felt the weight of this, and in his own words faced the task "frankly, fully, fearlessly." That there might be no danger of his feelings towards the movement carrying him beyond what he would say in quiet thought, he wrote out his speech beforehand. There is no doubt, therefore, that it was an honest effort on McGee's part to do carefully what he looked upon as an imperative duty. But there is equally no doubt that it was not a speech of generous treatment, impartial judgment, and calm reasoning, such as could have borne good fruit in the troubled times in Ireland and the United States. Given the conditions, McGee's was an analysis bound to provoke more trouble.

As would be expected, it was an able and eloquent address, and gave a historical résumé of the years in question which only a thinker and writer and politician such as McGee could make. What a truly McGee ring there is about the imaginative words, the vigour and originality of the setting in the following picture:

> Let no man think when he has heard the last sob from the ship's side—when he has seen the last glimpse of the emigrant ship itself—that he has heard the last or possibly seen the last of that living load of passion, affection, hatred, remembrance, prejudice, and speculation and power—stronger than distance, stronger than every influence but God's or death's—which has just launched itself out into the Atlantic. The Atlantic may prove

[1] *Irish Canadian,* May 31, 1865.

the grave to a small percentage of those outgoing myriads, but as sure as steam has narrowed it at most in our time to a fortnightly ferry, so sure the future of these myriads is destined within our own day to play an important part, directly or indirectly, in shaping the destinies of the lands they leave as well as the fate of the lands they sail for. The transfer of a third of a million of people a year—mostly adults—from old kingdoms to new republics, from a monarchy to a democracy, is a fact in the history of our times before which most other things that we call political sink into insignificance, whether regarded in their causes or in their consequences.

Taken as a whole, D'Arcy McGee's Wexford speech was a brief autobiographical sketch, with footnotes of his present mature criticism on this or that act or experience. In his reference to Young Ireland days he was brief but severe on the "folly of '48." Gavan Duffy afterwards maintained that the reflection cast on Young Ireland's policies in this speech was the only act of McGee's life for which he offered no defence. In the light of the fact that nearly every one of his colleagues in the Young Ireland movement had by that time spoken no less frankly, if, to use *The Nation's* word, somewhat less "hurtfully," Gavan Duffy's resentment appears rather strong. However, it was shared by a great many of the old Confederation members who were then in Dublin. Duffy happened to be home from Australia that spring also, and John Dillon gave a dinner in Dublin, intending to have both his old friends at it. The other guests were to be Samuel Ferguson, D. F. MacCarthy, John O'Hagan, Charles Hart, P. J. Smyth, and J. J. MacCarthy. But when the report of McGee's Wexford speech reached the city Dillon decided to have only one guest of honour at his dinner, McGee's friends at the time were so indignant with him. McGee had been so single-minded in the object of his address that he did not realize how bitterly his words could be interpreted and resented, by old associates. How little he understood how seriously they looked upon his reflections is seen clearly in the joking way he answered John Dillon's remonstrance. He merely parodied the *Biglow Papers*:

John B.
Dillon, he
Cannot put up with D'Arcy McGee.

However, it is pleasant to recall that the Dublin dinner was not the only one planned for Duffy and McGee. Two weeks later both men were in London and a very pleasant and interesting Irish banquet was held in St. James Hall. At it met once more many of the friends of the old generation. Duffy, McGee, John Dillon, Sir John Gray, and Sir Colman O'Loghlen, all sat together at this board.

What McGee had really said about Young Ireland in his Wexford speech was:

> I am not ashamed of Young Ireland—why should I? Politically we were a pack of fools, but we were honest in our folly, and no man need blush at forty for the follies of one-and-twenty, unless, indeed, he still perseveres in them.

The remarks of *The Nation* on this part of his speech are just and discriminating:

> They [nearly all the leaders of the Young Ireland party] now refer to t as a disastrous error into which they were swept by that surge of popular excitement, which, rising at Paris, spread through Europe, and momentarily bore away the strongest minds with irresistible force. A few of those leaders, it is true, still hold by the doctrine of the barricades; but they are those whose ardour was as great as their judgment was defective; and in Mr. McGee's curt criticism we have, roughly spoken, the self-accusation which most of his colleagues betimes express.
>
> Nevertheless, we take exception to Mr. McGee's reference to the politics of the Young Ireland party.....not so much for what he does say, as for what he does *not* say, while touching on the subject at all. To confess or condemn folly may be highly praiseworthy; but not to define more clearly the limits to which such condemnation was meant to reach, is, in the present case, to abandon to aspersion, if not, indeed, indirectly to cast aspersion upon the noble principles, the pure and lofty ambitions, and the useful labours of the Young Ireland Party.

This was the usual point of attack of the Irish press. As *The Wexford People* put it, they interpreted him as anxious to justify his Canadian loyalty and equally anxious to leave his Irish disloyalty unjustified. Fortunately for McGee's lasting reputation, this brief dismissal of the politics and deeds of '48 is not the only record he left of his mature estimation of them. No doubt it would have been wise for him in this speech to have enlarged a little on his reasons,

as he did in 1860 on the floor of the Canadian Parliament when twitted with being a rebel:

> Sir, I will say on the outset, it is not true. I am as loyal to the institutions under which I live in Canada as any Tory of the old or new schools. My native disposition is towards reverence for things old and veneration for the landmarks of the past. But when I saw in Ireland the people perish of famine at the rate of five thousand souls a day; when I saw children and women as well as able-bodied men perishing for food under the richest government and within the most powerful empire of the world, I rebelled against the pampered state church—I rebelled against the bankrupt aristocracy—I rebelled against Lord John Russell, who sacrificed two million of the Irish people to the interests of the corn buyers of Liverpool. At the age of twenty-two I threw myself into a struggle—a rash and ill-guided struggle—against that wretched condition. I do not defend the course there taken, I only state the cause of that disaffection, which was not directed against the government but against the misgovernment of that day. Those evils in Ireland have been to a great extent remedied; but those only who personally saw them in their worst stages can be fair judges of the disgust and resistance they were calculated to create. Sir, I lent my feeble resistance to that system, and though I do not defend the course taken, I plead the motive and intention to have been both honest and well-meaning.

But to speak thus at Wexford in May, 1865, did not occur to McGee. Fenianism was rampant, and it obsessed his mind. His one care was to give no shadow of countenance to any one still "holding by the doctrine of the barricades."

From his Young Ireland days, D'Arcy McGee passed to his American experiences and the lessons to be deduced from them. Given what those experiences had been, how he had been driven from post to pillar in the United States, his Irish quarrels, his Know-Nothing contentions, and his westward campaign failure, then how he had come to Canada, had found there a noble life-work stretching far before him, had envisioned the ideals which needed to be inculcated among his people, and lastly had felt his life and mission endangered and polluted by renewed attacks from his old Irish-American enemies, allied with Fenian forces and intriguing Canadian political foes; then given, beyond this life history, the exaggerated and hypersensitive, wounded feelings which the Fenian campaign of secret terrorizing had engendered, it was easy to understand the only lines along

which McGee's instincts and conscience would lead him to speak. He drew a painful picture of Irish life in the United States with exactly the same colours he had often used before. He pointed out the attitude of the Puritan states—"prosperous and proud of their prosperity and highly trained in mere school learning"—towards the Irish Catholics. He depicted the Northern States with their large commercial and industrial cities, in which only the congested slums were left for newcomers to inhabit. And he did not forget to mention the part played by politics in these human hives, whether it was that of the rank and file unaccustomed to the duties of republican citizenship or that of the native-born or Irish-born demagogues. He showed how his countrymen were used in American politics, and further, how they had been heartlessly and thanklessly used in the recent war. And lastly he dealt with the now Middle but then Western States. There, under the influence of the Know-Nothing movement, the Irish often found themselves proscribed in the very frontier towns they had helped to establish. In short, the *prestige* everywhere was against the Irish. He outlined his endeavours to take the people to the Western plains, the plans of the Buffalo Conference and their failure from lack of support.

As far as this part of his subject was concerned, it did not create much resentment in Ireland. The Irish newspapers—of course not including the Fenian press—seemed content with comparing McGee's statements with those of T. F. Meagher the year before. General Meagher's letter on the condition of his countrymen in the Northern States had angered the people terribly. He designated them as "a degraded herd, beneath respect and beneath contempt." There was nothing so sweeping and revolting as that in McGee's picture.

But the effect produced by this review was very different in the United States. There it angered afresh the same classes who had resented so greatly his going to Canada in the first place. All the old fires of the newspaper controversy on Irish conditions in the United States versus Irish conditions in the Canadian Provinces were kindled anew. The circum-

stances under which he had left the Republic always hurt McGee exceedingly, and for that reason perhaps he dwelt on them more than was needful:

> They did not hesitate to fling foul phrases and ribald reproaches after me.... They called me a traitor, a renegade, an apostate, but I tell them from this spot.... that I have done more in ten years, by a constitutional line of public conduct, by blending the warm Irish impulses which I shall only cease to feel when I cease to live with rational and lawful public objects, that I have done more, humble as I am, to conquer back the respect of intelligent men in Great Britain and America for the Irish name than any half hundred of the demagogues put together.

This was the part of McGee's address to which *The Irish People*, the Fenian organ in Ireland, gave greatest space. They wrote up in most offensive language the old Irish-American quarrels, concluding with a typical charge as to the motives for his change of heart:

> But it soon became too hot for him and he sought the protection of the British flag and was soon rewarded for his treason.

After the American part of the Wexford speech came Canadian statistics and a review of the social life in the province, of a very gratifying kind both for Irish and for Canadian ears. If American Irish social life was noted for the early scattering of families, and loosening of the bonds of affection, and drifting away of the second generation from their old faith, the Canadian Irish, in McGee's estimation, provided a pleasant contrast:

> They have uncoiled under the electric touch of prosperity, they have braced all their practical faculties in the keen air of the New World, they are struggling, earnest and usually successful in the battle of life, but they are unspoiled Irish still—they have lost little of their racial nationality and they do not blush to touch their hats to a superior or to kneel at the knee of the order which enlisted them at their birth into the ranks of Christendom. They have shaken off that painful servility of manner which I must say is most grating on the ear of every man who respects his manhood, but they have not yet mistaken impertinence for independence or blasphemy and scoffing for "freedom of speech."
>
> Our politics....have not demoralized the simple-minded emigrant or converted the astute resident of earlier date into a dealer in the manufacture and sale of his countrymen's votes.

It would be hard to find in all McGee's writings one paragraph which more concisely summed up exactly his conviction of the difference between the Irish of rural Canada and those in the streets of the American cities. It has to be remembered that it was to the slum and street Arab class in the United States this lecture, like almost all D'Arcy McGee's generalizing on Irish-Americans, referred. He did, it is true, allow the following paragraph to creep in, but it was so meagre a report in comparison that it was lost —swamped in its surrounding context:

> I do not say that this is the universal rule. I have met as well-ordered Irish families in the United States as there are in Ireland. I have met as worthy men and as amiable women in private life; but I say the rule is generally as I have stated it, and the reading of the commandment there would be, "Parents, obey your children that your days may be long in the land."

From social conditions the lecturer passed to the government of Canada and gave very convincing statistics of the place held by Irishmen in the Government, on the bench, as magistrates and in other official positions, to show there was no distinction in theory or in practice between them and the rest of Her Majesty's subjects. And he continued:

> The Imperial policy and the Irish policy in these provinces is one because we have justice....for these reasons we Irish are attached to the Imperial connection and would be found to-morrow in the front rank fighting to uphold the union of Canada with the rest of the Empire.

This was the natural introduction for the direct treatment of the Fenians. It might have been expected that on a platform in Ireland McGee would have reasoned with the people as to why he considered it was folly at this time to plan to establish a republican government through an armed revolution, that he would have admitted their need for some change and freedom in their relations with England, and have shown them definitely from his Canadian experience what he would substitute for the Fenian remedy. No doubt this too would have displeased the Fenians, but it would have been the stand of a patriotic Irishman who had still a Young Ireland

eye for the wrongs of his own country. This was not McGee's course, however. He contented himself with showing the sordid side of the American Fenian movement and its unjustifiable attitude towards Canada. On the crying evils in Ireland which the Irish Church Act and Gladstone's first Land Bill, both directly due to the Fenians, attempted to remedy, McGee was silent. Instead he heaped up ridicule on the American Fenians:

> It is true the emissaries of those illuminated regenerators of their race of whom you have heard so much, whose Head Centre[1] was brought by spirit-rapping to Bedlam and who came out of Bedlam a Head Centre, this hopeful society of regenerators, deploring the benighted state of their provincial countrymen, do sometimes seduce them from their allegiance to a Government against which as administered there is not a shadow of grievance;.....I have no doubt that their number in the United States is grossly and purposely exaggerated. Their morbid hatred of England has been played upon during the Civil War by bounty brokers and recruiting sergeants, and they have mistaken the surface slang of two or three great cities for the settled national sentiment of the American people, which is not, I repeat, one whit more pro-Irish than it is pro-Japanese. They have deluded each other and many of them are ready to betray each other. I have myself seen letters from some of the brethren from Chicago, Cincinnati, and other places offering their secret minutes and members' rolls for sale.

Then, in contrast, McGee turned to a review of the achievements of individual Irishmen and Irishwomen in America who had made themselves a part of their adopted land and brought honour to the land of their birth. That he should have singled out of all this illustrious company, there in Catholic Wexford, Henry Giles, the Unitarian preacher of New England, who, however, had been born a Roman Catholic near Wexford, to shower his chief and longest eulogy upon, was a very typical McGee manifestation of religious toleration. He declared:

> Henry Giles has poured out in one single discourse more genuine eloquence—the eloquence of thought—the eloquence of Chalmers and Robert Hall, of Canning and of Grattan—than all their demagogues will utter

[1] O'Mahony became a Spiritualist in the United States and had had a mental breakdown.

till the crack of doom. I know that richly gifted man cherishes a warm affection for this country, and I could not speak in Wexford without bearing my testimony to the honour he has reflected on his countrymen throughout America by his genius and the uses to which he has put it.

His closing, again, was in another very characteristic vein. It was not the Hon. D'Arcy McGee of Canada, among whose ministerial duties was included "Immigration," who gave his Irish townsmen his parting advice. It was rather the same Young Ireland D'Arcy McGee who felt that emigration from Ireland was a far-behind second-best method of remedying ills there, either national or personal:

I am not here to advise any man to emigrate. You seem to have a mania for emigration upon you in Ireland, and I certainly feel it no part of my duty to pander to that mania. On the contrary, I would say to every man and every woman who can live at home, stay at home.

Such was D'Arcy McGee's epoch-making, furor-raising Wexford speech. Taken all in all, he never delivered any public utterance more character-revealing and more deeply stamped with the life imprint of the man himself. It was his own experience and his own lessons, and his own philosophy based thereon, that he had given them. It was a time and place where such speaking demanded unusual moral courage. He knew perfectly that his opinions and deductions were anathema to many mighty forces in the land. But to him their righteousness was undoubted. Therefore his duty was clear. *The Nation*, in closing its criticism, pays a tribute to this quality of the speaker:

While we mark our dissidence from some of Mr. McGee's judgments and conclusions, we confess his lecture—even where we dissent from him—has one attraction of great power with us. In these days when mere rhetoric, rhodomontade, buncombe, and clap-trap, have so largely flooded the popular platform and when the effort of so many speechmakers seems to be how to get off warlike platitudes, how to win "loud cheers" and to tickle the popular ear, it is absolutely refreshing—though it were only for the effect of a "cold bath"—to alight upon a man who sets himself so completely as Mr. McGee does in the opposite direction; and who exhibits the moral courage of speaking wholesome, though unpalatable, truths to the people.

It would be idle to attempt to review in detail the rank and varied aftermath of this speech. In Montreal, it included the whole gamut of excited and spectacular passion. From the vituperative resolutions of the Hibernian Society against the traitorous Judas, to the quotation and laudation of the patronizing thanks which *The London Times* expressed to the one-time Young Irelander; from the astutely devised "Disclaimer" with its alleged seven hundred signatures, which dwindled in the light of fact to less than two hundred, and revealed all the prominent names among these to be crudely faked, to the large deputation of friends with warm, confidence-assuring greetings and homecoming welcomes; from the venom and malignity of *The Irish Canadian's* "Twenty Years' Experience of the Goulah of Griffintown" to the fraternal and patriotic applause of the grand November banquet in St. Lawrence Hall, the excitement never ceased to roll onward in its tumultuous swell.

The motives behind the hostile campaign are apparent enough. In spite of McGee's own spirited and well-taken explanations in a memorandum of July, and again in his long and eloquent speech at the banquet, and once more in his most cogent open letter to the Irish Press in March, in spite also of the energetic and outspoken loyalty and devotion of numerous Irish friends, the skilfully fomented agitation alienated hundreds of his political supporters. Furthermore, in spite of the endorsement of his stand against the Fenians by Archbishop McCloskey of New York and by all the other Irish Catholic prelates of Canada and the United States, including particularly the mitred Canadian statesman, Archbishop Connolly, who agreed heartily not only with his attitude on Fenianism but also with the substance of his comparisons between Canada and the United States, an angry feeling of suspicion and distrust was cultivated among his co-religionists. Many came to believe that D'Arcy McGee was an apostate and at heart an abettor of their ancient enemy and a betrayer of the Irish cause. Even the broadcasting of authoritative and astounding facts, based on government reports, as to the condition of the Irish and other immigrants in New

York's slums, by *The New York Tribune* in January, 1866, and the maturing of the Fenian designs on Canada, which culminated in the Niagara raid of June, 1866, failed to mitigate the intense embitterment of this long-drawn-out historic battle in the Irish politics of Montreal. But outside of that city the instructive months which followed the Wexford speech convinced many thinking men that McGee had a good case and had defended it well. It was not J. A. Macdonald's adroit persiflage[1] which expressed the sentiments of that nationally representative gathering of November 6th, but A. T. Galt's direct, explicit verdict:

....It is not only that he (McGee) may justly claim since he has come to Canada that he has been a foe to prejudice, an upholder of equal rights to all, irrespective of the religion or the race of any, but at this moment, threatened as we are by assault without, it is more than ever important that the stand—the worthy and patriotic public stand—he has taken should receive the endorsement it has met with to-night, (loud cheers) an endorsement which will go from one end of Canada to the other and the importance of which may be estimated by the extent of the folly and delusion which demagogues and false leaders of the Irish people are dragging their countrymen into in a neighbouring land. (Renewed cheers.) We all owe, and the country especially owes, a debt of gratitude to Mr. McGee.

As my worthy friend beside me has just said, if Mr. McGee had been tempted by the false popularity of a transitory reputation to take hold of the popular fallacy he might have achieved for himself a momentary reputation. But he has chosen the better part, he has chosen to appeal not to the passions but to the reason of his countrymen and showed on all occasions that he preferred telling them the truth, although it might be unpleasant, to a falsehood which might be of the contrary nature. But while he told them the truth on one hand he stood up for their rights on the other. (Cheers.) He led them in opposition to what was wrong and in the struggle for all that was great and beneficial and all that would make them great and happy in this country of their adoption.

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[1] Macdonald spoke at the dinner to the toast to the Canadian Government. He devoted his attention naturally to the members from Montreal. He said, after speaking of the East and Centre divisions, "We now come to the West division. I need say nothing about that, because we are here. The gentleman who represents it, [McGee,] has spoken for himself. Now, gentlemen, what do you think of him? (The audience answered by rousing cheers again and again repeated.) I think he has got on pretty well for a man who has had a bad case. (Laughter.) I really think you will say—not guilty, but he must not do it again."

Meanwhile, the storm cloud broke over Canada and the warring elements in Montreal raged without restraint. The Fenians came, Canadian volunteers swarmed in defence of their land, prisoners were taken, and state trials dragged on Still wilder projects were plotted. Mysterious emissaries shuttled back and forward across the border, here to-day and gone to-morrow, while only the upper rooms of some spotted inns knew what they plotted and with whom. Fantastic as were the raids, and still more fantastic the plots that came to nothing, the plots and massacres which existed only in the heated imagination of sections of Upper Canada reached a still further height of absurdity. Recruiting and drilling of volunteers, with all the race and party wrangling inevitable in a time rife with suspicion, became the business of the day. Rumour, gossip, and scandal flourished and multiplied. The cry was raised that no Irish Catholic was to be given admittance into the Montreal Home Guard, and further, that it was the Minister of Agriculture, McGee himself, who was responsible for this insult. Again, it was charged, "he had promised the Governor-General in a fit of patriotism two Irish Catholic companies" but could not recruit them "owing to the apathy of his co-religionists to wear Her Majesty's free clothes." Another story ran that such and such Irish Catholic companies had stacked their arms and their colonel declared he would not make himself unpopular by any further efforts. He was disgusted with the whole thing. Next, the Superintendent of the Grand Trunk was playing the tyrant. He had dismissed eighty-three Irish workmen who would not take the oath of allegiance—"cast them adrift in the depth of a pitiless, hard winter because they would not perjure themselves by taking an oath that their conscience disapproved." And lastly, the political bearing of all this may be gleaned from *The Irish Canadian's* prophecy: "His Excellency is about to call on our Honourable countryman to pass his Portfolio of Minister of Agriculture into the hands of the Colonel of the Prince of Wales. Bravo, Col. Devlin! You have done your work patiently but well."

Thus the general struggle raged, relevant only as a proof of how black the outlook had become for fair and just dealing in these matters, and remarkable only for the perplexing confusion of the rubbishy reports on which it was based. It is not necessary, however, to pursue this Fenian excitement through its various stages. It is enough to say that it was so manipulated as to leave McGee substantially weakened in local politics, but on the other hand correspondingly helped in the eyes of the rest of the country. Archbishop Connolly, on August 1st, 1867, thus estimated the value of his public services in this regard:

> I raise my voice in behalf of an Irishman who under a kind Providence has been mainly instrumental in lifting up his fellow-countrymen and co-religionists to a position which.....they never yet attained in this or perhaps any other country.....To his intellectual supremacy I would add only one other quality, which is the crowning of all in a public man, and that is a high-souled patriotism.....which made him advocate all that was sound in policy, despite the clamour of the crowd in whose behalf he was putting forth, at the risk of their displeasure, his gigantic strength....
>
> A man with the towering ability of McGee had but to hold his tongue and preserve a significant silence whilst in Canada as in Ireland his fellow-countrymen were blindly marching on to inevitable destruction.....If Mr. McGee, the Daniel O'Connell of this country, had not fearlessly come forward at the critical moment with genuine Irishry and true patriotism, who is the man now living who could have foretold the consequences for Irishmen and above all for Irish Catholics in British America? Like the unseen match, it might not have been heeded at the moment, nor the real danger understood by many to the present day, but if that match had been once ignited and if D'Arcy McGee had not been on the watch-towers when all others were asleep, I, as an Irish-Canadian archbishop, yielding to no man in my love to my fellow-countrymen and my co-religionists at home and abroad, I distinctly state my conviction, as far as Irishmen and Catholics in this country are concerned, it would have infallibly ended in nothing short of a disastrous conflagration. The single action of Mr. McGee in this instance has been of more signal service to Irishmen and their true interests in the new Dominion of Canada than what has been achieved by all others besides.

But the fundamental hostility in Montreal's Irish circles had become too open and wide a breach to admit of being reconciled by any outside influence. It had to bridge its own chasm, and for the present was intent only on blasting

it deeper. The history of the city's Irish politics became more and more a story of petty intrigues, bitter personalities, divided counsels, and despairing expedients, until their culmination in the memorable election campaign of McGee and Devlin in the deadly August heat of 1867.

It is not necessary to pursue this fight in all its details. Only one or two of the more significant events of this passionate time need be related to indicate how the main current of McGee's public life was twisted by them. A typical episode of the fray was an anonymous letter sent from Montreal to *The Globe* in November, 1866, attacking McGee. Over this arose a futile, bitter newspaper duel of seven or eight weeks' duration, ending with the reluctant admission of the utter baselessness of the charges. It served no purpose and was intended by the writer of the originating letter to serve none other than to create a bad public impression[1].

