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"OLD TIME STUFF"

Reminiscences of the Ottawa of Earlier Days. Personages, Scenes and Incidents Recalled for Evening Citizen Readers

Gradually the Old Time Stuff has been gathering and publishing material which will go far towards forming an excellent history not only of Ottawa, but of the early Ottawa. In the days to come The Citizen files of the present time will form an excellent source of information. There is, however, much to be told. Many interesting papers and documents which would throw a sidelight on the manner of life of the early people are in cupboards, in buried away in cupboards and deeds of present-day citizens who are descendants of the old timers. The Old Time Stuff will be glad to have the loan of such documents. All papers so loaned will be promptly returned. A note sent to The Citizen and addressed to "Editor, Old Time Stuff" will produce a call from the editor of this department. The editor will also be glad to hear from descendants of people who lived in Bytown, especially from descendants on the female side of families, whose descent may not be recognized because of the difference in names. Any assistance which readers of The Citizen may be able to give toward making this department valuable as well as interesting will be appreciated by the editor and will be helpful to everybody.

SPEECH WHICH CAUSED ASSASSINATION D'ARCY McGEE.

In the early morning of April 7, 1868, D'Arcy McGee was assassinated as he was about to enter the door of his boarding house on Sparks street, after a busy night in the House of Commons. Though fifty-five years have passed since the cold-blooded murder of this true statesman, the story of his assassination is still green in the public memory, though regarded as one of the dark stains on Ottawa's history, a stain which was only partly wiped out by the hanging of Whalen.

But while those of the present day know in a general way that the killing of T. D'Arcy McGee was due to his whole public and parliamentary attitude against the introduction of Fenian methods into Canada, there are few who are aware of the immediate cause, or at least the chief contributing cause, of his murder.

On St. Patrick's night, or just three weeks before the assassination, the Irish of Ottawa, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, united in a St. Patrick's Day concert for the purpose of raising funds for the poor and orphans of the city. D'Arcy McGee (member for one of the Montreal seats) was present and spoke at this concert. At its close (at 10 o'clock) a banquet was tendered to Mr. McGee by his Ottawa and parliamentary friends of all religious persuasions.

The Likely Cause.

There can be little doubt that it was the speech which Mr. McGee made at this banquet which was the more immediate cause of his taking off. Those who read the verbatim speech which the O.T.S. herewith reproduces, cannot but be convinced that they have read the words which acted as the death sentence of a truly great man. It was a remarkable speech from any point of view.

Among the prominent parliamentarians and citizens at this banquet were: Sir John Macdonald, Hon. Geo. E. Cartier, Sheriff Powell, Zach. Wilson, James Colton, Rev. Dr. Lauder, Hon. R. W. Scott, M.P.P., Mayor H. J. Friel, P. A. Egleson, Thos. McKay, Rev. Ami Dawson, Judge Armstrong, and about 150 others.

Sir John Macdonald in his speech paid a high tribute to D'Arcy McGee as a patriot, a statesman and an orator. Sir John said he was only sorry Mr. McGee was not a member of the federal government as his talents warranted a much higher position for him (Mr. McGee had been a minister in the old provincial parliament.) But, he said, Mr. McGee held a very high position in the esteem of the people even in his capacity as an ordinary member of parliament. The toast to Mr. McGee was moved by Mayor H. J. Friel.

The Speech.

Mr. McGee arose amid a thunder of applause. After some preliminary remarks, he said:

"I believe I do not exaggerate when I say that surely this (the joint banquet) is a good and salutary sign for this city and this country, and one that ought not to be without its influence with Irishmen of all parties and all denominations, especially in this country. (Cheers.) In no other country is Christendom, unfortunately, have religious differences been so embittered, so long lived, or so apparently incurable, as in Ireland; not because they were differences of religion, or because the Irish temper is naturally unsocial or intolerant, for I believe we may appeal to the whole world that such is not the national temperament of Irishmen—(hear, hear)—but because church questions were so complicated with material interests, and civil rights, in that country; because they were so long the qualification, or the bar, to the possession of property, or the enjoyment of equal political rights.

Canada Happy Country.

"Now, in this happy country—happy if we only know our own advantages—happy if we are all resolved to make it so—where these theological complications with private and political rights do not now, and never did to any extent, exist, why should the prejudices and the conflicts, which were the growth of a different set of circumstances, be imported and cultivated here? (Hear, hear.) I hold that man an insincere man who does not heartily prefer his own country to any other—and an unfortunate man, who does not practise the religion he holds dear; but surely we can all sincerely believe, and loyally live up to, our religious principles and yet remember that of the glorious trinity of evangelical virtues—the greatest of all these is charity." (Cheers.) Whatever else any church claiming to be a Christian teaches its members—whatever dogmas any of us hold or reject—we are all equally and alike taught the one and the same doctrine—'Do unto others, as you would they should do unto you.' (Cheers.)

Reason for Invitation.

