

## DEATH OF MR. JUSTIN MCCARTHY

### EMINENT NOVELIST, JOURNALIST AND HISTORIAN

A cable message received on Friday announced the death of Mr. Justin McCarthy, the eminent Irish historian, journalist, and novelist, who passed away in his 82nd year. Mr. McCarthy was born near Cork on November 22, 1830. His father was not in affluent circumstances, but was a man of culture with gifts which the struggle for daily bread as a magistrate's clerk prevented him from cultivating to the stage which might have brought him distinction. It had been the father's desire that on leaving school the boy should study law. But the hopes were soon destroyed. His father died, and at seventeen, young Justin was called upon to be the support of the family. Something had to be done, and a friend came to his assistance in the person of John Francis Maguire of the *Cork Examiner*, who tendered him a position as reporter. There were good influences to help the lad in his first struggle and of those was the friendship of the great Father Mathew, the Apostle of Temperance, from whom he had taken the pledge when quite young. A friendship, too, was started with Thomas Crosbie, a colleague on the staff of the *Cork Examiner*, who afterwards became its editor, and with him Justin read the ancient classics, the Italian poets, and the great masters of English literature. It was these studies that turned his thoughts in the direction of a literary career. A few poems in his paper gained him the notice of a Dublin editor.

The Irish famine, then at its height, furnished young McCarthy with the opportunity for a precocious exercise of his talents in descriptive writing in the *Cork Examiner*, and gave him his first insight into the Irish problem, which was to occupy so much of his maturer years. As a special correspondent he travelled in the stricken districts, and often saw the hinged coffin do its double and treble duty in filling nameless graves. He must have heard the bells of Cork ringing a joyous peal when an American frigate put into the harbor with food supplies sent over sea from Irishmen who had made their homes away from Ireland. Justin McCarthy attended the Clonmel State trial to chronicle the death sentences passed on Smith O'Brien and Thomas Francis Meagher. With the revival of the project of armed rebellion which followed the trial, McCarthy did not sympathise. Its patriotic motives he understood—to convince England of the vitality and depth of Irish national feeling,—but he seems to have taken up, even from boyhood, a constitutional point of view in regard to Irish agitation, and to have cherished from his earliest reflective moments that abiding belief in the English sense of justice which remained with him to the end.

In 1860 he went to London, and he got an appointment on a Radical paper which was waging an uphill fight under the able editorship of Samuel Lucas, a brother-in-law of the great John Bright. Meanwhile an article on *Voltaire's Romances and Their Moral* gained him the notice and encouragement of John Stuart Mill, the economist and philosopher, and on the death of Samuel Lucas he succeeded to the editorial chair. Besides the morning issue an evening edition of the paper was also published, in which appeared a series of literary articles by men who have since made names in the world of journalism and literature—William Black and Richard Whiting, the novelists, Edmond Yates, and Archibald Forbes, the famous war correspondent. Mr. McCarthy also came to know Tennyson, Carlyle, and Browning. It was at this time, too, that he entered upon a new field of literary labor—that of novel-writing. For some time he had been at work upon one of somewhat serious import; but a friendly publisher advised him to make his first appeal to the public with what it wanted—a sensational story. After this he resumed work on his first attempt, the child of his own fancy, which made a gratifying success as *My Enemy's Daughter*. Then came another change. John Bright's acceptance of office in a Liberal Cabinet

necessitated a severance of his relations with the *Morning Star*, and when this bond was snapped, Mr. McCarthy felt that his chief reason for holding on to so laborious a position as its editorship was gone. He, therefore, retired, and paid a long visit to his brother Francis, in the United States, where he would probably have taken up his permanent residence and become an American citizen, but for his desire to help forward by every means in his power the cause of his native country, which had at that time come to what seemed might turn out to be the crisis of her fate. Mr. McCarthy stayed two years in the States, with a brief visit paid to London in 1870. He became attached to the *New York Independent*, wrote leading articles for the *Tribune* under Horace Greeley, and accepted a commission from Harper and Brothers for a hundred short stories to appear in *Harpers Monthly*—a commission which he 'worked off' during his travels up and down the country.

During a visit to England in 1870 he had entered the service of the *Daily News* as a leader writer, and in the following year he felt that he was now in a position to assist the organisation which had been formed in Ireland for Home Rule under the leadership of that brilliant barrister, Isaac Butt. His circle of acquaintance quickly enlarged and soon came to embrace most of the men and women who were famous in art, literature, and politics. His house in Gower street brought him a neighbour in the person of Charles Stewart Parnell, then a handsome young man of a winning and most attractive personality, magnetic even, whose influence turned him more and more in the direction of a distinctly political career. Meanwhile an invitation to stand for the constituency of County Longford was accepted, and Mr. McCarthy entered the House of Commons in the following year in the party then dominated by the growing influence of Parnell who entered upon the policy of obstruction by which he forced the country to recognise the claims of Ireland.

The next 20 years of his life were pretty evenly divided between politics and literature. He had just begun his *History of Our Own Times* when he was elected for Longford, and the publishers who had projected the history became alarmed lest his association with Irish politics should prejudice the commercial chances of the enterprise. So they offered him compensation to release them from an agreement into which Messrs. Chatto and Windus were only too pleased to enter, and he went steadily on with his history, which became an immediate popular success, was translated into several Continental languages, and ran through almost as many editions in America as in Great Britain.

Shortly after his entrance into Parliament Isaac Butt died and was succeeded in the chairmanship of the party for a short time by William Shaw. Then Parnell was elected chairman and leader and Mr. McCarthy was elected the first vice-chairman in order that in the possible absence of the leader there might be one invested with authority to carry on the work in his name.

When Lord Salisbury went out of office in 1885 Mr. McCarthy was invited to contest the constituency of Derry which was regarded as the blue ribbon of the Nationalist Party. He was defeated by the narrow majority of twenty-nine, but his old constituency of Longford again sent him to Parliament. After the general election of 1892 Mr. McCarthy returned to the House as leader of the party with seventy-two supporters, whilst a compact and able body of nine were true to Mr. Parnell. It was a melancholy and even painful victory for a moderate man like Mr. McCarthy, who only accepted the position thrust upon him as a temporary expedient. As soon as possible he resigned in favor of Mr. John Dillon, and devoted himself as far as his Parliamentary duties would allow to his literary work. In 1897 he brought out the fifth volume of his *History of Our Own Times*, but soon after was struck down by a long illness which brought his eventful Parliamentary career to a close.

He has been a capable and prolific writer. In addition to his constant output of articles for the papers he has given us the *History of Our Own Times*, a *History of the Four Georges*, the *Reign of Queen Anne*,