And again a lurid light is thrown on the depth and intensity of the Irish hostility by the clash in St. Patrick's Society. McGee, who by this time was tremblingly alive to any least suspicion of Fenianism spreading in Canada, had charged that there was sympathy with Fenians, if there were not Fenians themselves, creeping into their society. He did not hide his fears or give the suspected the benefit of the doubt. Very shortly after there occurred a singular fire, "just sufficient of a fire to burn the entire books of record." Following this came new books, but chiefly new enrolment of members. Next, and most singular of all, in the midst of the heat of the McGee-Devlin election the old books reappeared. Naturally, there followed angry insinuations many, over legal investigations which had been called for with loud flourish of trumpets in the press, but very quickly let drop again in the proper official place before the proper judge. The end

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[1] Looking at it to-day, what impresses the reader is the incredible ease with which a letter which was manifestly suspect was accepted by a responsible newspaper without the most elementary inquiries, indeed with the appearance of avoiding inquiries lest they should prove the letter untrustworthy. Such incidents, and there were many such, indicate the prejudice of the time.

of this sordid story was McGee's expulsion by the newly enrolled St. Patrick's Society of Montreal.

But after all, these vindictive skirmishes were only subsidiary to the combat which occupied the centre of the stage. That was the never-to-be-forgotten contest between D'Arcy McGee and Bernard Devlin for the honour of representing Montreal West in the first Dominion Parliament. The contrast between this campaign and McGee's previous ones is marked. His initial election triumph, before the city was divided into electoral districts, when he defeated Starnes and Cartier, and stood at the head of the poll, will be easily recalled. The following election, in June, 1862, he went in by acclamation, and became President of the Council in John Sandfield Macdonald's Cabinet. Then the year after, when he ran as an Independent against John Young, he was once more victorious by 737 votes. And finally on April 11th, 1864, he was again returned by acclamation as the Minister of Agriculture in the Taché-Macdonald Government, and this position he still held after the Coalition reorganization in June. But there had much water run under the bridges since the spring of '64, and McGee in midsummer '67 had for opposition one of his own countrymen and his own faith.

It was an unusual election. It was not exactly a party fight. The Reformers considered long the advisability of running John Young, but desisted. The newspaper opinion was that this decidedly helped McGee. The Government and McGee's ex-colleagues remained neutral. Not one of them came to McGee's aid on the stump or in the press. Cartier was particularly silent, partly out of fear of the effect on his own Irish voters and partly from his ancient grudge against McGee. Thus politics proper were eliminated and it became a purely personal, factional fight. It was a time of intense heat; during the week nominations were held one hundred and sixty people died in Montreal. McGee himself was very ill, confined to his bed, and allowed to see no one during the week of greatest excitement.

The animosity between the two camps became intensified as the weeks advanced. The worst elements of ruffianism

were unchained. Speakers were howled down; men were mobbed and pelted with eggs and stones, committee rooms were smashed, "bludgeons and pieces of water-pipe which would have knocked down an ox" were brandished in many a fight; there were street fracases and physical encounters between prominent men, and one, at any rate, of these impromptu duels resulted in the death of the McGee champion shortly afterwards.

There is something truly awful about this last election. Although McGee defeated Devlin by 250 votes, the blackness of failure hangs over it. He who had shed honour on his countrymen by his genius and his energetic and patriotic endeavours was hissed by a faction among them as guilty of baseness and a cause for shame. He who had sought to lead them, by wise and charitable and kindly counsels and also by loving Christian example, into paths of moderation and peace was howled down by a ruffianism which the worst of the old days could not have surpassed. And the city which it was the pride of his heart to boast of on both sides of the Atlantic, as a bright and shining example of race and religious toleration, he saw given over to worse than the old-time violence, in a contest between himself and another Irish Catholic. And he who had been invited to be their leader and had been exalted as such to the pinnacle of his fame was branded as an apostate and an informer because he denounced the false friends and leaders who for the moment had intoxicated their mind and their heart.

In the final reckoning where is the blame to be placed? No doubt, in McGee's very marked hostility to Fenianism some errors of judgment and minor mistakes of taste may be admitted; but on the fundamental Canadian and Irish-Canadian aspects he was absolutely sound. In his views as to Irish-Americans versus Irish-Canadians there had been no change since he came to Canada. His speeches in Ireland in 1855 were identical in viewpoint with his Wexford address. As for Irish politics, rightly or wrongly, but quite fairly and honestly, he had come to feel political separation from England to the extent he had fought for it in Young

Ireland days was no longer feasible. He had always advocated Union in so far as the Crown was concerned, but as a Young Irelander he had aimed at legislative liberty such as had been enjoyed under the short Irish Parliament before the Union. Now, seeing Ireland so weakened, her young blood and her young brains banished to other lands, all national life stifled, the national agitation carried on by Fenians who had very few if any outstanding men in their ranks in the home land, McGee considered it was futile to struggle for immediate political freedom. The best to do was to work for social and religious liberty and try to arouse the spirit of justice in England to gain fair play politically for Ireland as part of the Union.

A series of articles which McGee wrote for the Montreal *Gazette*, in January, 1868, shatter the contention that he had become satisfied with things as they were in Ireland. He went very comprehensively into the changes England would require to make before Ireland, in his estimation, would be at least justly governed, if not self-governed. Politically, justice would require the repeal of many of the clauses of the Act of Union. All those establishing the Church of England, those proportioning taxation—he called attention forcibly to how grossly overtaxed Ireland was—the Jury Laws, and the whole system of selecting jurors, the billeting of soldiers in private houses, the forbidding of meetings of representatives of local bodies for any purpose, were scored as evils requiring immediate redress. Then he went more especially into the enactments in the ecclesiastical and educational fields, showing the wrongs which sprang from the Church establishment and the large exclusion of Catholic teaching in the schools and universities. Further, in the field of agriculture and industry, he reviewed the banking system, the patronage system, absenteeism, tenancy at will and the Poor Laws, and proved them all to be sources of bitter injustice. In brief, McGee held that if Ireland was to remain a part of the Union, it must be treated as a partner, not an alien land; if it could not be governed by an Irish parliament, it should be governed by Irish ideas and in accordance

with Irish needs. He was sufficiently an optimist to hope that without the stimulus of pike and musket, English statesmen would themselves be moved by justice or expediency thus to right the wrongs of centuries.

The same reasons that led him to urge peace in Canada, made him anxious to see it spread in the parent states. When he came to Canada his Young Ireland work in trying to unite North and South made him very quickly sensitive to the necessity of counselling the same elements in their new homes to bear and forbear with each other. They were to refrain from transplanting embers of their ancient feuds into the New World forests, which were only too inflammable. Nothing but hurt for themselves and their new homes would be the result of that clinging to memories of old-time wrongs. Such reasoning in turn reacted on his view of the mother nations' historic feud. They too "must blot out the class badge of a hue." On January 7th, 1867, he thus addressed the Irish Protestant Benevolent Association of Montreal:

> If we could get the Irish and British populations fairly to understand each other, there would not be a stronger bond of union in the world than the union which binds and must bind forever the destinies of the three ancient adjacent kingdoms. There is no natural repulsion among their populations, which have descended mainly from the same sources. The trash talked about Celt and Saxon is unworthy of the age in which we live; but there is on the other hand every possible reason of neighbourhood, of conscience, of mutual interest, and mutual security why these kindred communities should be and should remain united. For us, the Irish in Canada, there is at least this one public duty clear beyond doubt: to show both for the sake of our adopted and our native country that we dwell together in peace as one people.

Again, in his St. Patrick's Day speech in Ottawa in 1868, are these significant words:

> The best argument we here can make for Ireland, is to enable friendly observers at home to say, "See how well Irishmen get on together in Canada. There they have equal civil and religious rights; there they cheerfully obey just laws, and are ready to die for the rights they enjoy, and the country that is so governed." Let us put that weapon into the hands of the friends of Ireland at home, and it will be worth all the revolvers that ever were stolen from a Cork gunshop, and all the Republican chemicals that ever were smuggled out of New York.

ARCHBISHOP CONNOLLY

And in his letter of April 4th, 1868, to the Earl of Mayo are these words, which correspond well with those above:

....Let me venture again to say, in the name of British America, to the statesmen of Great Britain—"Settle for our sakes and your own; for the sake of international peace, settle promptly and generously the social and ecclesiastical condition of Ireland, *on terms to satisfy the majority of the people to be governed.* Every one sees and feels that while England lifts her white cliffs above the waves, she never can suffer a rival Government—the Union is an inexorable political necessity, as inexorable for England as for Ireland; but there is one miraculous agency which has yet to be fully and fairly tried out in Ireland; brute force has failed, proselytism has failed, Anglification has failed; try, if only as a novelty, try patiently and thoroughly, statesmen of the Empire! the miraculous agency of equal and exact justice for one or two generations.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ORATOR

As a prelude to considering the task of D'Arcy McGee's closing years in Canada, his labours in behalf of Confederation, the great work of his life, it seems well now to diverge and estimate the qualities which gave him his pre-eminence among men, and potency throughout the land. It was his genius as an orator which dedicated McGee for the supreme service he rendered our country. Therein his power was transcendent.

Nature, even in superficial ways, had dowered McGee as an orator. He had a striking face which stood out against a head of jet black hair. Gavan Duffy in *Four Years of Irish History* describes him as "odd....even ugly." But he continues:

> He had what is better than comeliness in the face of a man—plasticity and expression. The prevailing character was agreeable.....it changed suddenly to correspond with the sentiment he was about to utter, and in addressing a public audience helped wonderfully the purpose of his speech. An unaccountable negro cast of features was a constant source of jesting allusions[1] and induced his enemies, of whom he came to have a

[1] This negro cast was largely due to his curly black hair. Sir E. W. Watkin in his *Recollections* gives a McGee story based on this likeness. At a meeting in Montreal in a little public-house called Uncle Tom's Cabin, Luther Holton had preceded McGee and orated in a "very dry and Yankee-like way" on differential duties. Then came McGee, and then the respected negro landlord, Uncle Tom, got up to move a vote of confidence. According to McGee's version he said: "Bredren, we all on us heah came to dis land on a venter. Mr. McGee he came heah on a venter. Dis child know nothing 'bout dem disgreable duties. All we wants, bredren, is to pick out de best man How is we to do dat? Bredren, best way is to follow de hair. Mr. McGee has hair like a good nigger. Bredren, let us follow our hair." The result was McGee was adopted unanimously as the official Negro candidate.

plentiful supply, to distort his name from D'Arcy McGee into Darky McGee; but if he was as uncomely as Curran, he was nearly as gifted.

McGee's chief oratorical gift was his wonderful voice. Without the slightest strain or effort it filled every corner of the largest hall, and in an outdoor speech carried clear and sonorous to the fringes of the crowd. Just to listen to it was a joy. Gavan Duffy, on first meeting him, a boy of twenty, when in 1845 he returned from America, found him unprepossessing in appearance, but hastened to add that before McGee had spoken three sentences he was completely won by "his singularly sweet and flexible voice." A typical example of its carrying powers was given on the occasion of William Smith O'Brien's visit to Toronto in 1859. An immense crowd crushed about the Rossin House with addresses of welcome and greeting. All efforts on O'Brien's part to thank them were in vain. He could not make himself heard above the din of music, rockets and fireworks. His old friend D'Arcy McGee came to the rescue, stepped out on the balcony, and without the slightest difficulty extended his message to the people below and sent them home happy.

McGee's platform manner was one of distinction, and at the same time natural and attractive. On reading his volume of speeches one feels that no occasion was too trivial, no little speech too brief for him to take pains to establish at the opening, in one or two appropriate sentences, a sympathetic bond of interest and a kindly atmosphere between his audience and himself. He has been criticized as flattering his audiences. If so, it was a manly flattery, which took care to address all sorts and conditions of men, his Irish Catholic electors of Griffintown, the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society of Quebec, the members of the Caledonian Society, the German Society, or the New England Society, or the farmers at an agricultural exhibition in Upper Canada or at a political picnic at Ormstown in Lower Canada, the Scotchmen on St. Andrew's Night or the Irishmen on St. Patrick's Day—to address one and all with the same courtesy and respect for their feelings and prejudices,

with the same breadth and use of learning, with the same earnestness and interest, and the same poetic fervour and humour, that he would use on a high state occasion.

McGee's gestures were, as a rule, quiet, graceful, and dignified. At times, however, when the eloquence or warmth of his subject demanded it, they were carried along with a fine spontaneity and vivid energy wholly in keeping with the animation and working of his face. As with all real orators, his speech was more than the words he uttered. It gained greatly from the play of countenance, the dramatic gestures, the whole movement and atmosphere of the moment which his fervour and the fervour of his audience both united to inspire. Gladstone once said that "the work of an orator is cast in the mould offered to him by the mind of his hearers. It is an influence principally received from his audience (so to speak) in vapour, which he pours back upon them in a flood."[1] While McGee often displayed marvellous tact and understanding in handling a hostile audience and converting it to his side and into sympathy with his views, his deep earnestness, sincerity, tolerance, and humour, all combining to work wondrous effects, yet he was too imaginative and sympathetic a man not to be himself swayed by the subtle feeling and atmosphere between himself and his hearers. How emphatically true of him Gladstone's words could be was notably illustrated in a series of lectures he gave in 1863 on *The Future of Canada*. In Halifax and St. John, for example, his words were received with warm sympathy, and in consequence had a freedom, a spontaneity, a poetic truth and imagination which were most attractive and compelling.

[1] In the newspapers of the day there is scarcely a speech of McGee's mentioned, that the rejoicing and jubilation of the audience, before and during and after, is not specially commented upon. John Hamilton Gray's *Confederation* gives this brief picture of his reception at the Montreal banquet to the Maritime delegates in 1864:

"The Hon. Thos. D'Arcy McGee, M.P., was loudly called for, and rose amidst great cheering. His reception was a perfect ovation, and proved how deeply seated was the feeling in his favour among the citizens of Montreal. The waving of handkerchiefs almost constituted a canopy above the heads of the guests, and it was not till after long protracted cheering he could be heard."

Then he came to Toronto. Here *The Globe* had been waging a most incessant campaign against his "theoretical teachings." It had jeered at him as a teacher of loyalty, and had censured him as one who inculcated injurious opinions of our Republican neighbours. In spite of himself, in this atmosphere, his lecture became constrained.

Another great asset of the orator McGee was his gift of expression. Words never failed him. His vocabulary itself was noteworthy. It was wonderfully varied, precise, and scholarly. He had, moreover, an Irishman's peculiar delight in using it in all its breadth and variation. In another speaker his dictionary range of words would have seemed artificial, long sought after, and showy, but in his context it was natural, fitting, and pleasing. Once asked to speak on *The Land We Live In*, in the depths of a Canadian winter, he broached his subject in this way:

> It is a rather hard task, this you have set me, Mr. President, of extolling the excellencies of "the land we live in"—that is, praising ourselves—especially at this particular season of the year. If it were mid-summer instead of mid-winter, when our rapids are flashing, and our glorious river sings its triumphant song from Ontario to the ocean—when the Northern summer, like the resurrection of the just, clothes every lineament of the landscape in beauty and serenity, it might be easy to say fine things of ourselves without conflicting with the evidence of our senses. But to eulogize Canada at Christmas time requires a patriotism akin to the Laplander when, luxuriating in his train oil, he declares that "there is no land like Lapland under the sun." Our consolation, however, is that all the snows of the season fall upon our soil for wise and Providential purposes. The great workman, Jack Frost, wraps the ploughed land in a warm covering, preserving the late sown wheat for the first ripening influence of the spring. He macadamizes roads, and bridges brooks and rivers better than could the manual labour of 100,000 workmen. He forms and lubricates the track through the wilderness by which those sailors of the forest—the lumbermen—are enabled to draw down the annual supply of one of our chief staples to the margins of frozen rivers, which are to bear their rafts to Quebec at the first opening of the navigation. This climate of ours, though rigorous, is not unhealthful, since the average of human life in this Province is seven per cent higher than in any other portion of North America...."

The charm of this attractive passage is largely due, no doubt, to the spirit of poetry and picturesqueness which

permeates the description, and to the droll reference to Lapland. But much of it, too, depends on the pleasing and varied choice of words; "wraps," "macadamizes," "bridges," "forms and lubricates," for instance, all convey the same idea.

Again, in such a passage as this opening of the remarks he offered on behalf of Smith O'Brien, before referred to, it is his choice of words, together with his ever-present sense of the historic setting of the subject, which gives it the characteristic, sonorous beauty:

> Gentlemen, our guest inherits an illustrious name, rich with the accumulated historic glories of nearly two thousand years.[1] The land upon which he looks from the windows of his own home has been the land of his ancestors since a period coëval with the Christian era; and while the Shannon pours its rich stream through the Irish valleys the glorious name he bears will never cease to thrill through Irish hearts.

After McGee's maiden speech in the Canadian Parliament, a critic thus pronounced on his style as apart from his subject-matter:

> Mr. McGee is undoubtedly the most finished orator in the House. Every sentence is correctly turned, the language is precise and simple, and the mode of delivery and the voice admirable. With all these he has the peculiar power of inspiring an audience which can only be accounted for by attributing to those who possess it some magnetic influence not common to everybody. It is that which gives seeming depth to ordinary tones, and apparent lucidity and strength to simple commonplace. Mr. McGee is in fact an orator.

Yes. D'Arcy McGee was richly endowed with oratorical gifts, but it was the man behind these accomplishments that added the something more the reporter mentions but cannot define. D'Arcy McGee was a most companionable man, a man who made all hearts beat with a warmer fellowship

[1] His ancestors were the royal O'Briens, of whose family Brian Boroimhe was a member. Duffy says of him: "To the Celtic imagination he was an historical personage, the representative of a house which for twenty generations had ruled territories, conducted negotiations, and marshalled armies, and the lineal heir of a king still familiar to the memory of the nation after eight hundred years." *Young Ireland*, p. 383.

just to meet him on St. Andrew's Night or St. Patrick's Day; a man who radiated welcome, geniality and heartiness at all celebrations. To paraphrase slightly his own words on Kennedy, the Scottish lecturer: "Nor was it the speaker alone was remembered, every word seemed to breathe of the man and the friend."

Moreover, D'Arcy McGee prevailed with his audience through an earnestness and deep seriousness which had their roots in his strong religious feelings. He was never a dilettante speaker. He always felt it was his duty to share his gifts and his knowledge with his fellowmen. When in the United States it was his Irish countrymen whom he heard crying for help in every intellectual and moral way he could possibly give it. When he came to Canada the same call reached him from a broader constituency. It was to the whole people he spoke, and not to any one race or creed. But it was the same message. In his boundless admiration for this, his adopted country, he set himself the ideal task of arousing the people to the need

> to welcome every talent, to hail every invention, to cherish every gem of art, to foster every gleam of authorship, to honour every acquirement and every natural gift, to lift ourselves to the level of our destinies.

This was work after his own heart, and he went about it joyfully. But the spirit which compelled it gave a tone of serious reality to his words, quite as powerful over the hearts and minds of his audience as were their intellectual elevation and imaginative range.

Again, while nature had done much for the orator McGee, he superadded hours and years of ungrudging toil. Not only was he a natural genius, but a very hard worker. His speeches owe much of their distinction to his wide reading of history, constitutional documents, biographies, poetry, and especially the words of his great countrymen, Burke, Grattan, and Curran. From his mother's knee he had recited verse. From mere boyhood he had declaimed in true Irish oratorical style. He was a literary, scholarly man in his interests and activities. The material for his speeches on poetry, history, biography and political sci-

ence—to mention but a few of the concrete topics, on Burns, Moore, Scott, Milton, Shakespeare and Champlain, on the Jesuits and the Catholic Church, on the Irish Settlers, the Condition of Ireland, and the Reformation in Ireland, on Democracies and Monarchies, and on the Future of Canada and Confederation,—had all been carefully worked over time and time again. He was a much practised penman as well as speaker. One time his material was put into shape for newspaper or magazine articles, for pamphlets or books, the next time it came forth in his harmonious lectures. He was saturated with his subjects for years; he had not just crammed them for the moment. Was it to be wondered at, then, that he left his audience spellbound when they heard his melodious voice and glowing words unfolding his subjects with the ease and lucidity of complete mastery and the moral impressiveness of absolute faith?

The secret of a master's style is hard to ferret out. One has to be content with noticing its most striking attributes. In McGee's general public lectures, the clear, definite, concrete way he marshalled his facts is a noteworthy characteristic on one side, and on the other the picturesque, imaginative figures of speech, which lifted them into a high literary, sometimes even a poetic, plane. His highest oratorical flights were always on the borderland of poetry.

A good example of his prosaic lecture, packed with fact, was that on *The Growth and Power of the Middle Class in England*. While it is a body of impressive facts that any audience could grasp and carry away, yet it is cast in a fresh way which would interest even those familiar with the subject. Very briefly his arguments were these. The middle class was of comparatively modern growth. The British people of one hundred years ago were most unlike the British people of to-day (1861). One hundred years ago seventy-five per cent. of the whole population lived by the cultivation of the soil, now eighty-seven per cent. lived by following various manufacturing pursuits. One hundred years ago the British people were an agricultural people; now they were a mechanical people wedged together at crowded centres of population. The person who saw

the importation of the first bale of cotton into the Mersey lived within his own recollection, and now there were no fewer than 1,300,000 people in Lancashire, Cheshire, and elsewhere in England who earned their subsistence by the manufacture of cotton. This change and growth led gradually to the transference of political and social power to the same classes. The great Revolution in 1688 was a matter with which the people had nothing to do; the aristocracy of England made it to suit themselves; but they were unable to keep its influence to themselves.

Examples of his figures of speech may be taken from Confederation speeches, since, as most men saw it, that was not a subject to lend itself to figurative language. When giving a review in Montreal of the work accomplished at the Quebec Conference, he likened the new Constitution to the Eddystone lighthouse:

> We acted not in an empirical spirit. We consulted the oracles of history and of our race. We strove to build up on the old foundation, not to run up a sudden showy edifice for ourselves, stucco in front, and lath and plaster behind, but a British masonry, as solid as the foundations of the Eddystone, which would bear the tempest and the waves, and resist the effect of our corroding political atmosphere, consolidate our interests, and prove the legitimacy of our origin.

In another speech he was stressing how solid a guarantee Catholics would have for their religious freedom under the proposed scheme, and said:

> Embody the guarantee of the Treaty of Paris for religious liberty in a Canadian constitution, and you give it a vitality, a generative force, as a basis of future legislation. Now it may point a retort or embellish an argument, but it has no other potency for us; transplant it from the *musty scrolls of old diplomacy* to our own virgin soil, and, like the grains of Egyptian wheat, taken from the cerements of a mummy to be planted in the new world, it will bear fruit a hundred and a thousand fold.

A lecture he gave in Toronto at the Burns Centennial celebration is an admirable example of his Celtic feeling for style and nice choice of words exactly fitted to his subject. He opens by describing, in simple, touching, imaginative words, the birth of Burns:

When his honest father heard, on this night, in the year 1759, the first faint cry with which all our race enter into the world, he might well be filled with anxiety.....anxiety mingled with joy at the birth of an heir to his lowly lot and toils obscure. He might well have questioned himself in fear and awe as to the prospects of that new life:—

— a blast of Januar' win'
Blew hansel in on Robin.

It rocked to the foundations "the auld clay biggin" erected by his father's own hands; only one week later a stronger blast scattered it on the earth, so that the infant poet and his mother were carried under the midnight storm to the shelter of a neighbouring hovel.