"Now it is on this eminently social, true, and patriotic principle we meet here tonight, and it is a principle which ought to commend itself to the general approbation of all good men. (Cheers.) Mr. Mayor, I know it is because I have endeavored in my weak way to set forth and illustrate this principle, that you have graciously connected my humble name with this St. Patrick's festival of 1848; and it is because I am deeply grateful for this mark of your esteem and because I am honestly ambitious to be reckoned somewhere, however lowly the place, in the catalogue of her patriots, that I thank you most unaffectedly for this great impetus to the good cause—of future peace and goodwill among us all. (Cheers.) We have needed, and we shall need more and more, social union as well as political union among our diversified population; we need it in peace, for all the great designs of peace; we should need it still more in times of danger, for then, indeed, a divided people are an easy prey, but a united population, in a just cause, on their own soil, what foreign force can overcome, or destroy? (Cheers.)

Looking Into Future.

"May God avert the day when our friends here, and those assembled elsewhere in the same spirit, may be called upon to defend their country with their lives, but if such a day of trial should come, sooner or later, as come it may in the changes and chances of human affairs, believe me, gentlemen, it would be no bad preparation for the unity of the Irish contingent of our volunteer defenders, in camp or in action—it would be no ineffective contribution to the mutual confidence of brave men in each other, so important at such a time—that they had met together, as we are doing tonight, brothers in the exercises of hospitality, before they became brothers in arms! (Loud cheers.) When I accepted your invitation, gentlemen of the committee, I thought of that possible consequence, and I am rejoiced to know that there are similar reunions to this, of Irish Canadians, and their honored guests of other origins, taking place on this auspicious St. Patrick's Day, in Montreal, and elsewhere, throughout the country.

Something to Consider.

"The mention of Montreal reminds me that there are here now three members for that city—my honorable friend, the Minister (Mr. Cartier), facile princeps the honored head of his compatriots—and my other hon. friend and colleague, (Mr. Thos. McGee), an Irish Protestant from the heart of Ulster. (Cheers.) I wish the success of our internal peace—I wish the enemies of the Dominion—to consider for a moment that fact, and to ask themselves whether a state of society which enables us all to meet as we do in this manner, with the fullest feeling of equal rights, and the strongest sense of equal duties to our common country—is not a state of society, on condition of things, a system and a frame of self-government, worthy even of the sacrifice of men's lives, to perpetuate and preserve. (Cheers.)

Refers to Ireland.

"Mr. Mayor, before I sit down—as this is St. Patrick's night and I am the guest of the Irish citizens of Ottawa, if you will permit me—I may be expected to add a few general remarks on the critical subject of the state of the native land of our hosts and myself—the condition and state of Ireland. (Hear, hear.) If I have avoided for two or three years speaking in public on the subject of Ireland, even in a literary or historical sense, I do not admit that I can be fairly charged, in consequence, with being either a sordid or a cold-hearted Irishman. (Cheers.) I utterly deny that because I could not stand still and see our peaceful, unoffending Canada, invaded and deluged with blood, in the name of the sacred name of Ireland, that, therefore, I was a bad Irishman.

Denies Sordid Charge.

"I utterly deny the sordid charge, and I say that my mental labors will prove, such as they are, that I know Ireland as well, both in her strength and her weakness, as I love her as dearly as any of those who in ignorance of my Canadian position—in ignorance of my obligations to my adopted country—not to speak of my solemn oath of office—have made the cruelty false charge against me. (Loud cheers.) You have been kind enough in allude, Mr. Mayor, to my 'History of Ireland'; no one is more sensible of its many deficiencies than I am, and if I live I hope to remedy some of them; but it certainly was to me a labor of love, and I believe it is the first time that a history of Ireland has ever been commenced and completed by a person situated as I was at the time, in a distant colony, after his personal connexion with the native country might be supposed to have closed forever. (Cheers.) With reference to our literature generally, let me say, Mr. Mayor, that I have great faith in the recuperative energies and the mental energy of the Irish race. We have had heavy and almost irreparable losses as an intellectual people the past few years; we have lost a trio of Celtic scholars, in O'Donovan, O'Curry and Petrie, the like of whom will not soon arise again, if ever; but when we remember that we have still left, Dr. Todd, Dr. Moran and Dr. Reeves, and Samuel Ferguson, McCarthy, Gilbert, and Father Meehan, to unbold the glories of our national Academy; when I see what even our Irish ladies are doing, such as Lady Wilde and Mrs. Ferguson at Dublin, and Mrs. Sadlier at New York, to increase the store and elevate the standard of our national literature; when I see volume after volume of the purest metal, and combined with the finest skill in style and treatment, issuing from the Dublin and London and New York publishing houses on Irish subjects, even I, in this far north of the new world, can sometimes by reflection, a glow of the same inspiration, and venture my humbler work to cheer on and applaud those true patriots and true benefactors of their country and countrymen. (Cheers.)

Condemns Fenian Raid.

"As to Irish public affairs, I will further take the liberty to mention that when in 1865 and 1867, by the consent of my colleagues and my gallant friend here (Sir John A. Macdonald) I went home to represent this country, I, on both occasions, in '65 to Lord Kimberley, then lord lieutenant, and last year to the Earl of Derby, whose retirement from active life and his cause of it, every observer of his great historical career must regret—I twice respectfully submitted my humble views, and the result of my considerable Irish-American experience, and that they were courteously, and I hope I may say favorably, entertained. I spoke on those