From this lowly picture he passes to the circumstances which surround his memory one hundred years later, and describes these in a pomp of phrase and rhetorical sentence as strikingly in contrast with his first style as the birth and centenary celebration were with each other:

A century has gone by, and what a spell throughout the world to-day is the name of William Burns' son. Wherever on the face of the earth there is a Scotsman—and where is it they are not?—(cheers)—the anniversary of that lonely birth beside the Bridge of Doon is celebrated as the most glorious hour in modern Scottish history. And this rejoicing for the birth of Robert Burns is not confined alone to the men of his own country. In England it will be honoured by the presence of that veteran of every science, Lord Brougham, and embellished by the dainty fancy and carved and inlaid humour of a man after the Bard's own heart—Charles Dickens. (Loud applause.) In the neighbouring Republic it will draw out eloquent tributes from every distinguished man among the five-and-twenty millions who speak our language under their own flag. On the less familiar shores of that newer New World—Australia—by the banks of the Yarra and the Murray—they have already given their last cheer, sung their last song, and gone to bed on the morning of our to-morrow, with "Auld Lang Syne" still ringing in their ears. (Cheers.) Wherever on the face of the earth—at least in English-speaking regions—there is a Scotsman, or a *man*, Robert Burns is not to-night without honour. In our own remotest region the solitary factor of the fur company drains his glass of toddy to the memory he holds dear, and if there are human voices enough to swell a chorus, the frosty echoes of the Arctic night are ringing with Scottish words and Scottish melody.

But it is inadequate to consider only disconnected selections from his speeches. To understand the copiousness of his oratorical gifts, as well as the tone and feeling of his subject matter, it is necessary to follow in detail one of his

consummate public deliverances. On September 21, 1861, McGee gave a lecture at the London Agricultural Exhibition, which lends itself well to this purpose. His subject was *Canada's Interest in the American Civil War.*

The Civil War had begun about five months before, and so far success had been distinctly with the Confederates. Things looked very doubtful for the North after the defeats of July and August at Bull Run and Wilson Creek. But there is nothing doubtful or uncertain about McGee's utterance. It is throughout a generous, manly, comprehensive, and popular appeal for the North. The issue may be clouded for some men's minds, but for McGee the great reality is clear. The significance of the American war lies in its relation to slavery; and the principle of slavery is utterly detestable.

After a few pleasant, appropriate words of greeting to his audience, McGee passed quickly into a smooth, naturally arranged and well organized discussion. He pitched the whole tone of the lecture on a high moral plane. Canadians were aloof from this struggle, and should be able to form unbiased opinions of the merits of the combatants:

> We conceive that the public intelligence is sufficiently centred in itself, sufficiently calm, unbiased, and comprehensive to form opinions for ourselves neither parrotted after the organs of the North nor echoed after the orators of the South.

He pointed out how unnatural the revolution was from different points of view. Both sides had the same mother tongue, and their country was geographically one. As in later years, when urging Confederation for Canada, this unity and interdependence of the various parts of the country, because of the connection of their physical geography and physical resources, appeared in McGee's reasoning as a very important factor. In the following words he gave his hearers a graphic picture of the unity of the United States:

> Yet vast as the extent of the Union became within the last few years, it may be observed that, between the Rocky Mountains and the Atlantic at least, there is no natural barrier to its governmental unity. A canoe launched on the upper waters of the Missouri, within sight of those snowy

summits, may, with a few portages, make its way to the levee at New Orleans; a pine, felled on the Cattaraugus Hills, within sight of Lake Erie, may be floated from the Alleghany to the Ohio, and so to the same port with the canoe from Kansas or Dacotah.

Another bond, of equal force with the language and the river system, was the memory of the common *Pater Patriae.* He then turned aside for a moment to dissipate the popular "bloodless myth" by which panegyrists obscured the real Washington, revealing in its place "the least faulty public man of modern times."

The next question considered was, supposing the South successful, what kind of government would they establish? This part of the lecture does wonderful credit to McGee's powers of clear, unbiased judgment and reasoning. Not every one at that early date understood so thoroughly what secession and the erection of an independent state, which held labour in contempt and kept the labourer in cruel bondage, would mean as next-door neighbour to a "great nation, founded on free industry, political equality, diffused knowledge, energetic progress." McGee, with his glowing words, his passionate, eloquent and imaginative style, brought home to his audience very emphatically a truth which many of them before realized only in a vague, uncertain way. This is a good illustration of a characteristic gift he gave his time. He unfolded before ordinary men, in a never-to-be-forgotten way, the half-formed, half-realized truths and ideals of their better selves, and henceforth they had for them the force and strength in which his clear-sighted eloquence or passion had presented them. This new republic of the South would be

an Oligarchy founded upon caste, the caste founded upon colour. A Republic founded upon the servile labour of 4,000,000 blacks to begin with; with 200,000 or 300,000 planters, and the rest of the white population—over 7,000,000—rather freedmen than freemen; such an oligarchy, stripped of all disguises, being of the newest must be of the most exacting and intolerant description. Such an oligarchy would combine some of the worst features of the worst systems hitherto endured by mankind; a rule of caste as inexorable as obtains in India; a Patrician power of life and death; a Spanish contempt of mechanic industry; a Venetian espionage; a Carthaginian subtlety and craft.

What a number of historical hatreds this sentence transfers in men's minds to the proposed new republic! Then he continued:

Organize an American power on such a basis, give it a flag, a Senate, a military aristocracy, a literature, and a history, and you condemn mankind on this continent to begin over again the great battle of first principles, which, in the Christian parts of the earth, were thought to have been settled and established some centuries ago. As long as the monstrous doctrines of the innate diversity of the human race, the incurable barbarism of the black, and the hereditary mastership of the white, were confined to individuals, or States, or sections, they were comparatively harmless; but build a government on such a basis, accept 300,000 whites as the keepers and lords of life and death over 4,000,000 blacks; erect an entire social and political superstructure on that foundation, and contemplate, if you can, without horror, the problems and conflicts you are preparing for posterity.

He opened further discussion on this point with the brief, electrifying statement:

The Gulf of Guinea would soon be familiar with the new flag.

He continued then to drive home this fact by several rhetorical, passionate questions, breathing in every line his own fervent indignation:

While missionaries and men of science are penetrating the inmost recesses of Africa, some by way of Mount Atlas, others through Egypt and Abyssinia, others tracing the line across its vast extent, others starting from Zanzibar and Mozambique—while all this heroism of science and of the Cross is exhibited to us on that mysterious stage, are we preparing to sanction the erection of new barracoons on the slave coast and new auction marts for human creatures along the cotton coast? Has the benevolence and science of Europe explored the land only to bring the slave-seller and slave-buyer more readily together? Is dense night to settle down again on all the 60,000,000 who people that forlorn and melancholy region? For of one thing we must rest certain, the government that recognizes a slave power on the Gulf of Mexico, recognizes by one and the same act that slave power in the Gulf of Guinea. Was it not enough for Europe to have fastened such an evil on the infant societies of the New World, that she now, in the hour of hope for its extinction, comes to the rescue to perpetuate the crime? What has become of all the public penances done for that sin of our ancestors, of all the declarations against slavery and the slave trade? Are they all to be unsaid, renounced, controverted, because Man-

chester is alarmed for its cotton, and Liverpool and Havre averse to the blockade?

Not that McGee was forgetful of, or unsympathetic towards the want in Lancashire and Manchester. Time after time he urged his Canadian audiences to send relief for the suffering operatives in those manufacturing districts. Even in the following year, in the September of 1862, in spite of the soreness in Canada over the criticisms of the English press and several English politicians on the rejected Militia Bill, McGee continued to beg for relief for those districts "as the best reply Canadians could give to the bitter accusations which had been hurled against them." But in this lecture he was face to face with the greater permanent evil, and the passing one assumed its relative proportions:

I do not underrate the vital importance to England of an ample supply of cotton; there are a million mortals depending on that industry; but there is capital enough in England, and there are cotton fields enough in the rest of the world, to enable Manchester to shake off her dependence on slave labour, and now is the time in which that long desired change can be wrought—once and forever.

McGee next considered what the war would mean for Canada from a commercial, diplomatic and military point of view. This part of the lecture, while obvious, he hammered home in a way to do a great deal of good when the country seemed to be on the verge of drifting out of sympathy with the North on account of some offensive newspaper talk on the part of "one or two New York journals," and retorts by "one or more Canadian journals." The issue had become clouded in many men's minds, and instead of a war against slavery it was looked upon as a superficial conflict about boundaries and territorial partitions in which the North was actuated by lust of power. McGee's reasoning was clear and practical, exactly suited to the farmers attending an agricultural exhibition. Speaking of Canada's trade, which was wholly with the North, he said:

It may be crippled, or even lost, through international estrangement enmity, and a spirit of retaliation. I ask the farmers, the millers, the

forwarders and lumberers of Upper Canada and Central Canada to think of this, when they see a portion of the press they patronize artfully and continually labouring to stir up hostility and hatred towards the Northern Americans. I venture to ask those journalists themselves to reflect upon the consequences to Canada of refusal to continue the Reciprocity Treaty in 1865; to estimate the consequences, to count the cost, to ask themselves how many ploughs may rust in the farmyard, how many bushels may rot in the warehouse, how many mortgages may be foreclosed by the bank or the court, what stringency, what gloom, and what suffering, what permanent check to prosperity must be inflicted upon Canada and its people?

The rusting ploughs in the farmyard, the grain rotting in the warehouses, and the mortgages foreclosed! What well-selected definite incidents to flash into his argument and to touch the minds and hearts of his audience!

At the same time that he based his case on prudence and expediency, he appealed to their widest, highest, and best sympathies. Canada was reaping a benefit commercially from the war, but his most scathing denunciation was for those who could think of it largely from that point of view. Having quoted Longfellow's impassioned lines,

Thou too, sail on, O Ship of State!
Sail on, O Union, strong and great!
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!
We know what Master laid the keel,
What Workmen wrought the ribs of steel,
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope;
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
In what a forge and what a heat
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope.

he continued the powerful image—

While the ship is driving on the rocks, her signal gun pealing for aid above the din of the tempest—we do not lurk along the shore, gloating over her danger, in hopes of enriching ourselves from the wreck. No, God forbid! Such is not the feeling of the people of Canada. On the contrary, so far as their public opinion can be heard throughout the British Empire or the United States, their wish would be that the Republic, as it was twelve months ago, might live to celebrate in concord, in 1876, the centenary of its independence.

Then on rolled the vigorous, fervid lecture to its close in a triumphant summing up of the whole:

> We prefer our own institutions to theirs; but our preference is rational, not rancorous; we may think, and we do think, it would have been well for them to have retained more than they did retain of the long-tried wisdom of their ancestors; we may think, and we do think, that their overthrow of ancient precedents and venerable safe-guards was too sweeping in 1776; but as between continental peace and chronic civil war; as between natural right and oligarchical oppression; as between the constitutional majority and the lawless minority; as between free intercourse and armed frontiers; as between negro emancipation and a revival of the slave trade; as between the Golden Rule and the cotton crop of 1861; as between the revealed unity of the race and the heartless heresy of African bestiality; as between the North and South in this deplorable consequence, I rest firmly in the belief that all that is most liberal, most intelligent, and most magnanimous in Canada and the Empire, are for continental peace, for constitutional arbitrament, for universal, if gradual, emancipation, for free intercourse, for justice, mercy, civilization, and the North.

No one but a master most skilful with his material could carry through such a series of comprehensive, clear-cut, rhetorical antitheses in this smooth, easy, natural way. It is the height of fine declamation.

Such was McGee, the thoughtful, scholarly, liberal-minded public man, using his eloquence to direct popular opinion. There was another McGee, equally well known in his own generation, and maybe better remembered in ours. This was McGee the fighting politician. He too was richly endowed. He had marvellous skill and ingenuity in defending his own party. Their course never looked so attractive nor their arguments so cogent and convincing as when enunciated in his glowing words and graceful, polished periods. He had a rich variety of weapons for attack. He excelled in banter, which very often became downright ridicule, but very seldom went so far as derision. Badinage and mockery, too, he studied with good effect. In a House and at a time when coarse chaffing and rude jeering often took the place of more refined weapons, even McGee's jesting was, comparatively speaking, on a scholarly plane. This was very irritating to his more clumsy opponents. It was very often not what he said, but the superior way in

which it was said, that made the sting so unforgettable. Again, he was never at a loss for a pointed retort or a silencing rejoinder. In this he was without a peer.

Besides, McGee was a firm believer in the cumulative effect of constantly hitting on one nail—an adversary's well-known weakness, his amusing eccentricity, or vainglorious boasting. In days when there were few or no cartoons, his word-pictures took their place in making his warfare quickly and broadly effective and entertaining. True, some members, Alexander T. Galt for one, found such repeated references to some comic picture which he had established, most unseasonable and boring. But these censors were the exception. The majority enjoyed his reference to some past cartoon or his present sketching of a new one whenever he chose to indulge in the sport.

A few examples of his political cartoons may be resurrected to show both their popular and literary side, and also to show present day mature and sophisticated parliamentarians how untrammelled, amusingly simple, direct and boyish their fathers were in their political warfare.

In McGee's Opposition days, Attorney-General Macdonald appeared decked out as "the Julian of the troupe." His post-prandial habits gave the needed foundation.[1]

[1] This Opposition jesting calls in mind an editorial of *The Globe* headed "Mr. D'Arcy McGee in the Witness Box," published Sept. 11, 1866. D'Arcy McGee had been a chief guest and speaker at the John A. Macdonald banquet in Kingston. This entertainment had been given to Macdonald as Minister of Militia, to advertise his friends' confidence in him, and to repudiate a series of articles in the Canadian press under such titles as "Drunkenness in High Places." "That Mr. McGee should have been brought from Montreal to Kingston to testify to the virtues of the Minister of Militia reminds one," says *The Globe*, "of the old story of the Scot who was called as a witness in a trial in which the sobriety of an old crony of his was in question:

" 'Do you know John Thomson?' asked the counsel.

" 'That I do, sir,—kenn'd John Thomson frae a lad< ie '

" 'Have you often been in company with him?'

" 'Oh, ay—hunders o' times.'

" 'Had a jolly night with him occasionally, eh?'

" 'You may say that, sir, and no lee aboot it.'

" 'Seen him the worse for liquor occasionally?'

" 'Na, na, sir, but muckle the better o't many a time'.

" 'Did you never see him drunk?'

The Attorney-General East, George Etienne Cartier, appeared usually as an operatic singer in McGee's gallery. Cartier had a high-pitched, rasping voice in his speeches, but he prided himself upon his ability to sing French comic songs. As the head of the Government he had attended the Prince of Wales, on his visit in 1860, on board the "Hero" from Quebec to Ottawa, and according to contemporary accounts had entertained the Prince in a jovial and hilarious way, particularly by his singing and dancing.[1] During the next session, on Cartier saying that he lost the election in Montreal because the Irish voted against him simply because he would not accept Mr. McGee, and that he preferred to lose an election rather than win it in company with McGee, McGee answered:

> I fear I should have proved a rather uncongenial associate for the honourable gentleman. . . .especially during the Prince's visit. He has told us himself of one of the functions he discharged during that historical period—his dancing—but he modestly suppressed all reference to the other constitutional duty he discharged, namely, his singing. (Laughter.) Yet we have it set down in sundry places in a history of the visit dedicated to the Commissioner of Crown Lands, how the honourable gentleman transformed himself, both on the St. Lawrence and on the Ottawa, from a severe Prime Minister into an amusing Primo Buffo. (Roars of laughter.) At one place—I quote the page of history—Mr. Cartier is represented as volunteering a very earnest Canadian song of emphatic accent and tender purport. (Laughter.) Ah, Mr. Speaker, if he would only have his speeches set to music (laughter) and sing them from the Treasury Bench in the manner of an operatic hero, what a saving it would be to our ears, and who can tell but such syren arts might win over some of the stubborn Opposition.

" 'Never saw sic a thing in a' my life.'

" 'Do you venture to say, witness, under the solemnity of your oath, that you never once saw John Thomson drunk?'

" 'Never ance—as sure's daith!—I was aye under the table mysel', lang afore that.' "

[1] Apropos of Cartier's entertainment of the Prince of Wales, it may be noted how he contrived to prevent McGee displaying his particular talents before the Prince. The committee of citizens of Montreal in charge of the banquet given to the Prince on the opening of Victoria Bridge, with John Young as chairman, arranged that D'Arcy McGee should propose the toast of the evening. When the Premier heard this, in the words of a press report, "he knocked the plan on the head;" no speaking at all was allowed.

John Sandfield Macdonald was another whom McGee delighted to caricature. John Sandfield was a fiddler, and one of his most popular methods of keeping in touch with his constituents in those good old days was to enliven their various dinners, weddings and family festivities by playing Scotch selections on his beloved Cremona. Accordingly his role in D'Arcy's troupe became "Old Rosin the Bow."

Christopher Dunkin, secure to fame by his Confederation speech of two days and two nights, which filled one hundred and twenty columns of the official report, and analyzed with microscopic thoroughness every clause and phrase of the agreement, was born to enter McGee's gay procession. Sometimes he was the "petty politician" of Tom Moore's ditty, "There was a little man and he had a little soul," etc. This classic had some five or six stanzas of eight lines each and all of the same high order. The first time McGee hit on its applicability he treated the House to a complete rendering, and contemporary reports say, "roars of laughter and applause from all parts of the House prevented the honourable gentleman continuing his speech for several minutes." At other times Dunkin reminded McGee, "as he rises and scintillates his little points," of the nursery rhyme, "Twinkle, twinkle, little star," but usually he was drawn, to counterbalance our neighbours' "old Abe the rail-splitter," as "Young Abe the hair-splitter."

D'Arcy McGee's powers of retort were equally entertaining. A Mr. St. Dennis laughed a very loud, derisive ha-ha, when McGee spoke in criticism of the report of the Financial and Departmental Commission in March, 1863. McGee turned on him suddenly:

> The honourable gentleman seems to be jocose out of place. He rather reminds me of his namesake who went from Montmartre to Paris without a head (great laughter) and who was not apparently the last of his name who arrived at a capital without the necessary capital to his spinal column. (Hear, hear, and great laughter.)
>
> Mr. St. Dennis: The honourable gentleman brought his head without his reputation across the Atlantic. (Oh, oh, and Hear, hear.)
>
> Mr. McGee: Well, if the honourable gentleman is pleased with my hagiology he is welcome to any references he pleases to my exodus.

On one occasion a member elected to support the Opposition became a strong Government supporter very suddenly and mysteriously—unless the alleged fact of the Bank of Upper Canada having advanced him one hundred thousand dollars in the meantime, and later being refunded that amount by the Government, might throw light on his conversion. The Honourable Provincial Secretary, alluding to the matter, said, "The honourable gentleman had good reason for changing his mind," whereupon McGee added, "and I have no doubt that he also had good change for his reasons."

When James Aikens on April 29th, 1859, brought in his bill to incorporate the medical profession in Upper Canada under the name of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Sidney Smith, the Postmaster-General, tried to estimate the number of medical men in the province "roughly." There were above one thousand post offices in Upper Canada, and he would hold a guinea against any man that there were at least as many practitioners, "because wherever there was a post office there was always a medical practitioner." (Cries of No, no, and laughter.) McGee interrupted, "Does the honourable gentleman mean to say that there is an accoucheur wherever there is a delivery?"

And so the examples might be multiplied, for it is a tempting subject. Almost every column of his speeches reported some pun or play of words or witticism. The Postmaster-General, whose speeches the Opposition organ, with the usual grain of truth, spoke of "as being as good as he had brains to make them, which is rather contemptible at the best," and again as "a rare jumble of absurdity, malice and knavery," became, in McGee's vernacular, "the one who has charge of all the intelligence of Canada." On another day, the secret of the Government lay in "the rhinoceros character of their conscience." At another time the speech reminded him of "Falstaff's pennyworth of bread to such an unconscionable quantity of sack," while another address "possessed, like Mercutio's brain, a plentiful lack of matter."

But such sallies and waggeries were merely the froth of his political speeches. To get a complete example of his tactics and ability as a political orator, one entire speech

should be followed. A very good one for this purpose is the one he made at the time of the "thrusting out" of the Brown-Dorion Ministry in the summer of 1858.

The passing of this short Administration was a tooth-and-nail affair. Dent's history records that it produced "a tone of public mind in some parts of Upper Canada for some days, almost revolutionary." When the temper and tone of D'Arcy McGee's speech is considered this must be remembered. And further it must be remembered that the five months session which had worked itself up to this climax was one of the bitterest in our annals.

The political details have been narrated elsewhere. It is sufficient to recall that the session had been one of inordinate party strife, and that, when it was announced Ottawa had been chosen as capital, the Reformers decided then was the opportune time to capitalize all the antagonism and general dissatisfaction against the Government in their own favour. A motion so worded as to command wide support and to the effect that Ottawa ought not to be the permanent seat of government was carried by a vote of sixty-four to fifty. Brown then said this was an expression of disapproval of the Government's policy and to test the matter he would move an adjournment. Macdonald and Cartier accepted the challenge; the question was submitted and defeated by a majority of eleven. Therefore, the Macdonald-Cartier Government were entitled to say they had not lost the confidence of the House. But later, considering it would be good tactics, they decided to resign. The Governor-General, Sir Edmund Head, accepted their resignation and entrusted to George Brown the task of forming a new Administration. In three days the Brown-Dorion Ministry was formed on a general platform. This was astonishing success to the House, and very disconcerting news to their opponents, who had no desire to see all their Government archives thus unpreparedly turned over to their antagonists. But they took heart. It was a curious business, and it was not too late to retrieve their position. The swearing in of the Brown-Dorion Cabinet automatically vacated their seats in the Legislature until such time as they could be re-elected

Immediately, therefore, it was necessary to bring before the House motions to issue the writs for these necessitated elections. This gave the Conservatives their opportunity. Two prominent Macdonald-Cartier supporters moved a want of confidence amendment to the motion for the first of those writs. The voting on this put the Brown-Dorion Ministry in a minority of forty. Brown had then either to have Parliament dissolved and try his fate in a new election, or to resign. He asked the Governor-General for a dissolution and sent him at the same time a very detailed memorandum of why, as his constitutional adviser, he considered a new election the only course. In spite of Brown's reasoning, Sir Edmund Head thought otherwise and in his turn sent Brown an elaborate and sarcastically penned document refusing dissolution. The Brown-Dorion Ministry resigned and the full correspondence between Brown and his Excellency was placed on the table.

It was in the following prolonged and bitter debate, and when the Minister members of the Liberal party were debarred from their seats in the House, that D'Arcy McGee spoke valiantly for his absent leaders.

McGee had been absent in Montreal during the earlier proceedings, so he opened his speech by referring to the accounts of the crisis he had seen in the Conservative newspapers. They had been largely desirous to prejudice the new Government by linking it up with an Irish Catholic. Their chief articles set forth McGee—decked out in all manner of absurd allusions to his past history—as about to become one of the favourite counsellors of the new Administration, especially on education:

> Such things, I suppose, are to be expected on an occasion of such a crisis as that we have just gone through—or at least the earlier stage of t.

And so, to use Gladstone's homely phrase, he proceeded to "make the kettle boil," with the rhetorical amplitude of a born speaker just warming to his subject:

> We have this day only seen the beginning of it, unless I have entirely mistaken the public sentiment of the city I have the honour to represent,

and along the line I have traversed during the last day or two. I believe we have passed through only one stage of the crisis, and whatever may be the other stages I feel assured that persons who have hitherto stood high in this country will be made to experience that there is a public opinion in Canada....I do not wish to refer to the documents (Correspondence between Governor-General and Mr. Brown), but I presume that they are public property, and I think no one can fail to see through those documents an animus in them, a dexterous hand appearing through them, a lawyer-like cunning and sagacity all through them. (Cries of Order!)

All my life I have been a student of style, and I can tell a professional form of expression from a non-professional, and, I say, a skillful technical hand has been at the framing of those documents. The country can trace the hand and the spirit that guided it and will draw its own conclusions and act upon them.

The charity that thinketh no evil could not be expected to flourish in the parliamentary atmosphere of that July. The unusually skilful and sarcastic wording of Sir Edmund's answer lent any little plausibility needed for the Liberal interpretation that the Governor-General had been a party to an intrigue with John A. Macdonald and that his refusal of dissolution emanated from that dark source. History absolves Sir Edmund of intrigue, but finds him guilty of gross partiality towards the Conservative leaders. McGee continued:

The whole country prophesied that no matter what the House might advise, the Executive would not permit dissolution.

And there he was happily interrupted by Ogle R. Gowan, member for Leeds, shouting: "Every person of common sense knew that." McGee's uncanny quickness to convert such a simple enemy dart as this into a veritable boomerang never had richer scope:

Every person of common sense, that is, I suppose, every supporter of the Macdonald-Cartier Administration, knew what would be the result. Well! we are learning a new lesson and have turned a new leaf in the history of responsible government. Everyone, says the honourable gentleman, knew that the Executive of this country would not take a certain course, notwithstanding that his sworn advisers might constitutionally have advised him to take that course! Everyone knew that the Executive would not be bound by the advice of the men he had called to his council! If that were true. I say it would be a mockery of all government—that anywhere

in Europe or America such a course of proceeding would dishonour any private or public person who resorted to it—especially a gentleman in high station. Such a one would deserve to have his arms reversed and the sword that dubbed him by the title he wears broken before his face. (Cheers and cries of Order!)

We are learning new lessons in responsible government, and before we leave this floor to-night the representatives of the people of Canada ought to have the fullest and most detailed explanation in order to justify the statement made here by an habitual supporter of the late Administration that a Government was formed whose advice the supporters of a previous government knew that his Excellency would not take. (Hear, hear.) If this be so, then it appears that the new Administration, while they were going through the form of being sworn in and getting their portfolios, that the new Administration had not, but the old Administration still had, the confidence of his Excellency—that the men whom he had called in and invited to be his advisers were the men whom he mistrusted and distrusted, while the men who had been discarded from his councils, the men who last Thursday went through the farce and mockery of a resignation, were the men who still retained his confidence.

It had been a most unusual proceeding. The Conservatives with their majority of eleven had really changed seats with the sportiveness of schoolboys playing a prank. This had not been lost on McGee:

If we look at the spirit which was visible and the scenes we witnessed last Thursday, and day by day afterwards, we will see everything to confirm us in that view. On Thursday morning the honourable gentlemen went through the solemn farce, or as it now turns out to have been on the evidence of the gentleman from Leeds, the amusing farce, the light comedy of resigning. But never surely did Ministry resign in such excellent good humour. Instead of looking like losing men they looked like men who had won. From what has since turned out it is evident that the whole plan was arranged (cries of Order from the Macdonald side). Then the gibes and jokes and jests about changing sides, and offering the keys of desks, were all in consistency with the expectation of a successful result from a cunningly devised scheme. The honourable member for Leeds spoke about common sense, but nothing is more adverse to common sense than its counterfeit, a low, mole-like cunning. (Hear, Hear.)

Naturally these last unusually disparaging and taunting words caused a loud commotion from the Macdonald ranks. But McGee's voice was never drowned in turmoil, nor his manner perturbed by disturbance. He went soaringly on, carried away by a high moral wave. In a most characteristic

manner he gained now, as on many such occasions he was able to gain, an immense advantage from this tone of superiority which he successfully maintained. "When the rights of the people were assailed in England," he questioned, "what was the tone of the House of Commons? Bold speaking and outspoken candour." In support of this he heaped up his historical proof in abundance from the days of Magna Charta down to those of Wilkes and the Reform Bill:

> Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, those who held your position [in the British Parliament] had to put forth all their authority, and sometimes in vain, to restrain those bold, outspoken representatives of the people who would not be cheated of their rights by any dexterous caballing....

Old William Lyon Mackenzie, then sitting in his last Parliament, here broke in, "And won't now." Once again McGee's ready repartee, coining a poetic epithet, accentuated the gain made by this interruption:

> I am glad to hear that response from the oldest sentinel of public liberty in Canada.

So much for the attack. Was the defence as clever and cogent as the assault and exposure had been? The vague general outline of the party platform which had been given to the Assembly by William Patrick, member for South Grenville, when the names of the Cabinet were announced, was in Conservative eyes a significant failure. They were most anxious to hear in precise terms how far George Brown had compromised with his colleagues on the questions of the day. Why, McGee lightly retorted, the House had to wait five months for a policy at the hands of those honourable gentlemen who demand that their successors should have one ready, cut and dry, in as many hours. On Monday evening, the Ministry had only a few hours before been sworn into office, their seats had not yet been declared vacant, the writs had not yet been moved for their constituencies, and they were called upon to give an explanation, as if to form a policy was such plain sailing in Canada:

> I appeal to any man of candour, to any of the gentlemen opposite who is not blinded by passion or prejudice, if it really is such plain sailing in

Canada—if the people are so homogeneous—if there are no questions of creed, of tongue, of blood, of historic feud, that in eight or twelve hours, twelve men, coming together at the council board for the first time, can shape an official policy that they will afterwards like to come down and endorse as their policy for the future government of the country.

Very true and ingenious reasoning, if not wholly convincing. But McGee felt himself on stronger ground when carrying the war into the enemy's country, so he veered to a very attractive line of argument about fair play. The step taken on Monday evening was an outrage upon justice, and as such would be resented. There was no race or class of people in Canada who did not advocate "fair play." Canadians were not Sepoy slaves from the jungles of India, "who fawn and fawn only to obtain an opportunity to stab." No, Canadians were sprung from the European family, all of whom demanded fair play. The Scotch said "fair play, bonnie play;" "never asperse a man who is absent" was the characteristic of the Englishman, and he thought he knew enough of another race to know what their sense of honour and chivalry would lead them to do:

These were the sentiments that animated the people of the land ennobled by a Du Guesclin and a Bayard (hear, hear) and these were the sentiments which sprang from the hearts of the great body of the people of Upper and Lower Canada.

There had been a strenuous campaign to antagonize the Catholics against the new Ministry on account of George Brown's strongly voiced views on "popery," "Separate Schools," and "Lower Canada Domination." But McGee parried this very neatly, and turned attention from the main issue by a diverting little aside of sarcastic banter, which, judged by its reception, was equally appreciated on both sides of the House. He and his friends had never been ashamed to avow what they considered to be the essentials of the Catholic religion, but among these essentials he never yet found that portion of the Mosaic Law which demanded an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. He never found uncharitableness or the principle of attacking absent men a part of that religion. Those who professed it ought to

have given the new Administration a fair trial and been prepared to judge them by their acts and not judge them in advance:

> It must have been a rare sight to have seen the champions of Christendom who represented the constituencies of Lambton (M. Cameron) and Terrebonne (L. S. Morin) trembling for the safety of the ark of Israel. The country would, however, know that their anxiety for the ark of Israel was far less in intensity than their solicitude about the treasury box. (Laughter and cheers.)

The attempt to disparage the Liberals as lacking in loyalty to the Queen he handled with energy and estimated very pointedly at its true worth. The fine speeches that were made about the respect due to the Queen and about the rudeness and disrespect to the sovereign of the motion of E. U. Piche, member for Berthier, would, in England, "where loyalty was undoubted," be laughed at. The true English loyalist was not always trumpeting his loyalty forth to the world, he was satisfied it had root in the heart and was perfectly easy respecting it:

> It is your unsteady, nervous kind of loyalist who takes alarm at the voice of Democracy, but true loyalists bow to the voice of the people. (Hear, hear.)

Towards the end of this zealous speech, D'Arcy McGee attained a calmer, higher and characteristic note. The party politician was eclipsed by the statesman who caught a glimpse of the future of a united Canada foreshadowed in the union of the Brown-Dorion forces. He would have welcomed the Brown-Dorion combination as a truce to religious war, "which has so long and fiercely waged in this country." If such men were able to work honestly together, "and no one would rise and impute to any of them dishonest motives," it would have been a proof that the two provinces could work together well. It would have been a practical answer to the demand for the dissolution of the Union. They would have been twelve hostages for the preservation of the Union. As a Unionist, as a lover of the country, and as one who had not abandoned the hope of seeing the people

of Canada working out their destiny with one heart and will, he hailed their appointment with great and undisguised satisfaction.

So ended this great political speech. Even in the cold distance of to-day it is a stirring, entertaining address. But when it was delivered it had an energy and a fervour about it, a force and a justness in its dramatic appeal for parliamentary liberty, a life and movement and climax, very hard to equal in Canadian political speeches.

Furthermore, this closing was typical of McGee. He consciously and conscientiously endeavoured to uphold the high and elevated principles behind politics and parliamentary work. He sought zealously and laboriously, even in the midst of party warfare and personal conflict, to relate his parliamentary speeches to broad, general, fundamental truths of political science and history and constitutional development. He chose great subjects—historic empires, historic characters, national rights, religious toleration, and his own splendid visions of the future of Canada. And such great themes naturally lifted his speeches to a higher plane, just as he represented the idea of Confederation elevating the "provincial mind and provincial politicians:"

> The provincial mind, it would seem, under the inspiration of a great question, leaped at a single bound out of the slough of mere mercenary struggles for office, and took post on the higher and honourable ground from which alone this great subject can be taken in, in all its dimensions. We find in the journals and in the speeches of public men in the Lower Provinces a discussion of the first principles of government, a discussion of the principles of constitutional law, and an intimate knowledge and close application of the leading facts in constitutional history, which gives, to me at least, the satisfaction and assurance that if we never went further in the matter we have put an end for the present, and I hope for long, to bitterer and smaller controversies. We have given the people some sound mental food, and to every man who has a capacity for discussion we have given a topic upon which he can fitly exercise his powers, no longer gnawing at a file, and wasting his abilities in the poor effort of advancing the ends of some paltry faction or party.

D'Arcy McGee could scarcely have put into better words the ideal behind his own speeches, both as a standard for

himself and as a tonic for others. The unanimous verdict of his contemporaries was that political discussion in this country was of a distinctly higher tone than it would have been if D'Arcy McGee had never come to Canada.

And more, political knowledge and understanding were much more widely disseminated than if D'Arcy McGee had never come to Canada. The country had come to look to him for the vivid and imaginative presentation of great public questions which enabled all classes of the community to realize their importance. As it was said, D'Arcy McGee was the link between the people and their representatives in Parliament. He created in thousands of minds an intelligent interest in our country and its political destinies. He laboured as no other public Canadian man has before or since, to increase the interest felt by the people of the country, not alone in politics, but in all intellectual pursuits. In all the principal towns of Canada, and in many of the smaller ones, he had lectured repeatedly in behalf of various benevolent and literary societies, and he never did so without imparting both instruction and delight.

D'Arcy McGee's eloquence, his oratory, was the crown and flower of his marvellous and varied abilities. The facility with which, under all circumstances, he could draw on the rich resources of his mind, his fancy, his memory, and his heart, to the joy and edification of all men, was the glory of his day. This great gift he was now to use in Canada on its most imperishable theme. In making Confederation an idea understood, valued and held precious by the people from Sarnia to Halifax, D'Arcy McGee's transcendent abilities found the most compelling and fitting work which had ever fallen to them. Away beyond the realm of party and sectional selfishness, of racial and religious strife, he pointed his hearers to a vision of a nation and a national life united, self-reliant, strong, pressing on to higher things. His persuasive eloquence drew the people together and kindled them with his own fire.

CHAPTER XV

THE NATION-BUILDER

There is a name I would fain approach with befitting reverence, for it casts athwart memory the shadow of all those qualities that man admires in man. It tells of one in whom the generous enthusiasm of youth was but mellowed by the experience of cultured manhood; of one who lavished the warm love of an Irish heart on the land of his birth, yet gave a loyal and true affection to the land of his adoption; who strove with all the power of genius to convert the stagnant pool of politics into a stream of living water; who dared to be national in the face of provincial selfishness, and impartially liberal in the teeth of sectarian strife; who from Halifax to Sandwich sowed broadcast the seeds of a higher national life, and with persuasive eloquence drew us closer together as a people, pointing out to each what was good in the other, wreathing our sympathies and blending our hopes—yes! one who breathed into our New Dominion the spirit of a proud self-reliance, and first taught Canadians to respect themselves. Was it a wonder that a cry of agony rang throughout the land when murder, foul and most unnatural, drank the life-blood of Thomas D'Arcy McGee![1]

A heroic hour had struck in the history of our country. There was a "work of noble note" to be done, and the men of the day, thrusting behind them all minor matters, all petty disputes and narrow jealousies, rose in stature as they bent their best endeavours to accomplish a truly great and permanent result.

[1] *Canada First, or Our New Nationality*, an address by W. A. Foster, Q. C., in Toronto, 1871.

By 1864, both in the Maritime Provinces and in Canada, events had moved toward union. When the construction of the Intercolonial road at an early day seemed hopeless, the three Maritime Provinces, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, at their session in the winter of 1864, severally passed resolutions authorizing their respective governments to enter negotiations and hold a convention to arrange all details for their political, legislative, and fiscal union. This convention was to meet in September at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. A few weeks after the Maritime determination had been taken, a most unheard-of coalition was formed in Canada, between the leaders of the Reform and Conservative parties—between George Brown and John A. Macdonald. The object of the coalition, it has been seen, was to find a solution for the sectional antagonism and political deadlock which had befallen the Province of Canada. That solution, it was hoped, would be found by adopting a federal system, to comprise all central and eastern British North America. This involved a meeting between representatives of the five provinces it was hoped to unite.

The proposed Maritime Convention at Charlottetown gave an immediate opportunity, and the Canadians were allowed to utilize it. They were extended an invitation to lay before the others, when there assembled, the wider Canadian scheme. These Canadian delegates were selected on the same coalition principles as the Government they represented. The Convention likewise had been lifted out of party conflict. Dr. Tupper, the leader of the Government of Nova Scotia, had included in his deputation not only Henry and Dickey, his own supporters, but Archibald and McCully, long and well-known leaders of the Liberal party. Tilley from New Brunswick had taken with him Chandler and Gray as Conservative representatives as well as Johnson and Steeves, his Liberal allies; and Prince Edward Island had also representatives of both parties among her delegates, Gray, Coles, Pope, Palmer and Macdonald.

Towards the creating and strengthening of the national

spirit which lay behind and prompted these simultaneous non-party endeavours in five different centres to create one great, united land, D'Arcy McGee made a distinctive and indispensable contribution.

This proposal of a British American Union was not new. As far back as the year 1800 the Hon. Mr. Uniacke of Nova Scotia had submitted to the Imperial authorities a scheme for the union of all the colonies. Chief Justice Sewell and Sir John Beverley Robinson had each formed at different times a similar project before the Union of the Canadas was effected in 1840. During the last decade of this Union, since the representation difficulties had been growing acute, there had been much academic talk of a larger alliance as the solution which would eventually lead to the greatest things. Alexander Galt's endeavour in 1858 was the most definite and noteworthy effort of the period. As far as Canada alone was concerned, the present status of the movement grew naturally out of it. Brown's important Committee was based on Galt's original motion. As D'Arcy McGee put it, it now looked as if the dream of Colonial Union "which had been dreamed by such wise and good men.....must have been a sort of vision—a vision foreshadowing forthcoming natural events in a clear intelligence: a vision—I say it without irreverence, for the events concern the lives of millions living, and yet to come—resembling those seen by the Daniels and Josephs of old, foreshadowing the trials of the future, the fate of tribes and peoples, the rise and fall of dynasties."

Yet, the great question had hitherto, and still, in fact, floated aloof. For the people as a whole, it had not life or interest. "Whatever the private writer in his closet may have conceived," McGee said, with a right understanding, in his famous Confederation speech in the Canadian Parliament on February 9th, 1865, "whatever the individual statesman may have designed, so long as the public mind was uninterested in the adoption, even in the discussion of a change in our position so momentous as this, the union of these separate Provinces, the individual laboured in vain—perhaps, Sir, not wholly in vain, for

although his work may not have borne fruit then, it was kindling a fire that would ultimately light up the whole political horizon and herald the dawn of a better day for our country and our people."

And now the golden moment of opportunity had come; the question itself was at the door; partisan politics was suspended to solve it. "Events stronger than advocacy, events stronger than men, have come in at last like the fire behind the invisible writing to bring out the truth of these writings and to impress them upon the mind of every thoughtful man who has considered the position and probable future of these provinces."[1] With the opportunity came also the divinely gifted leader and teacher of the people with his glory of words to make the vision of their new nation a thing familiar and beloved to all—to the thinkers and the common people alike. He pointed them to something to be worked for gladly and proudly, to be sought for solemnly and prayerfully, and when obtained to be cherished dearer and more precious than life itself.

The Fathers of Confederation were many; and each one brought to his country's altar the highest powers and talents which within him lay. With no wish to individualize unduly, but merely by way of illustration, one or two of McGee's most prominent colleagues may be mentioned. John A. Macdonald, once he was converted, exerted to the utmost his winning, persuasive power over men and his ability to work out and analyze practical and constitutional forms of government and the distribution of authority and functions. George E. Cartier likewise, when in the end he was convinced, successfully threw the weight of his influence into counselling and guiding Lower Canada into acceptance of the larger union in which they had hitherto feared their particular interests of race and religion would be swallowed up. Alexander Galt, who had championed Federation with the farsighted reasoning of a statesman in the days of cold and heedless indifference, now gave to the common weal his matchless ability in handling Canadian finances. He inspired, as no other could have done, a faith and confi-

[1] McGee in his speech of Feb. 9th, 1865.

dence in the financial, commercial, and fiscal soundness of the proposed state. George Brown gave himself. He trampled under foot his deepest personal prejudices and passions in order to further the great national plan which alone would solve worthily the Upper Canadian problem he had been working upon for years. And likewise all the others; each man brought his characteristic contribution to aid in the furtherance of the great work. D'Arcy McGee's offering can best be understood by saying that he stamped the movement with its ideal and inspiring character. It came to have a soul, and it was D'Arcy McGee who gave it this soul.

For the majority of people, D'Arcy McGee's Confederation speeches and writings lifted the whole subject, not exactly out of politics, but up to a plane where political and moral ideas met. Many things which the people, under the enchantment of his presence and his voice, could not have fully understood, helped to accomplish this. His hearers did not always apprehend his persuasive reasoning, his learning, and his wealth of historic and contemporary illustration; and they were not always familiar with the facts of foreign and domestic politics and of constitutional development he presented, nor with the glory of the great names and the great words he culled from our own parliamentary records and those of the Mother of Parliaments; yet they were mastered and impressed by the fullness of his knowledge. Moreover, his fervid words aroused their feeling of civic duty, and the man's own life and work, his genuine depth of conviction, and the unmistakable proofs that his whole heart was in the matter, gave force and depth to the orator's speech.

A pertinent yet not too detailed example of how McGee habitually gave his hearers a breadth of survey which included the great affairs of history, of nations, and of life, and blotted out of consideration petty material details, may be found in his article, *A Plea for a British American Nationality*.[1] He had been considering the pecuniary reasons which were advanced for Canada becoming one with

[1] *British American Magazine*, August, 1863.

the American Republic. But he turned aside, impatient of such a line of reasoning. He must find a better way to combat material inducements than with material objections. He would join issue "not on pecuniary advantages, but on broader and better grounds." Then his argument soared. "If ever a people of the New World were called to prove their capacity for self-examination and self-guidance, it is the British Americans of our day." Following the development of this theme, McGee asked: "What kind of a country do men fight to uphold?" And his answer came thus: "What men love best they defend best; what they truly believe in, for that they will bravely die. Enthusiasm is to war as the stream to the mill-wheel..... Whoever or whatever excites this irresistible spirit, whether for a creed or a constitution, an idea or a chief, brings into the field a living power, sufficient to combat the most serious disparities and to overthrow the most formidable obstacles." And so on the article rolls, touching on such subjects or illustrations as the Prussian dynasty swept before the cannon of Jena and afterwards rising victorious through "the inspiration of poet voices which sang the common fatherland from the Baltic to the Tyrol and the Rhine." Austria's experience follows; then Italy's, where "enthusiasm for Italian unity, excited by the writings, speeches, and sacrifices of so many gifted Italians....has invested the descendants of the Dukes of Savoy with the power and resources of the Caesars." Thus to the end, where McGee achieved the seerlike international vision of a greater Europe which would include America, and which has only very recently become a practical question in the politics of this continent:

> In pleading again the cause of British American nationality, we do so on this among other grounds, that the bare idea is capable of exciting in our breasts that force which only patriotic enthusiasm can give. It is an idea which begets a whole progeny, kindred to itself—such as ideas of extension, construction, permanence, grandeur, and historical renown. It expands as we observe it, opening up long, gleaming perspectives into both time and space. It comprehends the erection of a new North American nation, inheriting among other advantages the law of nations for its shelter and guidance. For, whether the disunited Republican States

south of us, shall finally come together under one government or not, it is quite clear that if two or more really independent powers, founded on distinct schemes of polity, should hereafter stand side by side on this continent, the international law of Christendom, or some substitute for it, must regulate the relations of neighbourhood between such powers.

Hitherto, as our readers are aware, the United States have not considered themselves included in what they persist in calling "the European system" of the balance of power, and the international justice symbolized by that balance.....But should Mexico, under the guarantee of France, recover her lost unity.....and British America, under the protection of England, attain to the dignity of a kingdom or principality—dependent on the Imperial Crown.....then the two great Western powers of Europe would feel equally with Mexico and British North America, the importance of extending to this continent that code under which, by the admission of Wheaton, the highest American authority, the Old World has made "a considerable advance both in the theory of international morality and in the practice of justice among states."....

The union of British America into one nationality would, then, according to our view, perpetuate our connection with the European family of states, and make this country instrumental in bringing the whole of America within the circle of international law. To enable us to play this distinguished part before both the New and Old Worlds, it is essential that we should have first a constitution framed upon our own *sensus communis*: the offspring and image of our own intelligence; a constitution to love and to live for; a cherished inheritance for our children; in comprehension, noble; in justice, admirable; in wisdom, venerable.

Carrying on this noble propaganda from Halifax to Sarnia was no new work for McGee. From his earliest days in Canada there had been the affinity of a great nature for a great issue between McGee and this endeavour. He had a missionary zeal to convert the national mind upon the various factors of the immense problem as he himself took hold of them one after another and prepared his own mind upon them. He had become saturated with the subject, and wielded as a result the tremendous power over people which great and accurate knowledge always commands. In November, 1863, he told his Toronto audience, when speaking on *The Future of Canada*, that he had but recently spoken in seven of the principal towns in Canada as well as in the cities of the Maritime Provinces on the same text, and "every time it suggested something new." "I am embarrassed, not with the meagreness, but with the richness and fullness of the topic and the amplitude of the material

connected with it," were his words on another occasion, and the result was a deep, rapid, steady, onflowing volume of argument which was bound to carry the day.

The constitutional difficulties between Upper and Lower Canada had been the first reason for McGee's attention turning to this great subject. From his first arrival he had been untiring in his researches to find the best solution for the friction, the injustice, and the evils produced by the Act of Union of 1840. He studied with the greatest minuteness the constitutional history of Canada from the British advent there. He saw into the facts of each era, and with unceasing toil as speaker and writer he disclosed and elucidated them in clear and popular language which yet never lost its attractive literary style and form. It was due to this work of his that a great majority of the Canadian people came to understand the constitution they had, how it originated, how it compared with that of other lands, and, as a corollary to this, the kind of constitution they now needed and where it should originate.

McGee's speech in the Canadian Assembly on May 2nd, 1860, is an admirable example of this spade-work on the Act of Union which he did for the people. He began by outlining how Canada had been governed since first British rule was established. For fourteen years she had been governed by a military executive; for seventeen ruled as a Crown Colony, by a Governor and Council; then for upwards of forty ruled as two distinct provinces with one Chamber filled by election and one by nomination in each section; since then she had been governed by a single legislature, and since 1854 both branches of this had become elective. He carried his hearers back to the debates in the Imperial Parliament when the Quebec Act and the Constitutional Act were passed. He demonstrated exactly how these instruments of government had been devised and that each was the product of a particular era and a particular set of circumstances as they were viewed in England. He followed this with a brief account of their working in Canada; 1822 found the petitioners from Lower Canada at the bar of the House of Commons in England,

again in 1823 Papineau went to London to obtain redress of grievances, and by 1828 the "Canada Committee" of the Imperial Parliament reported that no change short of "an impartial, conciliatory, and constitutional system" would be attended by the desired effect—the pacification of the Province at large. Then in 1832 William Lyon Mackenzie appeared in London, by 1834 he was followed by a report of the "Committee on Grievances" of Upper Canada, and finally the rebellion of 1837 and '38 challenged the attention of Imperial statesmen. "The swell and clamour of this storm had not disappeared when the high commanding voice of Lord Durham was heard above all other voices propounding remedies."

In itself, McGee lauded Durham's report—"a document above all praise, above all price; it is such a report as Timoleon might have made to the Corinthian Senate, when sent to deliver their descendants, the Syracusans, from the double-headed monster, despotism and anarchy." But what he was intent upon impressing on his hearers was that the Union and the system of government and distribution of powers which were established in Canada as a result of it were set up as necessary from an Imperial point of view. They were to prevent the recurrence of the events of 1837 and '38 and to strengthen the connection with Great Britain. McGee's early persistence, that whatever change was to be made in Canada's constitution should originate with Canadians, was one of the most outstanding features of his campaign. He drove the point home in this speech by recounting the circumstances under which the new form of government was set up. The Act of Union was passed in the Imperial Parliament after Canadian affairs had occupied the House for six or eight days:

> I do not pretend to say that all considerations local to Canada were underrated or omitted from the deliberations of the Melbourne Administration—I do not even say that the Imperial view they took was not the view which the most patriotic Canadian—reasoning now after the fact—might not have taken could he have foreseen its actual consequences; but I do say, that the measure of Union passed in 1840 was conceived in an Imperial spirit, that it was urged on by Imperial, rather than Provincial motives and interests, and that advantage was taken of the temporary

agitation and reaction in this country to force it, all imperfect as it was, into premature operation.....

It was resolved upon in England before Lord Sydenham left; and that energetic nobleman prided himself especially on the celerity with which he carried the foregone conclusion of his colleagues into effect. He gave the Special Council of Lower Canada less than a week's time to deliberate —he gave the Parliament of Upper Canada a fortnight; after listening to both he heeded neither; he confessed in his private correspondence that he thought the best thing for Lower Canada "would be ten years more of despotism;" but *he* could not personally afford to wait ten years; he had arrived in the last week of October, 1839, and he boasted within two months from that date, before the end of December, he had carried the Union, so far as Canada could assent or make submission.

Such was the origin of their Canadian constitution from a Canadian point of view. McGee compared it with the British constitution—"the work of many generations of men—the foundations of which, like Cologne Cathedral, were the work of one age, the superstructure of another, the completion of a third, the embellishment of a fourth." Again, he compared it with the American constitution, "the product of the wisest men, gathered in from the Kennebec to the Altamaha, sitting in conclave under the presidency of a Washington, or engaged in the discussions of the 'Federalist' or the Forum for seven whole years together!" Compared with these, Canada could point to no "chivalric gathering such as met at Runnymede; no learned assembly, such as sat at Annapolis." The free voice of her people had not formed the Act of Union. At the time there did not even exist a fair representation of the people: "it was carried by sheer Imperial influence, executive address, and the advance of £1,500,000 sterling for public works." "The Sydenham loan carried the Sydenham Union, and the instrument thus framed deserves for its origin no other reverence than such as may fairly be attached to its authors."

However, McGee proceeded to demonstrate, in rapid and ever onward pushing argument, that whatever little reverence might be attached to the origin of the Union, it had during its twenty years' operation lost even that little:

That Union, such as it *was*, no longer exists; it has been frittered away, year by year, by Imperial legislation and by Provincial legislation, till it now hangs in tatters upon the expanding frame of this colony. Of its sixty-two clauses, no less than thirty have been repealed by statute within the last ten years.

McGee went into those clauses in detail for the benefit of his audience, and then dealt with "the little left." The twelfth section, decreeing an equality of representation independent of population, was left, and the forty-fifth, vaguely describing the powers of the Governor-General and the all-important "orders-in-council," was left. Speaking on the equality clause, he said:

It was introduced avowedly for the purpose of "swamping the French;" but that purpose has been defeated—and I rejoice that it has been defeated. It was a deliberate conspiracy against the rights of one set of people—flagitious in the conception, and wholly indefensible in the enactment; why, then, should it be maintained and enforced against another set? Are we, of Lower Canada, to rule our fellow-subjects of Upper Canada, on the Pagan principle of the *lex talionis*? or rather on the Christian principle "of doing unto others as we would be done by?" I do not say that we should place ourselves or our institutions—differing so widely as we do from Upper Canadians—at their mercy; I mean nothing of the kind; I have never entertained any such idea. No! I believe that a remedy can be found by Upper Canada for her wrongs and by Lower Canada ample safeguards for her rights.

There was another aspect of the Union Act on which McGee turned his searchlight. It was commonly said that it established responsible government. McGee outlined the acts and words of Lord Sydenham and Lord Metcalfe—his "ablest successor"—as well as the opinions of their superiors, the Colonial Secretaries, and demonstrated in a very conclusive climax that Lord Elgin, seven years after the Union, was the first who consistently acted on the theory of responsible government.

Thus McGee made the foundations and weaknesses of Canada's existing form of government well known to the people. And he made equally well known what he counselled to bring about improvement. No changes in party allegiance caused the faintest waver in his policy here. Alike as a Reformer and as a Conservative he refused to lend the

slightest countenance to the Representation by Population cry in its narrow, sectional form. He agreed the principle was just and should be applied to the composition of the Legislative Assembly, but it had to be accompanied by some simultaneous check introduced into the other parts of the system, before it could make an equitable solution for both provinces. And equally as a Reformer and as a Conservative McGee supported every motion that looked to the larger union as its goal. He began operations in this field at once and continued them with unflagging resolution. Adverse votes only increased the persuasiveness of his reasoning. Looked at thus, the kernel of his maiden speech was the necessity of preparation for the new era about to dawn in Canada. May 2nd, 1860, saw him speak to George Brown's resolutions affirming the necessity for constitutional changes and based on the articles of the Toronto Convention which agreed on the larger union as the desirable end. His speech that day, much of which has just been analyzed, was one of the longest and most closely reasoned he ever made on the floor of the House. But the vote stood 66 to 27 against Brown. In 1861 two speeches, more rhetorical, but with a solid basis of fact and some very diverting asides, one delivered in March and one in April, stand to McGee's credit. During the Sandfield Macdonald Administration, when Matthew Crooks Cameron revived William McDougall's motion of the year before on Representation by Population as a censure on the Government, McGee merely voted against it as he had done before on the same ground, that it was not conprehensive enough. His real work for federation at this time was done in connection with the Intercolonial Railway negotiations. However, as soon as the old Canadian constitutional problem appeared in the larger aspect, when George Brown asked for his Committee during the Taché-Macdonald Administration, McGee gave it his fullest support.

If the constitutional difficulty between the Canadas was the first fact of Canadian contemporary conditions which disclosed to McGee the need for a greater union, and which he in turn utilized to create a public opinion in favour of this solution, the second fact which gave him

a helpful opening was the Intercolonial negotiations. The Intercolonial project led on to the larger plan of expansion from ocean to ocean. This opened up much broader aspects of the subject, and McGee rose with the opportunity to a greater eminence, from which he could give his hearers a vision of far national horizons. In comparison with this theme, the mere constitutional trouble of the Canadas was a plodding detail which could afford glimpses of the glory-to-be only in the ultimate solution. The Intercolonial was directly linked up with the larger expansion from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The constitutional issue was one for definite, logical reasoning, persuasive, attractive, and as exhaustive as McGee could make it. But there was little scope for the play of passion, for the kindling of patriotic sentiment, or for high literary and poetic imagination, and all of these were included in McGee's gift, and in his vigorous, intrepid, and confident words were now requisitioned to direct the public opinion of all the provinces.

Not that D'Arcy McGee ever disregarded his basis of fact. No man's exposition of the desirability of union was divided more methodically or was more clearly presented under definite headings. His speech on *The Common Interest of British North America* at Halifax opened with the argument from association which was to prove that small means could produce great results only when united. The very Intercolonial Railway, what did it prove but the absolute necessity for intercolonial association? Canada could not build it alone, New Brunswick could not build it alone, Nova Scotia could not build it alone, but "their joint credit, skill, and resources could accomplish the common purpose." Secondly, he took the commercial argument. Extended markets, enhanced credits, hostile tariff barriers broken down, greater security and reputation were the counters in this field. Thirdly, came the immigration argument, a very popular one with him, which in brief might be indicated by his watchword, "The wide market makes the full ship." Although he did not use it at Halifax, as he was keeping it in reserve for his St. John speech, his fourth argument in this series was usually that of defence—

the great asset "in promptitude, in decision, in unanimity, and in effectiveness," union would be in the time of war, as well as the "security for peace which a larger political organization has over a smaller one." And there was yet another—rather, two more, but very intimately connected—through which he made his strongest appeal. "Although I have usually put forward defensive and commercial reasons..... I confess to you frankly that I place as high, or even higher than either, reasons more purely political." These McGee then divided into reasons of political necessity and reasons of patriotism.

The argument of political necessity, as McGee read the signs of the times, had three main divisions. There was the necessity arising from the changing relations of the colonies with the Motherland; the necessity from the changes in the republic to the south; and those again which arose out of the internal politics of the colonies themselves. McGee used his insight into these facts to impress upon all the absolute surety of the old order passing away and a new one taking its place. The only uncertainty was, were they as a people going to be prepared to take a voice and an active, conscientious part in shaping the new according to their wants, or were they going to be merely passive units drifting wherever the future or the more active powers in the world decreed they should go? The following were the salient points in this division of his theme, as he presented them in his parliamentary Confederation speech. "The Colonies," he declared, "had had three warnings:"

> The first is from England, and is a friendly warning. England has warned us by several matters of fact, according to her custom, rather than verbiage that the colonies have entered upon a new era of existence, a new phase in their career. She has given us this warning in several different shapes—when she gave us "Responsible Government"—when she approved Free Trade—when she repealed the Navigation Laws—and when, three or four years ago, she commenced that series of official despatches in relation to militia and defence which she has ever since poured in on us, in a steady stream, always bearing the same solemn burthen—"Prepare! prepare!" These warnings gave us notice that the old order of things between the colonies and the Mother Country had ceased, and that a new order must take its place....We may grumble or not at the

necessity of preparation England imposes upon us, but, whether we like it or not, we have, at all events, been told that we have entered upon a new era in our military relations to the rest of the Empire.

McGee dwelt for some time on these despatches from the Duke of Newcastle. All the relationship with the Mother Country had centred about the subject of defence during the previous four years. He then passed on to "the American warning:"

Republican America gave us her notices in times past, through her press, and her demagogues, and her statesmen, but of late days she has given us much more intelligible notices—such as the notice to abrogate the Reciprocity Treaty, and to arm the Lakes, contrary to the provisions of the Convention of 1818. She has given us another notice in imposing a vexatious passport system; another in her avowed purpose to construct a ship canal round the Falls of Niagara, so as "to pass war vessels from Lake Ontario to Lake Erie;" and yet another, the most striking one of all, has been given to us, if we will only understand it, by the enormous expansion of the American army and navy.

At this point McGee read the House the figures for America's war preparations in 1861, and followed them by those of 1865. It is sufficient here to say that where there were not quite 15,000 men in the army of 1861, there were now 800,000 actually in service, and all other departments had increased in proportion. "But," he continued, "it is not the figures which give the worst view of the fact—for England still carries more guns afloat even than our well-armed neighbours;" and he proceeded instead to dilate on the change in the spirit of the people with most vehement emphasis and surpassing rhetorical skill:

But it is not the revolution wrought in the minds of men of great intelligence that is most to be deplored—for the powerful will of such men may compel their thoughts back again to a philosophy of peace; no, it is the mercenary and military interests created....by the armies out of uniform who prey upon the army; by the army of contractors who are to feed and clothe and arm the million; by that other army, the army of tax-collectors, who cover the land, seeing that no industry escapes unburthened, no possession unentered, no affection, even, untaxed. Tax! tax! tax! is the cry from the rear! Blood! blood! blood! is the cry from the front! Gold! gold! gold! is the chuckling undertone which comes up from the mushroom millionaires, well named a shoddy aristocracy;

nor do I think the army interest, the contracting interest, and the tax-gathering interest, the worst results that have grown out of this war. There is another and equally serious interest—the change that has come over the spirit, mind, and principles of the people, that terrible change which has made war familiar and even attractive to them. When the first battle was fought—when, in the language of the Duke of Wellington, the first "butcher's bill was sent in"—a shudder of horror ran through the length and breadth of the country; but by and by, as the carnage increased, no newspaper was considered worth laying on the breakfast table unless it contained the story of the butchery of thousands of men..... Nothing short of the news of ten, fifteen, twenty thousand human beings struck dead in one day would satisfy the jaded palate of men craving for excitement, and such terrible excitement as attended the wholesale murder of their fellow-creatures. Have these sights and sounds no warning addressed to us? Are we as those who have eyes and see not; ears and hear not; reason, neither do they understand?....Let us remember this; that when the three cries among our next neighbours are money, taxation, blood, it is time for us to provide for our own security.[1]

After repeating in different accents this solemn warning from the United States, McGee passed to Canada herself, and in a diverting way merely recalled their constitutional difficulties. He observed that when there had been five Administrations within two years, it was full time to look about for some permanent remedy for such a state of things:

Constitutional government among us had touched its lowest point when it existed only by the successful search of a messenger or a page, after a member, willingly or unwillingly, absent from his seat. Any one might in those days have been the saviour of his country. All he had to do was, when one of the five successive governments which arose in two years was in danger, to rise in his place, say "Yea!" and presto, the country was saved.

In this happy change of treatment from the gruesome American war annals to the entertaining asides on the Canadian parliamentary situation, it is easy to see the gifts and graces McGee had to aid in qualifying him as a popular speaker and leader in a democratic movement. But what strikes one most is how naturally he looks upon current events with a historian's eye. He handled all the material

[1] This passage may appear strained today. There was, however, no little foundation for McGee's alarmist cries, in the anti-Canadian campaign of the *New York Herald* and other Jefferson Bricks.

with such unstrained and abounding knowledge, he was sure to inspire confidence in his interpretation.

There was yet another and a worthier motive which McGee brought to bear on the case. He called it the patriotic argument. "Are we capable," he once asked, "of being inspired with sentiments of a saving patriotism?" It was when he reached this stage of his subject that McGee stamped the campaign for union with his own personality. It partook of the great visions among which he lived, and he lifted the subject into the realm of permanent principles. The points in the question might be small, but the principles at stake were eternal. His ability to do this, in so far as it can be defined beyond saying it was simply a manifestation of the moral and poetic and literary greatness of the man, lay in his wonderful geographic imagination, his deep feeling for historical continuity, and his ability to touch all things with the light of poetry. The following passage affords one characteristic example:

> When I advocate our future union I only follow Nature; the text is given us by Nature; it is for man to make the commentary. All states and forms of ancient and modern civilization have been the result of human intelligence, supplementing and supplying the requirements of Nature. Voices cried aloud from the void, and man hastened to respond. Thus, in the Plain of Egypt, what was needed of old was elevation, and man multiplied the column, the obelisk, and the pyramid; thus, what was needed in modern Europe was expansion, and man invented the mariner's compass, the ocean ship, and the art of navigation. So uncouth rivers have become celebrated in song, and obscure scenes, glorified by the footsteps of romance, attract wanderers in search of health or pleasure from the ends of the earth. With the same cry do the gigantic dislocated fragments of British America appeal to our hearts, our senses, and our reason; there they lie, outstretched, longing for unity—if we are a generation worthy to organize a nation, assuredly the materials are abundant and are at hand.[1]

Or again, take this passage:

> I repeat, what do we need to construct such a nationality? Territory, resources by sea and land, civil and religious freedom—these we already have. Four millions we already are—four millions culled from the races

[1] Speech in St. John, August, 1863.

that for a thousand years have led the van of Christendom. When the sceptre of Christian civilization trembled in the enervate grasp of the Greeks of the Lower Empire, then the Western tribes of Europe, fiery, hirsute, clamorous, but kindly, snatched at the falling prize, and placed themselves at the head of human affairs. We are the children of these fire-tried kingdom founders, of these ocean discoverers of Western Europe. Analyze our aggregate population: we have more Saxons than Alfred had when he founded the English realm; we have more Celts than Brien had when he put his heel on the neck of Odin; we have more Normans than William had when he marshalled his invading host along the strand of Falaise. We have the laws of St. Edward and St. Louis; Magna Charta and the Roman Code; we speak the speeches of Shakespeare and Bossuet; we copy the constitution which Burke and Somers and Sidney and Sir Thomas More lived or died to secure or save. Out of these august elements, in the name of the future generations who shall inhabit all the vast regions we now call ours, I invoke the fortunate genius of a united British America, to solemnize law with the moral sanctions of religion and to crown the fair pillar of our freedom with its only appropriate capital, lawful authority, so that, hand in hand, we and our descendants may advance steadily to the accomplishment of a common destiny.[1]

The geographical weakness of Canada—length without breadth—challenged attention. McGee's immigration eagerness was largely due to his anxiety to give Canada a back country. As he once put it:

Our population, so far, is the most peculiarly distributed of any to be found anywhere on all this side of the world. Our great central valley from Cornwall to the Saguenay is banked on both sides with settlements, facing to the front, and not extending, on an average, except up the latera valley of the Ottawa, and in the direction of the Eastern Townships, fifty miles from the St. Lawrence; we have thus a long, narrow riband of population, one-seventh the breadth of its own length, as singularly shaped a country as eye ever beheld. East of the junction of the Saguenay with the St. Lawrence, our population is carried down to the Gulf by the south shore alone, while west of Cornwall it is found only to the north of the upper St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes. The peopled part of the Province thus presents the shape of a long, fantastic letter "S"—a waving Lesbian line, which, to my eye, is neither a line of beauty nor of grace, nor of defensive strength.[2]

However, when McGee turned from this to view "the ground plan on which we propose to erect our constitutional

[1] Speech in Halifax, July 21st, 1863.
[2] Speech, Legislative Assembly, April 25th, 1862.

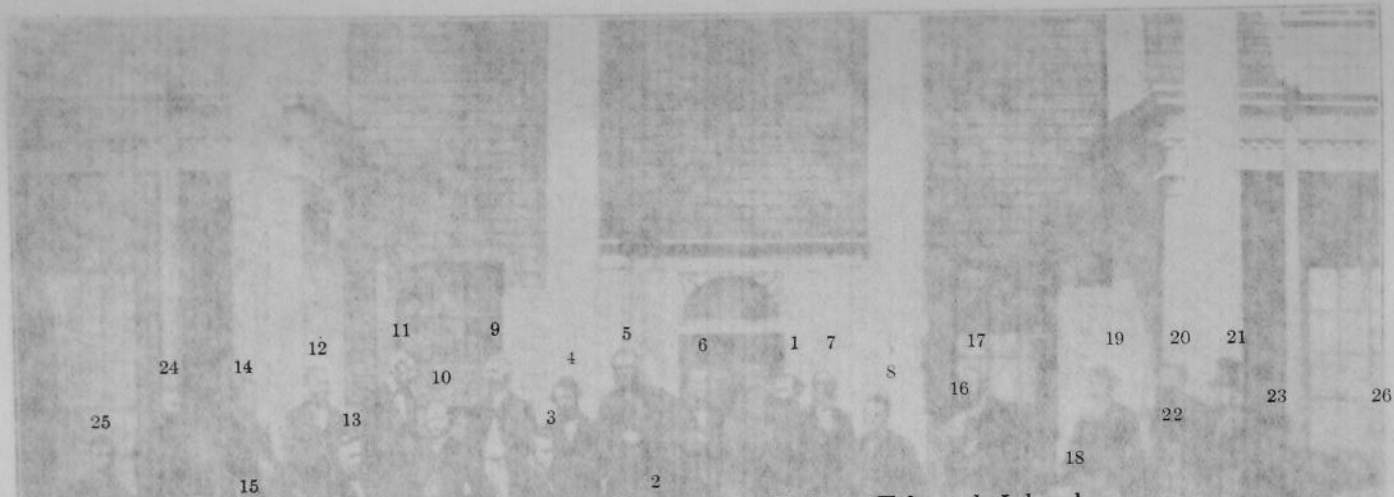
edifice,....its natural oneness was admirable to contemplate." This was a realm in which his smaller and nationally timid critics always felt they could show up the fallacies of his argument most easily. As one of them said, "Mr. McGee does not let a forest or a mountain or two stand between him and his goal." No, he did not. He thought right through them. And he carried his audience over them. It was his intuition, not his intellect, which spread out the mighty vistas of Canada before his spellbound hearers.

Such was the "ground plan;" but what of the constitutional superstructure which was to be erected thereon? Should they have a consolidated government, or a commercial league, a legislative union or a federation? In unfolding to the people the inherent characteristics of each of these systems and showing how they were or were not adapted to Canadian needs, McGee took the part both of a scholar and of a patriot. The *Zollverein* or commercial union he dismissed thus:

> If any one for a moment will remember that the trade of the whole front of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia gravitates at present alongshore to Portland and Boston, while the trade of Upper Canada, west to Kingston, has long gravitated across the Lakes to New York, he will see, I think, that a mere *Zollverein* treaty without a strong political end to serve, and some practical power at its back, would be, in our new circumstances, merely waste paper.

The consolidated union he disposed of in this clear and convincing way:

> If we had had, as was proposed, an Intercolonial Railway, twenty years ago, we might by this time have been perhaps, and only perhaps, in a condition to unite into one consolidated government; but certain politicians and capitalists having defeated that project twenty years ago, special interests took the place great general interests might by this time have occupied, vested rights and local ambitions arose and were recognized; and all these had to be admitted as existing in a pretty advanced stage of development when the late conferences were called together. The lesson to be learned from this squandering of quarter centuries by British Americans is this, that if we lose the present propitious opportunity, we may find it as hard a few years hence to get an audience, even for any kind of union (except democratic union), as we should have found it to get a

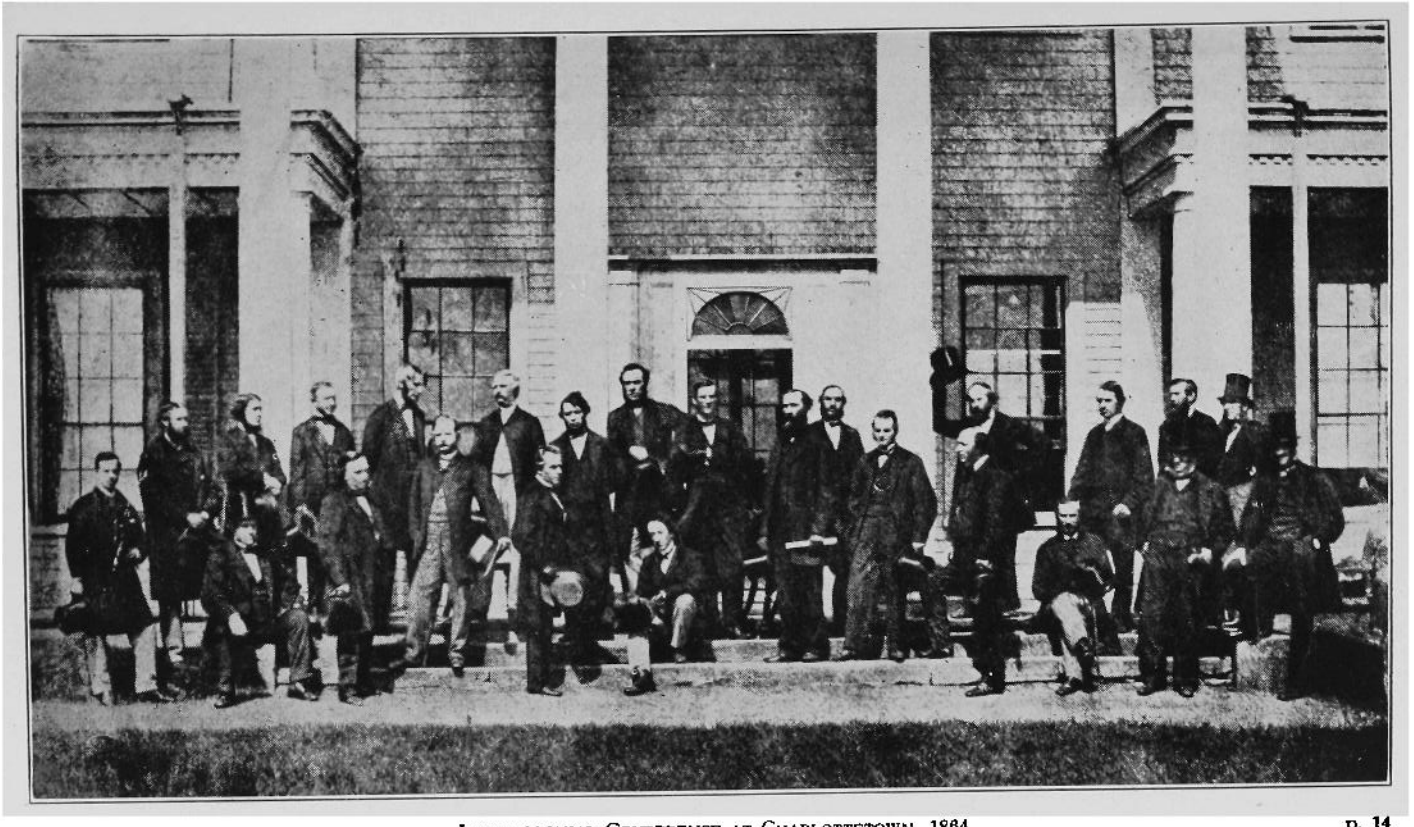


Convention at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island,

Of Delegates from the Legislatures of Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, to take into consideration the Union of the British North American Colonies.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1864

1. Col., the Hon. John Hamilton Gray, M. P. P., Prince Edward Island—CHAIRMAN OF CONVENTION.
2. The Hon. John A. Macdonald, M. P. P. *Attorney-General*, Canada West.
3. The Hon. George E. Cartier, M. P. P. *Attorney-General*, Canada East.
4. The Hon. Thomas D'Arcy McGee, M. P. P. *Minister of Agriculture*, Canada.
5. The Hon. Wm. A. Henry, M. P. P. *Attorney-General*, Nova Scotia.
6. The Hon. Wm. H. Steeves, M. E. C. New Brunswick.
7. The Hon John M. Johnson, M. P. P. *Attorney-General*, New Brunswick.
8. The Hon. Samuel Leonard Tilley, M. P. P. *Provincial* Secretary, New Brunswick.
9. The Hon. Robert Dickey, M. L. C. Nova Scotia.
10. Lt. Col., The Hon. John Hamilton Gray, M. P. P. New Brunswick.
11. The Hon. Edward Palmer, M. L. C. *Attorney-General*, Prince Edward Island.
12. The Hon. Edward Botsford Chandler, M. L. C. New Brunswick.
13. The Hon. H. L. Langevin, M. P. P. *Solicitor General*, Canada East.
14. The Hon. Charles Tupper, M. P. P. *Provincial Secretary*, Nova Scotia.
15. The Hon. A. J. Glat, M. P. P *Finance Minister*, Canada.
16. The Hon. Adams G. Archibald, M. P. P. Nova Scotia.
17. The Hon. Andrew G. McDonald, M. L. C. Prince Edward Island.
18. The Hon. Wm. Campbell, M. L. C. *Commissioner of Crown Land*, Canada.
19. The Hon. Wm. McDougall, M. P. P. *Provincial Secretary*, Canada.
20. The Hon. Wm. H. Pope, M. P. P. *Colonial Secretary*, Prince Edward Island.
21. The Hon. Jonathan McCully, M. L. C. Nova Scotia.
22. The Hon. George Coles, M. P. P. Prince Edward Island.
23. The Hon. George Brown, M. P. P. *President Executive Council*, Canada.
24. Major Bernard, *Secretary to the Attorney-General*, Canada West.
25. Mr. Charles Drinkwater, *Private Secretary to the Attorney-General*, Canada West.
26. William H. Lee, *Clerk Ex. Council*, Canada.



INTERCOLONIAL CONFERENCE AT CHARLOTTETOWN, 1864

hearing last year for a legislative union, from the long period of estrangement and non-intercourse which had existed between these provinces and the special interests which had grown up in the meantime in each of them.[1]

A federation was the one kind of union possible. Although the proposal was not new there were all sorts of notions afloat about the changes which would follow in its wake. Such a union, it was felt by many, would necessitate separation from England. In 1865, it must be remembered, the system of self-governing states within the Empire was untried. The very name Dominion had not come into use. Statesmen had experience of Grattan's Parliament, of the Canadian Legislative Union which had worked out responsible government in many sections, and of the New Zealand Federal Constitution of 1852, but they had no experience of such a constitution as it was proposed to set up in Canada. McGee prepared a very careful pamphlet on *Federal Governments Past and Present.* Both in this and in many speeches he emphasized how men must not be misled by names, but look into the real basis of the government. All monarchies were not alike, all republics were not alike, and all confederacies were not alike, and a federation might be either a republic or a monarchy. It is unnecessary to recount how fully McGee went into the distribution of powers in various federal partnerships. He emphasized the fact that a federal system not only invested the citizen with local duties but demanded "a healthy sense of responsibility and comprehension" of the general affairs. In addition, a federation "was capable of being so adapted as to promote internal peace and external security, and to call into action a genuine, enduring, and heroic patriotism."

But it was the spirit which would underlie the government and which would be strengthened and supported by the government that D'Arcy McGee was most anxious should engage the attention of the framers of the constitution. In Canada, on account of its history and geographical situation, there were two spirits or tendencies at work. One was in sympathy with the American and the

[1] Legislative Assembly, February 9th, 1865.

other with the British constitution. McGee's feelings about American government, society, manners, and education are well known. Sufficient now to say he argued with all his old-time fervour and facts about their instability and inconstancy. In contrast, he upheld the British system, conservative, stable, and cherishing authority and tradition. It is easy to see how intimately connected was McGee's religious and theological thinking with his political thinking. His religious views more than tinged his political outlook in this matter. The following paragraph from his article, *A Plea for a British American Nationality*, summarizes his reasoning:

> The modern age seems more and more to want, and the new spirit of the New World to exact, a wider degree of individual liberty and equality than is consistent with stability or longevity in the State, unless the principle of authority shall be as strongly fortified in the constitution as the love of liberty is among the people. Not that authority and liberty are at all incompatible; not that, rightly considered, they are even separable; but that liberty is active, exigent, perennial, and self-assertive; while authority, in our times, must be early introduced into the system of the State, widely known and felt over the land, carefully protected in its prerogatives, and recommended by word and example to the veneration of all the people. With us, liberty has nothing to fear except from the unworthiness of the people's own representatives; while should authority, endangered and dishonoured, perish out of our State system, it would soon be found, as it was found of old and of late, that the rent large enough to permit the removal of that palladium is also large enough to permit the triumphal entry of a dictator.

McGee maintained, as far as democracy was concerned, the important thing was for the people to have the determination of the kind of government in their own hand. If they elected to have a king or a prince, no exception on democratic grounds could be taken to such a ruler. Reasoning in this way, "a prospectus," as he liked to call it, which was very attractive to him, was the establishing of "a Canadian nationality under one of the sons of Her Majesty," Queen Victoria:

> Looking at the position, at this moment, of the English Monarchy on the one hand, and of the American Democracy on the other, is it too

much to assume that such a providential occasion or opportunity is now presented to the good people of all British America? It is not possible, and therefore not desirable, that we should seek to transfer to this crude soil of ours the delicate plant of old European loyalty, as it grew in the gardens of monasteries, on the parterres of palaces and the glacis of walled towns, in the Middle Ages. That flower of the feudal ages has perished out of many parts even of Europe, but finds shelter yet among the hedgerows of old England. What Lord Stanhope remarks of the increase of Hungarian loyalty in the days of Maria Theresa, because of her sex, her virtues, and her afflictions, is felt in a great degree towards our present gracious Sovereign, not only in England, but through all her dominions Happily for us, if we are to derive authority from abroad, we can find it united in Her Majesty the Queen with all the domestic virtues that can adorn the first lady of her age....When such is the sentiment....why do not statesmen seize the fortunate hour, to fix the character of the states and give stability to their institutions, their credit, and their character? Why not the united voice of British America be heard.... asking Her Majesty....to dedicate to this noble service of perfecting the liberties of these colonies, one of her sons....so that her descendants and those of her people beyond the Atlantic may conjointly perpetuate to all their posterity that combination of liberty and law of which we recognize the antitype in the British Constitution?[1]

Along with "Mr. McGee's little British prince," according to his first prospectus,[2] it would be necessary also to establish a court, a peerage, and the law of primogeniture. Fortunately, in his later working out of the problem these trappings were discarded, as likely to produce a reaction against the cause he wished to benefit.

Naturally however, such a concrete, picturesque proposal was not allowed to die. It was taken up greedily. Editorials, poems, special articles, and comments of all kinds criticized, emphasized, and amplified McGee's original suggestion. The following taken from *A King for a Colony*, by Martin F. Tupper, is typical—and probably the *reductio ad Tupperum* that led McGee to say no more of peerage and court:

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[1] *Plea for British American Nationality*, British American Magazine August, 1863.

[2] Public letter to Daniel Macarow of Kingston, C. W., on June 19th 1863.

A Throne—with its titles and places and gifts,
A Peerage, a Court, and all parties made one
By loyalty's wholesome romance, that uplifts
And quickens a nation its new race to run—
This, this is the plan to make Canada strong,
To keep her united and English and free,
To save her at once from unneighbourly wrong,
And start her aright both by land and by sea.

. . . . . .

Let Canada's magnates be honoured and raised
By office and rank, as the chiefs of their race:
Let patriot zeal be promoted and praised,
And the name of each lordship be linked to a place
Toronto, Quebec, Montreal, and St. John's,
Hamilton, Halifax, Ottawa—these,
With scores of like names, and as rich in great sons,
Might yield them their titles in varied degrees:
Let the duke, and the earl, and the baron be there,
Each in the just grade of his wealth and his worth,
And the people's free voices be glad to declare
Who best should be ranged with the nobles of earth.

Such had been McGee's effort to arouse the interest of his countrymen in the idea and the planning of the New Confederation. Now the urging of its advocates and the logic of events were fast bringing the dreamed-of project to reality.

August, September, and October, 1864, saw an astonishing amount of travelling and exchange of hospitality between Canada and the Maritime Provinces. As we have seen, D'Arcy McGee had several times declared that intercolonial ignorance was the greatest barrier to intercolonial union. During the closing weeks of the parliamentary session at Quebec, after the news of the proposed Convention at Charlottetown had become known, McGee's thoughts and conversations reverted more and more to the benefits which might arise if only the men of the inland could meet with the men of the coast while yet the plans of the latter were in making. In Sandford Fleming, whom Parliament had just chosen as the surveyor for the Intercolonial route, he found a kindred spirit. Fleming was thoroughly convinced that "the brotherhood of the knife and fork" provided the hap-

piest auspices under which men could become acquainted; he was also thoroughly imbued with the faith that there was no time like the present for pushing forward a good cause. He therefore made it his special care on his next business visit to Halifax and St. John to talk the matter over with his friends there. He did this to such good effect that before the Canadian Legislature closed, a most cordial invitation had been sent from the Board of Trade of St. John and the mayor and citizens of Halifax for them to come down in a body and visit the sister provinces. The Canadians turned longing eyes towards this opportunity, but for financial reasons sternly put it behind them. Their excuse to Halifax and St. John was that "the members of the Canadian Parliament have been so long detained at Quebec by public matters they are unable to accept."

The Lower Provinces took this refusal very hardly. It is easy to see from their press comments that the little episode, instead of bringing them all together, had thrust them farther apart. They seemed to feel that the Canadians were supercilious and looked down upon them as "sterile rocks somewhere in the Gulf and inhabited by a half-starved lot of folk clad in skins and living on rye and codfish." Upper Canada was esteemed the more blamable. The fact that she had shown greater anxiety for Union and development towards the Red River Colony during the Intercolonial negotiations was now remembered against her and gave a certain plausibility to the serious side of their resentment.

D'Arcy McGee was greatly worried over this collapse of their schemes and bestirred himself more vigorously than ever to find a way or make it. His ally in this renewed attempt was the Honourable James Ferrier, the life member in the Legislative Council for the Montreal district and a director of the Grand Trunk. This combination proved irresistible, and by July 24th the Canadian press was able to announce jubilantly, "The excursion is to take place after all, the Hon. Messrs. Ferrier and McGee having taken the lead in pushing the matter." In other words, the Grand Trunk, with laudable public spirit, had issued an invitation to the members of both Houses and of the Canadian press

to make an excursion over their line to Portland, Maine, on August 2nd.

Forty members of the House of Assembly, with twenty-five from the Legislative Council and forty more representing the press, formed the Canadian party of guests who now journeyed to the Lower Provinces, D'Arcy McGee was the only member of the Canadian Cabinet to accompany the party, as the others remained in Quebec during the three weeks the excursionists were absent and held a series of Cabinet Council meetings, where they drew up the proposals which they were to be permitted to place before the Charlottetown Convention.

True to schedule time, the Canadians reached Portland on August 2nd, after a very crowded, hot, and sleepless journey in day coaches. However, they were there met by the steamer *New England*, with a most tempting supply of two hundred mattresses piled high on deck. These were at once appropriated, so that the decks became "literally paved with human carcasses." At Eastport the Hon. Mr. Skinner, M. P. for St. John County, met them, but, according to an eye-witness, there was at this stage no formal greeting beyond "Tilley's words, 'I am glad to see you,' addressed to Mr. McGee." From August 4th until the 9th was spent by the party in New Brunswick, then from the 10th to the 17th they were in Nova Scotia, and by the 18th they were once more embarked, crossing to Portland, having completed one of the most significant visits in Canadian history. It had been emphatically a time of becoming acquainted and getting together. Never before had so many inhabitants of one British North American province seen and been seen in another.

A few days after McGee's return to Quebec he set out once more, this time with the official delegation for Charlottetown. They sailed by the steamer *Victoria* from Quebec, and arrived at Charlottetown the morning after the Convention opened. The members of this party were J. A. Macdonald, Brown, Cartier, Galt, Langevin, McDougall, Campbell, and McGee. On being introduced to the Convention they presented the case for the broader union and

the advantages it would have beyond the more limited one contemplated by the Maritime Provinces. They also outlined a constitution for such a union should it be effected. For two full days the Canadians had the undivided attention of the Assembly at Charlottetown. Then they withdrew, suggesting the advisability of a later conference at Quebec if the others thought well of it. The Maritime members in a few days determined they should adjourn, report to their respective Governments and meet the Canadians at Quebec to consider more fully the details of the wider union, and if possible, form a comprehensive constitution thereon. In the meantime all the delegates visited first Halifax and then St. John and a second series of reception banquets was given by these most hospitable cities.

There was no delay in arranging for the Conference at Quebec. Delegates were invited not only from the original three Maritime Provinces, but from Newfoundland, and again the steamer *Victoria* did proud duty in carrying them around the Gulf to the place of meeting. She went first to Pictou, then to Charlottetown, and lastly called at Shediac. The only innovation was, many of the men this time were accompanied by their wives and daughters. They arrived at Quebec Sunday evening, October 9th, and the Conference met at eleven the next morning in the Parliament House of old Canada. It sat in Quebec until the 28th, then moved to Montreal, where two sessions were held before its close on October 31st. Afterwards the delegates toured Upper Canada, being most lavishly entertained at Ottawa,[1] Toronto, Hamilton, and St. Catharines.

McGee's contribution to the deliberations of these serious conclaves and his share in their practical result—the constitution, but for a few minor changes, of the Dominion of Canada to-day—may be easily inferred from his attitude, as here recorded, on the various phases of the problem. The discussions were held behind closed doors, and the memorials which have survived are very meagre. At

[1] The repast at Ottawa was particularly interesting, as it was spread in a room temporarily arranged amid the construction work of the Parliament Buildings of the future Dominion.

Quebec, one of McGee's chief interests was to see, in conjunction with Alexander Galt, that the educational rights of religious minorities in the old Canadas would be fully protected by the new enactment.

It is the social aspect of these many weeks of close fellowship which is of prime importance in a record of McGee's life. The value of his gifts in bringing about happy and pleasant relations between men and diffusing an atmosphere in which the spirit of union would flourish can never be too highly appreciated. He was in himself a bond of union between men in the first place strangers. When the Canadians arrived at Halifax and St. John, McGee, on account of his previous lectures, was the one best acquainted with their hosts. He was sufficiently unlike other people, his personality was so unique, his abilities so supreme, men admired his eloquence and enjoyed his wit so greatly and loved his kindliness and generosity of heart so enthusiastically, that many warm friendships could be based on a common knowledge of him.[1]

Again, these recorded weeks of familiar intercourse give an unusual opportunity to see the man at close quarters as he appeared to those who travelled with him and saw and enjoyed the many sides of his personality. One day he was the scholar, bringing out from the treasure-house of his rich memory things new and old for their edification; next day he was the statesman, reviewing the problems of their constitution-making with clear knowledge and understanding; and on the third he was the rollicking boy, enlivening hours of weariness with ludicrous gaiety and throwing himself with the most joyous freshness and keenness into the lightest of their festivities.

To understand the temper of the time and the point of any man's contribution to the company, it is necessary to take a somewhat detailed picture of their entertainment.

[1] The strength of this bond was exemplified some years after his death, when it proved to be one of the strongest incentives and puissant binding forces in that "group of sympathizing spirits known by the collective name of 'Canada First,'" whose chief founder, W. A. Foster, gave to McGee's influence the glowing tribute prefaced to this chapter.

Each province appeared to be trying to outdo the others in hospitality to "the invading host," whether it was from the inland or from the sea. Public receptions, torch-light processions, municipal banquets amid fruit and flowers, flags and martial music, where hundreds of prominent citizens, of all shades of politics, cheered to the echo the toast of the Union of British North America, were the order of the day and the night. After the Canadian tour through New Brunswick we are told: "People are all ready to descant à la D'Arcy McGee, as nearly as their brains and oratorical powers will permit, on the grandeur of the British American Union." Two or three brief paragraphs from a contemporary report give an idea of the scale of the entertainment:

St. John has raised $4,000 by private subscription to defray expenses, and as much more will be forthcoming should it be wanted. So far the representatives of the people forming the chip off the block of Canada's "collective wisdom" have conducted themselves well. None of them got into difficulties at Portland.

Unfortunately, this last sentence could not be added to every later report. However, as the following quotation shows, there were extenuating circumstances always to be remembered:

Had each Canadian been a Cerberus and a Briareus combined, with the digestion of an ostrich and the "sack" standing capacity of the venerable friend of the now deceased Prince of Wales, we might have been equal to the demands made upon us, provided we could have been present at a dozen places at the same time.

And on another occasion we are told:

With singular unanimity the Canadians sought their beds. The New Brunswickers had nearly killed them with kindness. If ever they, as visitors, come to Canada, it will be right and proper, praiseworthy and decorous to take a fearful revenge.

At Halifax McGee proposed the toast to their hosts, the mayor and citizens:

. . . . All of us, both those who are silent and those who speak, feel deeply the uniform kindness with which we have been treated since we have

been here. I have been here before, and that was one reason why I was so anxious to come again. My friends have consulted me, and I have told them that this is the ordinary kindness of Nova Scotia; and now I think I may say for them, one and all, that their ambition is to be classed henceforth among your friends. You will permit me on their part to return our heartfelt thanks. From their Excellencies the Lieutenant-Governor, the Vice-Admiral, His Grace the Archbishop—from all classes of the citizens of Halifax, there has been nothing but one continual series of kindnesses since we landed here. That kindness was not merely local, it met us beyond the borders of the Province—in the persons of our friends Mr. Pryor, Mr. Coleman, and Mr. Wier. They took the trouble to pass the bounds of this Province to meet us, and therefore I think I may say your hospitalities surpass all bounds.

The effect on all sides of an ordinary little courtesy done so aptly and beautifully as this can be readily understood. We get a glimpse of another kindred trait of McGee's at Charlottetown, where the Canadians attempted a return of hospitality by an informal luncheon on board the *Victoria*. At this "every man was as sober and serious as Mr. McGee's wit would allow him to be."

There was one memorable day in Halifax which McGee pronounced to be overpowering. The Canadians were first treated to a Hodge-Podge[1] on the shore of the North-West Arm. At this Joseph Howe and D'Arcy McGee were the speakers, and the *Globe* reporter says, "Mr. McGee supported the high reputation he has earned as our orator. I intend by no means to detract from the well-earned fame of the Hon. Joseph Howe when I say that Nova Scotians acquainted with him and who heard Mr. McGee at the Hodge-Podge and chowder affair, acknowledge the Minister of Agriculture to be the better orator of the two." From the Hodge-Podge they returned to the city and found a public dinner awaiting them in the volunteer drill-shed, which had been beautifully decorated for the occasion. At this banquet "everybody spoke," and McGee's turn came at the end of the following list, when, the reporter remarks, "even the finest oratorical talking had begun to

[1] The reporter tells us this "consisted of an *omnium gatherum* of the fishy tribe—cod, herring, salmon, sole, haddock and—the Halegonians can alone tell what else—boiled and eaten together with chowder."

pall." The first speaker was Sir Richard Graves Macdonnell, the Lieutenant-Governor; then came Admiral Sir James Hope, Dr. Tupper, G. E. Cartier, George Brown, Leonard Tilley, Col. Gray, President of the Charlottetown Convention, J. A. Macdonald, Alexander Galt, and then D'Arcy McGee. There have been so many quotations included from McGee's serious speeches, it is only fair to give one now from the fun he indulged in at this hour, even if the aptness, spontaneity, and sparkle have been somewhat dulled by the weight of the intervening years. His opening was as follows:

> I think, Sir, you have been guilty of a very serious attack upon myself constitutionally, and also, what is more important, upon the union of the colonies. The hope of the union is comprised within the four walls of this assembly; the only statesmen that can carry it out are here; it is highly important to the success of the measure that these statesmen should preserve their constitutions in order to frame constitutions for the Provinces. Now, I think I see a desire to undermine the constitutions of the different statesmen, and therefore it is I fear that the cause is in danger. (Laughter.)
>
> However, I have no fear that it will not go on. Men will rise and fall as bubbles upon a stream, but the cause that gets into the hearts of a free and intelligent people will never die.

McGee then went on to detail his gratification at seeing such pleasant friendships springing up between people who had known each other before only through blue books, "where we looked into the figures to see what a figure we cut." Coming together as they were now had "a very different effect from poring over cold pages of books of statistics." Then he made a few remarks on "Immigration and Agriculture," supposed to be the subject of his toast. The immigration section enunciated his old-time creed about where the source of true national growth and greatness lay in the New World and the folly of fearing a pauper immigration. "Bless me! something like half this continent has been made by paupers."

On agriculture he was very brief. The country was safe and the Confederation crop in a flourishing condition, was his main report. In any case, his Canadian portfolio demanded merely an administrator of the laws, and not

necessarily "a man of cultivation." However, he had a complaint to make of an outrage he had sustained in his official capacity that day, and at the hands of one of the members for the city:

> My friend, Mr. Pryor, for I forgive him, showed me over his garden at the North-West Arm and with a deliberate design asked me to identify the several crops. With the potatoes and beets and turnips I got along tolerably well, till I came to a leek-like looking vegetable, which I therefore pronounced to be a leek.
>
> "Oh, no," cried my friend, "that is the *celebrated* oyster-plant." (Laughter.)
>
> Now, how was I to have foreseen that though a gentleman has a marine villa with lobsters within hail, and can walk up his own avenue with a couple of lobsters whenever he chooses (laughter) that he should also have oysters growing in his garden (laughter) with leeks growing over them—for I still maintain in my official capacity that the things I saw were leeks. (Roars of laughter.)

Yes. It was an overpowering day, yet it ended in a light enough little flourish.

However, the path of Confederation turned out to be by no means as smooth as the conferences and after-dinner speeches might indicate. There was no faltering on the part of Canada. Through years of constitutional agitation and the recent parliamentary deadlock she had come to understand how necessary was some change. But not so the Maritime Provinces. Scarcely had their delegates returned from the Quebec Conference than such energetic opposition developed that it required three more years of very careful handling on the part of the Imperial authorities, Canadian friends, and their own leaders who supported the union, before they could be persuaded to enter. Even then Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland did not come in. It was in the winter of 1866-7 that the delegates of the remaining provinces met in London and prepared the British North America Bill in conjunction with the Imperial law officials. Finally on March 29th the Imperial Act was passed and received the royal assent.

D'Arcy McGee was not an official member of the Canadian delegation to London. A temporary coolness between Macdonald and McGee during the summer of 1866 ex-

plained his omission from the Order-in-Council of September 24th, which named the Canadian delegates to the London Conference for the discussion of the Confederation Act. McGee had been heart and soul absorbed in the repulsing of the Fenian attacks from the United States and had felt dissatisfied with the slackness of the administration of the Department of Militia during the June crisis. Therefore he proposed in a letter to Macdonald that Alexander Galt should be made Minister of Militia, on the ground that there were so many financial questions involved and the position demanded a man of financial and executive capacity. In view of the fact that the Minister of Militia at the time was J. A. Macdonald himself, and that the newspapers of the time—especially *The Globe*—had been full of very circumstantial accounts of just why the Minister of Militia had been unable to perform his duties during the crisis, it was not to be wondered at that Macdonald was irritated by McGee's naïve proposal. However, the disappointment voiced by the Catholic bishops, clergy, and laity, who had looked to McGee to watch over their educational interests, was so great that it was later arranged that he and Dr. Taché should attend the Industrial Exposition at Paris. It opened on April 1st, and the Canadian Agricultural Department had a large and well organized exhibit ready. Thus McGee had an opportunity to be in London during the crucial consultations there, and to tender his Canadian colleagues whatever assistance he could.

McGee had looked forward to this visit to England and Europe. It was to be one of the rare little interludes in his very busy, crowded life. But unfortunately he was stricken down in Paris by a very severe and painful illness arising from ulceration of the veins of his leg, which prevented him from accomplishing and enjoying the things he wished. He did manage, however, to make a trip to Rome, where he was charged with laying at the feet of His Holiness Pope Pius IX the petition of the Irish Catholic congregation of St. Patrick's Church against the new division of parishes. To this visit we owe several poems on the Eternal City, as well as some articles on "Irish Epi-

sodes of Foreign Travel." These latter appeared in the New York *Tablet*, and some of them also in the Montreal *Gazette*. Among his writings while in Paris was one poem, *Peace Hath her Victories*, which gains an especial interest from having been written during the last year of his life, and also at a time of pain and weakness when McGee was doubtless reviewing the deeds and seasons of his past. Many of its lines therefore indicate clearly what were McGee's innermost ambitions for himself and his country. The third stanza, while having, of course, a broad and general meaning, can with great suggestiveness be read in the light of the Fenian attacks upon himself:

To stand amidst the passions of the hour
Storm-lash'd, resounding fierce from shore to shore;
To watch the human whirlwind waste its power,
Till drownèd Reason lifts her head once more;
To build on hatred nothing; to be just,
Judging of men and nations as they are,
Too strong to share the councils of mistrust;
Peace hath her victories, no less than War.

The next one has likewise an aptness as a summary of his Canadian political ambition:

To draw the nations in a silken bond
On to their highest exercise of good;
To show the better land above, beyond
The sea of Egypt, all whose waves are blood;
These, leader of the age! these arts be thine,
All vulgar victories surpassing far!
On these all Heaven's benignant planets shine;
Peace hath her victories, no less than War.

The fact that McGee's illness kept him a very close prisoner to his room was partly the explanation of another piece of writing he did in Paris. His thoughts had had much time to turn to Canada and dwell upon her needs. He composed, therefore, what he called his May-Day letter for his constituents, telling them what he felt should be the policy of the future Dominion Government, and exactly what his own politics were going to be. It was a

strong document and took, very McGee-like, a most decided and unequivocal position on the fundamental issues for Canadian legislation. On tariff, militia, education, and expenditure for public works, no one was left in doubt as to McGee's stand, and it was the one hitherto identified with the Conservative party of old Canada.

All this was startlingly outspoken and disconcerting for his colleagues in Canada. They were intent upon maintaining that there were now no party issues dividing the people. A Coalition Government composed of the men most in sympathy with putting the new machinery into motion was the only question of the hour. Of course, after a time there would spring up parties, but for the present a strong government, irrespective of party considerations of the past, was what was required. In pursuance of this theory all their speeches—Galt's speeches and J. A. Macdonald's speeches—had been delightfully indefinite. They might be interpreted to mean much or little tariff, much or little militia, and much or little expenditure, as the occasion required. Take, for example, the speech of Alexander Galt at the big dinner in Lennoxville. It was quite justly described by *The Globe* as "the very embodiment of discretion itself."

McGee's was the first address issued by a Minister of the Crown after the passing of the British North America Act. It was pounced upon by the Reform press:

> The manifesto bears internal evidence that it is the joint handiwork of the illustrious quartette [Macdonald, Cartier, Galt, and McGee]..... The bold declaration in favour of a standing army....the rushing in for the Intercolonial, the Ottawa Canal, the Verte Canal, this glorious contempt for hundreds of millions of public debt bring back floods of recollections of Grand Trunk "loans," Seigniorial Tenure iniquities, Ottawa buildings insanity—jobbery and extravagance without limit in the good old days of the Macdonald-Cartier ascendancy. The hand is the hand of D'Arcy, but the voice is the voice of A. T. Galt on a Budget night in the days of increased customs, fresh excise duties, new stamp taxes, and enormous deficits.

But if the Reform press gave the letter publicity, not so the Conservative. *The Globe* was the only paper west of

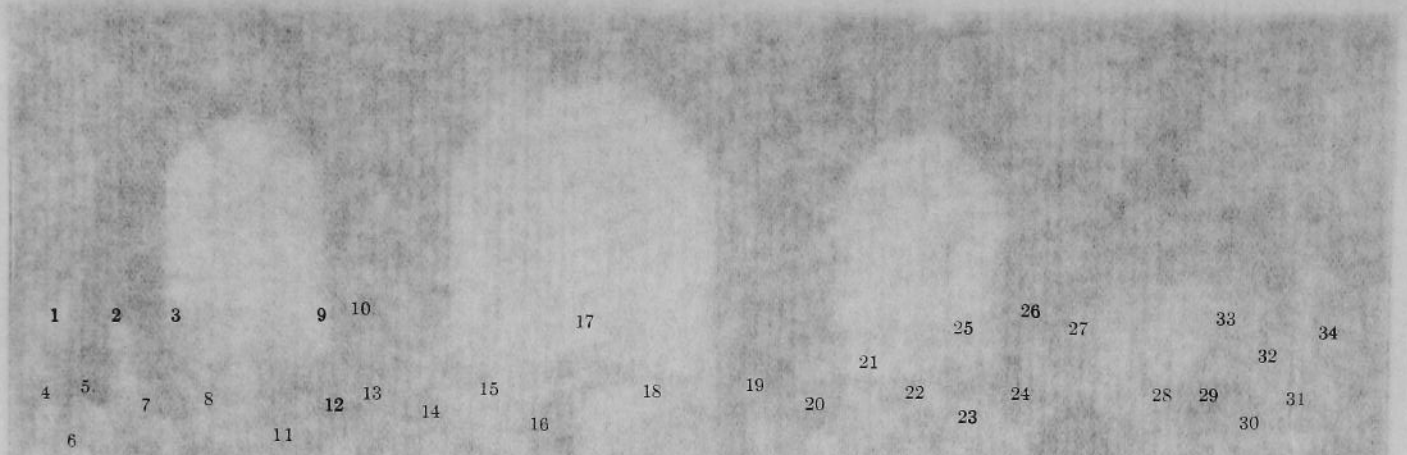
Ottawa which printed it. "Our Upper Canada Tories don't do business that way," was the comment of *The Galt Reformer* on this ominous silence. McGee in his sincere and outspoken eagerness had intended this letter as only the first of two, but the second never appeared. It was strangled by the powers that were. Some politicians thought it a very curious thing that a man with the transcendent imagination of McGee could not have imagined how such a document would affect men and parties in Canada. They asked, could he not foresee how such a course of conduct would affect people and react on his own popularity? They were wholly wrong in their way of looking at the man. Such acts of his, and one or two such outstanding ones will be recalled, were due not to lack of imagination. They sprang from his sincere and conscientious determination to stand up openly for what he felt was right. When he saw a duty to be performed—a political duty, a patriotic duty, or a religious duty—during all his life he did it at once in a downright, above-board, uncompromising way, absolutely regardless of past associations or future effects. They had no place in his problem. They never occurred to him.

By the end of May McGee was able to return to Canada, but it was to find the Fates there most adverse. His party leaders were in the throes of forming the new Dominion Cabinet. As Christopher Dunkin had pointed out in exhaustive detail in his Confederation speech of February 27th, 1865, this was "none too easy a task:"

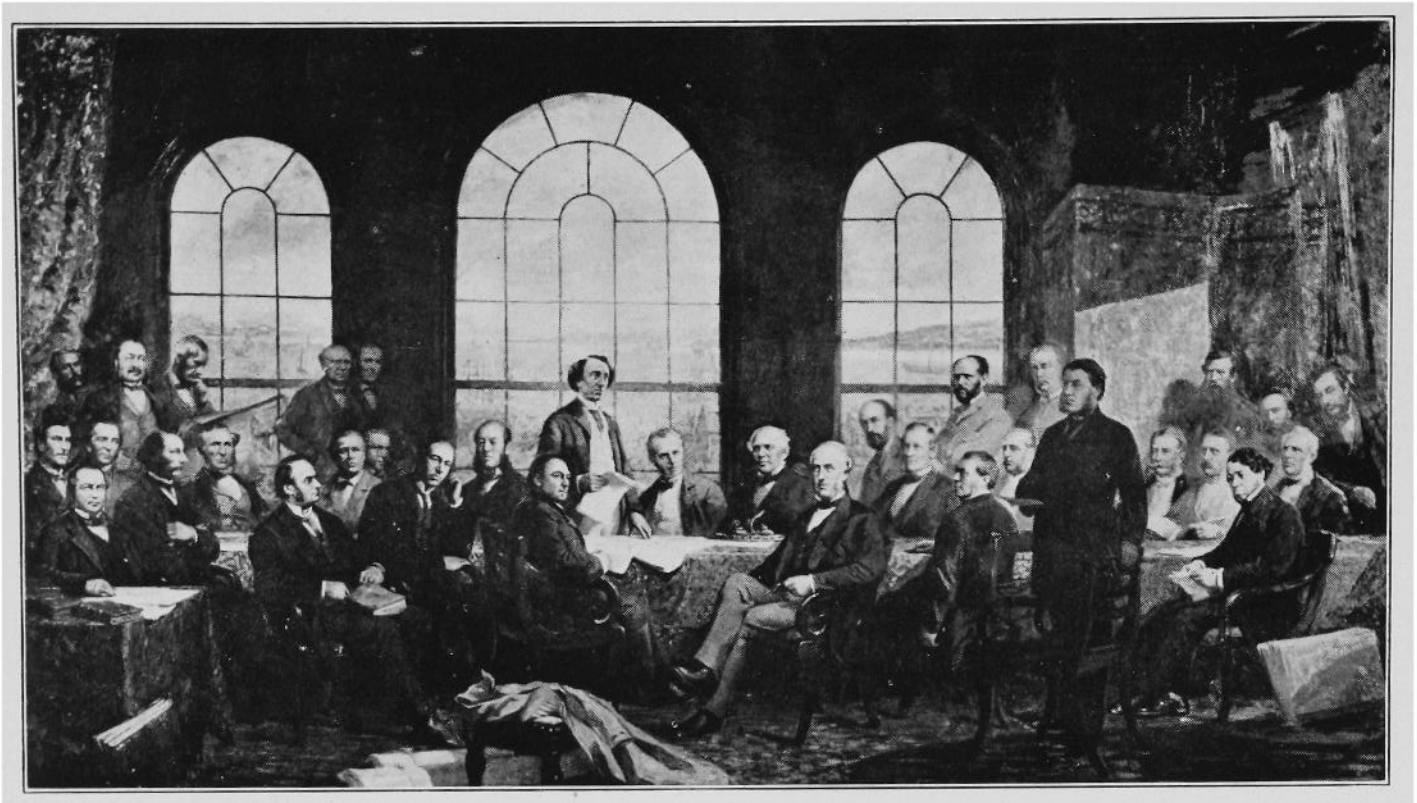
> This Executive Council must have, in order to work at all,....a representation of the different provinces....Let us look therefore at what will have to be its number. There are two ways of calculating this—two sets of data on which to go. Either we must go upon the wants of the component parts, or we may start from the wants of the country as a whole. Suppose we start from the wants of the different provinces. I take it no section of the Confederation can well have less than one representative in the Cabinet. Prince Edward Island will want one; Newfoundland, one. A difficulty presents itself with regard to Lower Canada. On just the same principle upon which Lower Canada wants, for Federal ends, to have a proper representation in the Executive Council, on the same principle the minority populations in Lower Canada will each want, and reasonably want, the

The Fathers of Confederation, 1864

KEY TO THE ACCOMPANYING PLATE



1. Lt.-Col. H. Bernard
2. W. A. Henry. (Sec.
3. E. Palmer.
4. W. H. Steeves.
5. C. Fisher.
6. E. Whelan.
7. Col. J. H. Gray, P. E. I.
8. G. Coles.
9. Sir F. B. T. Carter.
10. Sir Ambrose Shea.
11. Sir S. L. Tilley.
12. J. C. Chapais.
13. E. B. Chandler.
14. Sir A. Campbell.
15. Sir A. G. Archibald.
16. Sir H. L. Langevin.
17. Sir J. A. Macdonald.
18. Sir G. E. Cartier.
19. Sir E. P. Tache.
20. George Brown.
21. T. H. Haviland.
22. Sir A. T. Galt.
23. Sir O. Mowat.
24. J. Cockburn.
25. P. Mitchell.
26. R. B. Dickey.
27. Sir C. Tupper.
28. Lt.-Col. J. H. Gray (N.B.)
29. W. McDougall.
30. T. D'A. McGee.
31. J. McCully.
32. A. A. Macdonald.
33. W. H. Pope.
34. J. M. Johnson.



FATHERS OF CONFEDERATION
FROM SKETCH BY ROBERT HARRIS

same thing. We have three populations in Lower Canada, the French-Canadians, the Irish Catholics, and the British Protestants. In other words, there are the Catholics and the non-Catholics, and the English-speaking and the non-English-speaking, and these two cross lines of division cut our people into the three divisions I have just indicated. Well, if in a Government of this Federal kind the different populations of Lower Canada are to feel that justice is done them, none of them are to be ignored. The consequences of ignoring them might not be very comfortable. Heretofore, according to general usage, the normal amount of representation for Lower Canada....has been six seats out of twelve. Of those, four.... legitimately belong to the French-Canadians, one to the Irish Catholics, and one to the British Protestant class. Every one is satisfied that that is about the fairest thing that can be done....

Well, Sir, if there are to be six for Lower Canada there must be six or seven for Upper Canada, and you cannot very well have less than three each for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick....thus you have an Executive Council of twenty to twenty-one members, besides all we might have to add for other provinces....The thing could not be done.

Suppose, then, on the other hand, we start with the idea of limiting the number of our Executive Council to meet what I may call the exigencies of the country as a whole. Eleven, twelve, or thirteen....leaves three each for Upper and Lower Canada. For Lower Canada in particular, how will any one divide this intractable figure between her French, Irish, and British?....It will be none too easy a task, Sir,....to form an Executive Council with its three members for Lower Canada, and satisfy the somewhat pressing exigencies of her creeds and races.

Such was one set of factors in the Cabinet problem. Now added to it was Cartier's insistence that the French-Canadians could not be represented by fewer than three Ministers, which with the Irish Catholic and the Protestant members from Quebec would make five. The Ontario Reformers in turn were equally determined that Ontario must have one more Minister than Quebec, which would have meant eleven between them, and when the other provinces were given proportional representation, would have produced in turn a Cabinet too large to be either workable or acceptable to the country. Macdonald was clear from the outset that the Cabinet would have to be limited to thirteen at most, and, further, that it must be a coalition ministry, divided as equally as possible between Conservatives and Liberals. Considering the Reform majority in Ontario, he began with three Liberals—or ex-Liberals, as many of their old allies insisted they were—McDougall,

Howland, and Fergusson-Blair, together with himself and Campbell as two Conservatives from that section. Then there were to be two members from Nova Scotia, the Conservative Tupper and the Liberal Archibald, and two Liberals from New Brunswick, Tilley and Mitchell. This left only four members, all Conservatives, to Quebec. But the trouble then arose that Cartier insisted three of these had to be French-Canadians, Cartier, Chapais, and Langevin, which necessitated the dropping of either Galt or McGee. That this was a difficulty long foreseen is evident from a letter McGee had written Macdonald from Paris:

71 Champs Elysées, Paris,
April 9th, 1867.

My dear Macdonald,

....You observe in your last that my own "political future is at stake." I feel the whole force of that remark, and will not lose a day in returning, that I possibly can. As to Montreal West, I do not fear any issue which I may have to meet there, with any one; but the other two seats in that city can only be secured by actual co-operation of those I can influence, as was shown to Cartier's and Rose's satisfaction last time, and time before. Whatever I can do westward, will be, as it always has been, at your service. Ever since we have acted together, I recognize no other leader in Parliament or the country; and I only ask in return, that you will protect my position in my absence—till I am able to mount guard over it myself. I certainly have no desire to embarrass future arrangements, which will naturally be under your direction, but in a Confederation Government, founded upon principles which I have always zealously advocated, I will, if in Parliament, give way neither to Galt, nor to a third Frenchman, "nor any other man."[1]

When Cartier insisted on the three French-Canadians, McGee's position, which had been previously secured to him by a letter from Macdonald, became, nevertheless, strategically the weak one. Galt represented a geographical and local minority—the English-speaking Protestants of Quebec. This minority could be represented in the Cabinet only in the Quebec section. The Irish Catholics, on the other hand, were found in all the provinces, so it was not essential a Quebec man should represent them.

During one solid week of deadlock, Macdonald arranged and rearranged all his various factors, the limited number

[1] Sir Joseph Pope, *Correspondence of Sir John A. Macdonald, ii*, p. 42.

possible, with the certain men who had to be included, as well as the sectional, party, and religious requirements. Then he diplomatically allowed his lieutenants to understand that the problem appeared beyond his powers of solution, and that he would have to allow George Brown to form the first Dominion Cabinet.[1]

At this crisis Tupper brought forward a proposal. He would be willing to step out and make way for an Irish Catholic Conservative from Nova Scotia, E. F. Kenny, if McGee would do likewise and thus allow one man to take the place of them both. This met no opposition in the party's council. The Conservative leaders had been irritated by McGee's May-Day manifesto, and his unpopularity created by the Fenian excitement together with the Irish quarrel in Montreal made many of them feel it would be better if he were only a private member in their ranks. Also, there was no doubt that personal jealousy and long-nursed political animosity dulled the conscience of one or two when it came to be a question of weighing McGee's just deserts.

Cartier undertook to put the matter to McGee personally. He spent two long mornings with him and eventually emerged with McGee's consent to withdraw and with Macdonald's letter of appointment to him safely in his keeping.

McGee was aggrieved, but after the natural temporary indignation had passed, the self-forgetfulness of the man, his absolute self-abnegation when a great issue was concerned, reasserted itself, and he stepped out, solicitous only

[1] A letter from A. T. Galt to his wife, on June 23rd, 1867, cited by O. D. Skelton in *The Life and Times of Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt* sheds an inner light on the temper of the time:

"....The U. C. Liberals in the Cabinet have insisted on every sort of concession to them....The only people who have really been without reproach are the gentlemen from the Lower Provinces who have done all in their power to reconcile matters.....Macdonald.....at one moment says he will go on without the Grits, the next he says he will throw up the cards and recommend the Governor to send for George Brown. Things are turning out just as I told you I feared would be the case, and I am so thoroughly disgusted that if it were not for the fear of deserting my friends in such a crisis I would shake off the dust from my feet of political life."

that the great cause should flourish and his co-religionists be adequately represented. In spite of the way they had treated him, he remained true to those he held to be the true friends of Union. As his letter to Macdonald in April had stated, "Theoretically it is true, the work is done; but practically it is only beginning. At such a real crisis, personal and mere party politics might afford to 'listen a while'." Two letters he wrote Macdonald in July, 1867, attest the same unswerving loyalty. In the first he is asking what form the explanations for his being omitted from the Cabinet had better take:

> "....I am sure that on presenting myself there [in Montreal] I shall be beset by good and kind and constant friends, as well as by the curious generally, for political explanations, which without your concurrence (or rather perhaps I should say His Excellency's permission) I do not feel that I have any right to make.
>
> What I should be able to say to my friends, does not so much concern myself as the general interest of the class to which very many of them belong, namely, the Irish Catholics of the Dominion. Mr. Kenny's appointment to office ought, in my opinion, to be a guarantee that they were, and were to be, fairly considered in the Executive Councils of our common country. But, unfortunately, all men are not equally reasonable, and I fear the appeals lately made to this large and important body, by designing demagogues who have no particle of real regard for them at heart, are producing a mischief, which, even in my own constituency, I shall find myself powerless to correct.
>
> Now I think you know that there is one sort of power I am very ambitious of, namely, to hold the good opinion of my friends. What I want of you, therefore, is, with His Excellency's permission and the concurrence of your colleagues, to provide me with such a memorandum of the proposed policy of the new Government, as will enable me to fight the Union battle, not only at Montreal, but anywhere else where I may be of use, with advantage to the vast public interests at stake. For I will add frankly that I should deplore as the greatest calamity that could now befall us, a sectarian, in addition to a sectional, organization. I would do anything possible to one man to avoid such a state of things, and I hope you may see your way to arming me with such a memorandum of facts and intentions as will help me to do so.
>
> I subscribe myself with all sincerity,
>
> Yours very faithfully,
>
> THOMAS D'ARCY McGEE.

P. S.— I add with great pleasure to your address those marks of honourable distinction which you and my other ex-colleagues have so honourably achieved.

The curious answer Macdonald sent him to this was more satisfactory from the Macdonald than the McGee point of view. Macdonald began by chiding him for resigning his place in the Cabinet without consulting him, and regretted that he had been so generous as to stand aside. "However, the thing is done and cannot be undone for the present, but I am sure that at a very early day your valuable services will be sought for by the Government."

However, McGee's second letter shows how steadily he went on to further the cause of Union in spite of Government quasi-friends and Opposition foes:

Montreal,
July 11, 1867.

My dear Macdonald,

You are, I hope, satisfied with my explanations. So far as your name was mentioned I hope I observed due reticence—and in other respects.

I found the feeling in Montreal more unsettled than I could imagine. Rose's retirement had emboldened the enemy, and besides there were local causes of irritation both in Cartier's quarters and my own, which were being artfully fomented. Being on the spot for a few days, I think I have done good for Cartier, and I am sure I have for myself. My explanations have, I think, satisfied every real friend that I have in the city, and I have even heard made converts.

I have seen Mr. Kenny and introduced my principal friends, upon whom he has made, as I was sure he would, a most favourable impression.....

I go to Prescott to-morrow,[1] and shall oscillate between Prescott and Montreal, for the present week or ten days. I shall have contests in both. Devlin is really canvassing hard—with the Holton-Herald clique in the background, but I shall beat *him* easily 1,000 votes. Of Prescott I am not so sure up to date.

This was written just before the deplorable McGee-Devlin election. It has been shown how McGee endured this ordeal. He fought against ill-health and great physical weakness. He fought amid a worse than old-time ruffianism directed against him. He fought with narrow means. All party campaign funds were withheld because the leaders considered it immaterial, since either McGee or Devlin as a private member was pledged to support union and

[1] McGee ran in Prescott for the Ontario House, but was defeated. The effective weapon the Opposition had against him was that Ontario wanted no outsider meddling in her own local concerns.

their general policy. He fought without the help of one single speech or any kind of countenance or support, from a solitary colleague. The opposition press were able to boast that Cartier never mentioned McGee's name at any public meeting. The Montreal *Gazette* stood by him, and Archbishop Connolly came out very forcibly in his favour with a long and closely reasoned letter published in the Montreal press.

But the iron had entered McGee's soul. Never again, it was said, was he the same gay, jovial, buoyant D'Arcy McGee. His determination was made. Once the Confederation government was well established he would withdraw from politics and devote himself to history and literature. After his death Sir John A. Macdonald, in a letter to Archbishop Connolly, said:

> It was arranged between him and myself that he should retire from political life this summer. He was to have been appointed Commissioner of Patents, with a salary of $3,200 a year. This office would have been in a great measure a sinecure; and he intended to live here at head-quarters, in the immediate vicinity of our magnificent library, and devote himself to literary pursuits.[1]

McGee's own letters reveal nothing of this particular arrangement, but they bear ample testimony of his return to his first loves, history and literature. From the end of October, 1867, until almost the end of February, 1868, he was again a close prisoner in his room on account of the same illness. But his activity was unabated. His industrious pen scratched off several articles of literary criticism for the New York *Tablet* and the Dublin *Nation*, as well as his weekly contribution on Irish and Canadian politics for the Montreal *Gazette*. He also got into touch with Harpers, the American publishers, and about the end of March came to terms with them which he told his friends "presented a promise of permanency." He was writing poems, too, off and on, in contemplation of a volume under the title *Celtic Bards and Funeral Songs*, which was to be published in New York in the autumn of 1868. Speaking of this in a letter to Father Meehan,[1] McGee said, "You

[1] Sir Joseph Pope, *Memoirs of Sir John A. Macdonald*, Vol. II, p. 12.

know I am an old *keener* and half my lays are lamentations. It could not well be otherwise in this age with an Irish bard, if I am worthy to be called a Bard of Erin." What we have of these poems demonstrate how fondly McGee's heart turned back to Ireland, and how completely he was reverting to the old McGee of 1846, with all his scholarly and historical schemes of the literary *Nation* before the revolution of '48. *Iona to Erin*, and *The Caoine of Donnell More*, were his last, the latter unfinished. In *Iona to Erin* St. Columba is supposed to be addressing a bird flying away across the waters to Ireland. Thus it easily voices the author's yearning as well as the Saint's:

But you will see what I am bann'd
No more, for my youth's sins, to see:
My Derry's oaks in council stand
By Roseapenna's silver strand—
Or by Raphoe your course may be.

The shrines of Meath are fair and far—
White-wing'd one, not too far for thee—
Emania, shining like a star,
(Bright brooch on Erin's breast you are!)[2]
That I am never more to see.

In addition, McGee wrote during these weeks an Irish-American tale. The first third of the plot was laid on the bordes of Ulster and Leinster, and the remainder in New York and New England. He was making arrangements to have it published by Hurst and Blackett, anonymously—"at lest at first"—and wrote them that it would make "a prtty thick volume of about six hundred and fifty pages. Unfortunately the manuscript of this has been lost. It would have been very interesting to see what kind of stor was woven by McGee's poetic imagination, personal experiences, and warm human sympathies, in a setting so happy for their development and play.

[1] Fr. C. P. Meehan of Dublin, who had been one of the Young Irelanders and later became the author of *The Fate and Fortunes of Hugh O'N*, and the biographies of other ancient Irish heroes.

[2] It is said that Queen Macha traced out the site of the royal rath of Emia, near Armagh, with the pin of her gold brooch.

At other times McGee's thoughts were centred upon ways and means of winning Nova Scotia. That province was still hostile to the Union. At the midsummer election only one of the nineteen members returned supported the Administration. When the first Dominion Parliament met, on November 7th, 1867, an early item for legislation was on the rate of postage between the different provinces. McGee, whose ill-health allowed him to attend only the first fortnight of the session, spoke most earnestly for a reduction in the rate. He looked upon the tax as one upon intelligence, "but particularly as one the burden of which would fall upon the small newspapers of the Maritime Provinces." He voted against Sir John and with Alexander Mackenzie on this point. This speech and vote are indicative of his whole attitude towards the Maritime Provinces.

One of his letters to Macdonald in February illustrates this same desire to reconcile the Repealers:

Montreal,
Feb. 15, 1868.

My dear Macdonald:

....As to the Repealers, I suppose you have taken all due means to have them properly understood in England. But if anything could be done, by commercial legislation or otherwise, to bisect the mass of downright disaffection down there, it should be done.....

I have been trying in *The Gazette* to keep up the true constitutional doctrines on which many of our friends even, are at sea. I am to be out in a week, and to give on the 28th an address to the English workingman, on *The New Nation and the Old Empire*. It will contain a strong and pointed appeal against "personal politics."

An article on what the country expects from the Minister of Militia will appear in *The Gazette*, on Monday. It may not be amiss that all you gentlemen should feel that *public*, not *personal*, interests are expected to be in the ascendant next session.

Will you thank Campbell if you see him for his kind and prompt note—just like him.

Yours very truly,

T. D. McGEE

Sir J. A. Macdonald,
Ottawa.

P. S.- Mr. Rose got as far as the door, and left his compliments but as it was freezing very hard at the time, they were quite chilly when they reached me.

The following January finds him busy, although at the time confined to bed, writing editorials and letters without number on the ten thousand Nova Scotia fishermen who had returned empty-handed at the end of the mackerel season. So insistent was he in both his humanitarian and patriotic argument that a large charity concert was organized in Montreal. The sending of these proceeds to Nova Scotia for the destitute fishermen had not a little to do with making the people there feel that their interests were of real import to the Canadas, and it certainly encouraged a kindlier feeling between the two sections.

Meantime, however, Joseph Howe with three others had been sent by the local legislature of Nova Scotia to England to see if that province could be released from Confederation. As a counterstroke the Dominion Government sent Dr. Tupper. His was a very delicate commission. He was to be most "conciliatory towards his Nova Scotia friends," but to inform the Imperial authorities as to the grounds on which Nova Scotia wished for repeal. When the Dominion Parliament reassembled on March 12th, the Government were subjected to much adverse criticism for having sent Dr. Tupper to England to oppose Joseph Howe. On the evening of April 6th, 1868, Parker of North Wellington was one of those who spoke adversely of Dr. Tupper's appointment.

D'Arcy McGee rose to answer him. After a brief attack on Parker for his persistence in mischief-making, he defended warmly the absent Dr. Tupper in words to which his own well-known experience must have added double weight in that House:

> Dr. Tupper's character has been assailed, and he himself personally maligned, and it is due to him that he should be placed in a position to justify his conduct, with regard to the part he had taken towards obtaining that Imperial act of legislation by which the Union had been established. It has been charged against him that he has lost the confidence of his own people. Sir, I hope that in this House mere temporary or local popularity will never be made the test by which to measure the worth or efficiency of a public servant. (Hear, hear.) He, Sir, who builds upon popularity builds upon a shifting sand. He who rests simply on popularity, will soon find the object he pursues slip away from him. It is, Sir

in my humble opinion, the leader of a forlorn hope who is ready to meet and stem the tide of temporary unpopularity, who is prepared, if needs be, to sacrifice himself in defence of the principles which he has adopted as those of truth—who shows us that he is ready not only to triumph with his principles, but even to suffer for his principles—who has proved himself, above all others, worthy of peculiar honour. (Applause.)

McGee then began to criticize somewhat severely the resolutions of the Nova Scotia legislature and the address founded upon them. But he had hardly commenced this part of his speech when he suddenly left it as if distasteful to him, and spoke of his desire that Nova Scotia should suffer under no wrong. He believed the asperities now existing must wear out with time:

It may be that there are some grounds of complaint with regard to some of the legislations of the early part of the session, and that, in such minor matters as the newspaper postage and certain tariff impositions, Nova Scotia may have some grounds for remonstrance, but so long as these points admit of modification or adjustment there will be no danger of its denial here. Whenever, Sir, the Nova Scotian case on these issues is presented fairly and calmly, it will find an amount of support here which will leave none of its advocates ground for complaint that the voice of Nova Scotia demanding justice is not fairly listened to within these walls. And here, Sir, I cannot withhold my acknowledgment of respect and appreciation of the moderate and large-minded, and truly national spirit, in which the hon. member for Lambton, the leader of the largest section of the Opposition (Alexander Mackenzie), has approached and has dealt with all these great questions affecting the carrying out and the maintenance and the welfare of the Union.....

And besides this attention and practical consideration, we need, above everything else, the healing influence of time. I have, Sir, great reliance on the mellowing effects of time. It is not only the lime and the sand, and the hair and the mortar, but the time which has been taken to temper it. And if time be so necessary an element in so rudimentary a process as the mixing of mortar, of how much greater importance must it be in the working of consolidating the Confederation of these Provinces. Time, Sir, will heal all existing irritations; time will mellow and refine all points of contrast that seem so harsh to-day; time will come to the aid of the pervading principle of impartial justice, which happily permeates the whole land. By and by time will show us the Constitution of this Dominion as much cherished in the hearts of the people of all its Provinces, not excepting Nova Scotia, as is the British Constitution itself.

McGee went on thus to illustrate what time could do with the example of the Union between Cape Breton and Nova

Scotia herself, and thus carried to its close his last manly, kindly, patriotic speech: "And, Sir, I have every confidence that we will similarly wear out Nova Scotian hostility by the unfailing exercise and exhibition of a high-minded spirit of fair play. We will compel them by our fairness and our kindness. It has been said that the interests of Canada are diametrically opposed to the interests of Nova Scotia, but I ask which of the parties to the partnership has most interest in its successful conduct, or has most to fear from the failure which the misfortunes or the losses of any of its members must occasion? Would it not be we who have embarked the largest share of the capital of Confederation? Our friends, Sir, need have no fear but that Confederation will ever be administered with serene and even justice. To its whole history, from its earliest inception to its final triumphant consummation, no stigma can be attached, no stain attributed. Its single aim from the beginning has been to consolidate the extent of British North America with the utmost regard to the independent power and privileges of each Province, and I, Sir, who have been, and who am still, its warm and earnest advocate, speak here not as the representative of any race, or of any Province, but as thoroughly and emphatically a Canadian, ready and bound to recognize the claims, if any, of my Canadian fellow-subjects, from the farthest east to the farthest west, equally as those of my nearest neighbour, or of the friend who proposed me on the hustings."

An hour after D'Arcy McGee spoke those words he lay dead, shot down by a murderous assassin. There is very little really known of the deed. When the debate closed McGee called to his friend Robert Macfarlane, "Come, Bob, you young rascal, help me on with my coat," and the other replied merrily, "Always ready to give you a lift." The two friends thus walked down from the House together, chatting pleasantly. McGee was going home next day, when an even kindlier welcome than usual was awaiting him, as his birthday was at hand and several of his Montreal friends were preparing to celebrate it by presenting to his wife a portrait of him painted by Bell Smith. It was an

occasion to which they were looking forward with the greatest of pleasure.

Macfarlane and McGee parted at the corner of Metcalfe and Sparks Streets, and McGee crossed to the other side. As he did so a group of messengers of the House of Commons overtook him and one shouted out, "Good-night, Mr. McGee." McGee returned the salutation with his usual spontaneity: "Good morning—it is morning now, Buckley," and never spoke again. He walked but a few yards farther to his boarding-house, he put the key into the door to unlock it, when a flash—a report, and he was shot through the head by some one standing so close behind him that his hair was singed.

A Fenian named Patrick James Whelan was arrested shortly after. He was given a long, patient trial with an abundance of legal talent pleading in his behalf, but he was found guilty and hanged February 11th, 1869. However, it was never felt that the whole truth was known. Much of the evidence which hanged Whelan was purely circumstantial, and he, to the last, maintained he was innocent. Many believed that he was only one of a number who had conspired to commit the murder and that he may not have been the one to whom it actually fell to fire the shot.

A great wave of horror and grief swept over the country with the news. Business was involuntarily suspended, flags everywhere hung at half-mast, mourning badges were worn for weeks, sometimes months; even in the small towns public buildings were draped in black; as his funeral train passed from Ottawa to Montreal crowds met it at every station. No living man had ever had the homage which was now tendered their beloved dead. All kinds of societies, Catholic, Protestant, French, Irish, English, Scotch, and German, met and passed their resolutions of sympathy, and some of them, like the Council of the Township of Roxton in the County of Shefford, determined "that the persons present do go into deep mourning and keep it for six months." Requiem Mass was celebrated in hundreds of parish churches, the expenses incurred being borne by the parish-

ioners to show their appreciation of the services he had rendered his country. Everywhere churches were decorated by sorrowing women who desired thus to associate themselves with his widow in the grief in which she was plunged. Highest and lowest were united in common feelings of sympathy for Mrs. McGee. Queen Victoria sent her an autograph letter of condolence.

The Dominion Parliament adjourned until after his funeral. Sir John A. Macdonald, Alexander Mackenzie, and many others spoke in the profound and horrified hush of that afternoon. They were broken but sincere and heartfelt tributes to their friend, not to the statesman, which the anguish of the hour called forth. Macdonald's closing words were:

> He has gone from us, and it will be long ere we find such a happy mixture of eloquence and wisdom, wit and earnestness. His was no artificial or meretricious eloquence, every word of his was as he believed, and every belief, every thought of his was in the direction of what was good and true. Well may I say now, on behalf of the Government and of the country, that if he has fallen, he has fallen in our cause, leaving behind him a grateful recollection which will ever live in the hearts and minds of his countrymen.

Mackenzie recorded his affection for him, and said that in all the vicissitudes of political warfare he had ever found him to possess "that generous disposition so characteristic of the man and his country." Chauveau spoke in French, and, like Macdonald and Mackenzie, was visibly affected, but his words were taken up by the men and press of the day as exactly expressing their needs. The part they emphasized was:

> Mr. McGee never displayed the least vanity, or prided himself upon his transcendent talents. He was always modest and affable towards all, and never appeared to appreciate his own merit. He also had a generous heart. He was always ready to contribute to every charity or charitable institution. I have often met him in Montreal in ceremonies and public celebrations got up for the purpose of doing good and instilling charity, and he never refused his aid or refused to draw on the eloquent fund of words which sprung from the bottom of his heart in aid of the poor. On these occasions he always seemed to be under the impression that he was

only doing what another person would have done, and his good heart was equal to his modesty. The orphans and unfortunate have lost in him a great protector.

On the 9th, McGee's body was brought from Ottawa to his home in Montreal. There during the long hours of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday great multitudes filed past his bier. It was the climax of a striking demonstration of national grief, for the people came from far and near and represented all classes, rich and poor, great and lowly. On Easter Monday, April 13th, on his forty-third birthday, he was laid to rest on Mount Royal.[1] His funeral wound its way up between great throngs of people, and lines of soldiers, amid the booming of minute guns and the tolling of city bells.

Two solemn services were held for him that day. The first was in St. Patrick's, where the Rev. Father O'Farrell spoke with great earnestness and eloquence from the text, "How is the mighty man fallen, that saved the people of Israel!" A brief quotation from his impressive words shows in a beautiful way how D'Arcy McGee's spiritual counsellor looked upon his innermost character:

My brethren, when the muster-roll of the great men of Canada shall be read out to future generations, to the name of Thomas D'Arcy McGee shall be added as his best and most suitable epitaph, that he "died on the field of honour."....

[1] Perhaps in no way can it be so fully brought home to us how absolutely in his prime D'Arcy McGee was cut off, as by comparing the year of his death with those of his fellow-members at the Quebec Conference who were born in the same decade. Only two of the thirty-three Fathers of Confederation were younger than McGee, Langevin, who was born in 1826, and A. A. Macdonald, born in 1828. The men of the 1820-30 decade lived as follows:

McGee:.....	1825-1868
Tupper:.....	1821-1915
Langevin:.....	1826-1906
Mowat:.....	1820-1903
Mitchell:.....	1824-1899
Campbell:.....	1821-1892
McDougall:.....	1822-1905

Sir Charles Tupper, it will be noticed, lived for forty-seven years after McGee's death—five years longer than McGee's whole life.

I admired and esteemed in the deceased the *Scholar*, whose mind was stored and enriched with the most varied information; the *Patriot*, who loved his country, his native as well as his adopted one, with the truest and deepest affection; the *Statesman*, whose mighty intellect soared above all merely local interests, and comprehended in his far-reaching glance the necessities and advantages of the entire Empire; but more than all, as a minister of God, I loved and admired the humble *Christian*, who devoted his talents to the noblest causes, whose faith in the doctrines of the Catholic Church shone out all the brighter and purer after the storms by which it had been tested, and towards the close of his life he specially showed the firmest hope and the most touching confidence in the merits and mercies of his crucified Master.....

The second service was held in Notre Dame, where Bishop Bourget of Montreal delivered a solemn and touching address; and there was another being held by Archbishop Connolly at the same hour in the Cathedral at Halifax.

When Parliament reassembled on Tuesday, the 14th, the day following his funeral, they felt their first duty was to provide for McGee's family, "as now belonging to the State." As Macdonald said, "It was well known that he was too good and too generous to be rich." They unanimously voted Mrs. McGee an annuity of $1,200 and settled on each of his daughters £1,000. At the same time his friends made up a subscription of some six thousand dollars, which wiped out his debts.

A wild caoine of woe, in prose and poetry, went up from the Canadian press. It would be quite impossible to give any adequate selection from the hundreds of articles and poems printed during the following year on D'Arcy McGee. With one accord they seemed to go back for inspiration and words to old Celtic laments. One which appeared to satisfy them particularly was the dirge of Thomas Davis on Owen Roe O'Neil:

Did they dare, did they dare, to slay Owen Roe O'Neil?
Yes, they slew with poison him they feared to meet with steel!
May God wither up their hearts! May their blood cease to flow!
May they walk in living death who poisoned Owen Roe!

Wail, wail ye for the mighty one! Wail, wail ye for the dead!
Quench the hearth and hold the breath! With ashes strew the head!
How tenderly we loved him! How deeply we deplore!
Holy Saviour! but to think we shall never see him more!

Others again turned to his own poems, and particularly his last unfinished fragment:

He is dead, and to earth
We bear our shield and sparthe,
Thomond's prince and Ireland's promise,
In God's anger taken from us;
. . . . . .
Thomond's grief will not be hurried,
Royal deeds cannot be buried,
Men cannot cast a dungeon
O'er the stars, and he's among them—
He, of his the liberal spender,
Of ours the stern defender—
The pillar of our power,
Snapp'd in our trial's hour—
Chant slower, sisters, slower;
'Tis the Caoine of Donnell More'

Thomas D'Arcy McGee was a fine, generous, honourable, and sterling nature. It is hard to do justice to the valorous patriot, the poetical orator, the thorough Irishman, and the Christian peacemaker. He had the zeal of a missionary and the persistence of a propagandist in striving to push obstacles aside and force good causes forward. He welcomed the coming generation and held high before them an ideal of the part they had to play for their country's sake.

His years in Canada were few, but they were long enough to leave upon its political and social life an extraordinarily deep and lasting imprint. At the moment of his death, his political career lacked its full expression: with his great gifts and generous self-spending, a foremost place in the first Cabinet of the Dominion was his beyond challenge. The wheel of change was fast bringing round the time when he would again hold a place in the country's councils, as he always did in the people's confidence. But no office could have added lustre to his name. To see the Dominion firmly established was his political ambition, and that was granted. He was—as his last words said—"thoroughly and

STATUE OF D'ARCY McGEE p. 16

ERECTED ON PARLIAMENT HILL, OTTAWA, BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

emphatically a Canadian." He attached himself to the country with all the warmth of his ardent nature, and he left there a record of service. He laboured in abundance and he laboured in love to increase the unity, peace, greatness, and growth of our land, and to establish it on the best and surest foundations. This will hold for him an essential place in the enduring history of Canada.

A Chronology

1825 Born in Carlingford.
1833 Removed to Wexford.
1842 Sailed for the United States.
1844 Assistant Editor of **The Boston Pilot.**
1845 **O'Connell and His Friends.**
1845 Returned to Ireland; became London correspondent of **The Freeman's Journal.**
1846 Joined **The Nation** in Dublin.
1846 **The Irish Writers of the Seventeenth Century.**
1847 One of the founders of the Irish Confederation.
1847 **Life and Conquests of Art MacMurrogh.**
1848 Irish League; Revolution of '48; exiled to the United States.
1848 Established **The New York Nation.**
1848 **Memoir of Charles Gavan Duffy.**
1850 Established **The American Celt.**
1850 **A History of the Irish Settlers.**
1852 Transferred **The American Celt** to Buffalo.
1853 **The Catholic History of North America.**
1854 Lecture tour in Canada.
1855 Combats the Know-Nothing campaign.
1855 **The Attempts to Establish the Reformation in Ireland.**
1856 Campaign for Western Irish settlement.
1857 **The Life of Bishop Maginn.**
1857 Removal to Canada; established **New Era**; elected one of the members for Montreal.
1858 Supported Brown-Dorion Reform Administration.
1859 Politico-religious opposition; Peacemaker Banquet in Toronto.
1861 Defended the cause of the North and anti-slavery.
1862 (May). Became President of the Council in the Sandfield Macdonald-Sicotte Ministry.

1862 (Sept). Chairman of Intercolonial Conference at Quebec.
1863 (June). Cabinet reorganized; McGee became Independent; elected for Montreal West in contest with J. Young.
1863 (Aug). Lectured in Maritime Provinces and Canadas on British American Union; urged a Kingdom of Canada.
1863 Joined Liberal-Conservative party; campaigned eastern Upper Canada with J. A. Macdonald.
1863 **The History of Ireland.**
1864 (March) Became Minister of Agriculture, Immigration and Statistics in Taché-Macdonald Ministry.
1864 (Aug.-Oct). Member of Charlottetown Conference and of Quebec Conference and the Canadian Delegation to the Maritime Provinces.
1865 **Federal Governments, Past and Present.**
1865 Campaign against Fenianism; Wexford speech.
1866 **The Irish Position in British and in Republican North America.**
1867 Re-elected for Montreal in contest with Bernard Devlin; private member in first Dominion Parliament.
1867 Worked with Alexander Mackenzie to reconcile Nova Scotia to Confederation.
1867 (Nov).—1868 (March) Prolonged illness.
1868 (April 7.) Assassination.
1869 **Collected Poems,** edited by Mrs. J. Sadlier.

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