

Dr. Edward McGlynn

By

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New York

Dr. McGlynn Monument Association

1918

Dr. Edward McGlynn

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

We have been deprived of a great man,
But it has been our privilege to enjoy him.

DR. BURTSSELL.

Edward McGlynn was born in the City of New York, September 27, 1837. His parents came from Donegal, Ireland, in 1824. His father, Peter McGlynn, was a well-known New York contractor, who died when Edward was only ten years old. His mother, Sarah McGlynn, a woman of great strength of character, lived to a ripe old age, noted and beloved for her many generous and lovable qualities. Of their eleven children, Edward became the most celebrated. John, one of the "Argonauts" of '49, was elected the first Recorder of San Francisco. Frank McGlynn, the sole surviving brother, is now living in that city. George W., another brother, was prominent in public affairs in New York.

Edward McGlynn and the others were educated in the public schools, which he always upheld as an American institution to be cherished and preserved. He attended the Thirteenth Street Grammar School, and later the Free Academy, now College of the City of New York. "He always remembered the years he passed there as good and wholesome years that gave him sturdy faith and sturdy willingness to fight the battles for righteousness," said Dr. Burtzell in his funeral eulogy.

At the age of thirteen, in the year 1850, he was sent, at the instance of Bishop Hughes and Rev. Dr. Cummings, to the Urban College of the Propaganda, Rome, as he had already evidenced a strong desire for the ecclesiastical life. In that world-famed college, where he remained nine years, he met as fellow students men from every quarter of the globe, among them his life-long, cherished friend, Dr. Burtzell, who relates that Dr. McGlynn was the recognized and loved leader among

them all, being graduated with the highest honors, taking the rare reward, the gold medal for efficiency in all his studies. At the age of 23, he was already Doctor of Philosophy and Sacred Theology. He was hardly twenty-two when he was selected as Vice-President of the American College, then recently established (1859).

He was ordained a priest, March 24, 1860, in the Church of St. John Lateran, Rome, and soon afterwards returned to New York, since which time until his death in 1900, he became an ever increasing power for good to his fellow-men.

Dr. McGlynn was first sent to St. Joseph's Church, Sixth Avenue, and to its famous pastor, Father Thomas Farrell, whose broad sympathy received an earnest response from his new assistant. Father Farrell was an intense American, well-known for his liberal views, an ardent opponent of slavery, a staunch friend and supporter of Abraham Lincoln. He left \$5,000 in his will as a nucleus for the founding of a Catholic Church for Colored people and his wish was carried out when the Church of St. Benedict the Moor was established. This early association with Father Farrell no doubt had its share of influence on Dr. McGlynn's life. He next became acting pastor of St. Brigid's, Avenue B, afterwards went to the lower part of the city to St. James'; then to St. Ann's and during the later years of the Civil War was Chaplain of the Military Hospital in Central Park. In the fall of 1865, at the urgent request of his old pastor, Dr. Cummings, whose health was failing, he was made his assistant.

In January, 1866, upon the death of Dr. Cummings, Dr. McGlynn, at the age of 29, became pastor of St. Stephen's Parish, "a parish which at that time outranked in importance most of the dioceses of the country." It was one of the largest and most populous parishes in New York, 25,000 persons being estimated as among its parishioners.

Dr. McGlynn entered upon his work with energy and zeal and during twenty-one years, St. Stephen's, already well-known, became still more famous as the home where religion, aided by painting, music, and oratory found its highest forms of expression.

"How he loved to ornament the house of God," says Dr. Burtzell. "What pains he took to select the minutest details of the altar. The magnificent paintings from sanctuary to porch rivalled those of some of the grandest churches in the Eternal City." He

found a great pleasure in close association with Brumidi, painter of the historical paintings in the Capitol at Washington, while that famous artist was painting the "Crucifixion," the altar piece for St. Stephen's which has since been copied for other churches in the city.

The unselfishness of Dr. McGlynn's work for the poor, his great piety, profound learning and wonderful eloquence; the charm of his personality, the loveliness of his character, the brilliance of his conversation, the marvelous fund of information he brought to the contemplation of the problems of the age, made him much sought after by visitors to the city, whether Protestant, Catholic, Jew or Gentile. "Bishops from all parts of the country and the world never passed through New York without visiting Dr. McGlynn. They felt he was a wonderful man, and they loved to listen to his words."

But his influence was not confined within his Church. Born in New York, he always felt himself a citizen as well as a priest and he took an intense interest in whatever concerned her progress. He was frequently called upon by people and press to speak for some patriotic or charitable cause. He responded generously whenever the welfare of the City and the cause of good government were to be conserved or the interests of humanity to be promoted. Good government in this City owes very much to his active support in face of strong opposition, and our country is daily giving readier ear to the principles he urged.

Many times in New York and in the great cities and towns of this country and Canada, large congregations and vast audiences have been held spellbound by his eloquence for hours at a time in churches or great civic auditoriums. He has often been compared to Wendell Phillips, Phillips Brooks and Henry Ward Beecher. Like them he had a great heart overflowing with love for his fellowman and like them with sanctified eloquence, he taught the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

The tremendous power he exerted over the minds and hearts of men found its highest expression at the first meeting of the Anti-Poverty Society in Chickering Hall, May, 1887, when, in describing the full depth of meaning of the Lord's Prayer, he repeated it and created a scene of the greatest enthusiasm, the cheers and applause lasting fully fifteen minutes; and again ten years later, at the extraordinary funeral of Henry George in the Grand Central Palace, when, in the course of his splendid eulogy

of his dear friend and co-worker, Dr. McGlynn exclaimed: "There was a man sent of God whose name was Henry George," he so electrified that vast assemblage of 15,000 persons that the restraint of a funeral was swept aside in an outburst of applause and cheers.

Dr. McGlynn was not originally poor, but he lived among and worked for the poor unceasingly. He knew the hardships and "horrid drudgery" of their lot, the narrowness and cheerlessness of their blighted lives and he was profoundly touched by the misery, want and suffering he saw everywhere.

"I began to feel life made a burden," he has said, "by the never ending procession of men, women and little children coming to my door begging not so much for alms as employment, not asking for food, but asking for influence and letters of recommendation, and personally appealing to me to obtain for them an *opportunity for working for their daily bread*. And I felt that no matter how much I might give them, even though I reserved nothing for myself, even though I hopelessly involved myself in debt, I could accomplish nothing. I began to ask myself 'Is there no remedy? Is this God's order that the poor shall be constantly becoming poorer in all our large cities, the world over?'"

"I was compelled out of sympathy for those right at my own door, as well as for thousands of the starving people of the native land of my father and my mother, to ask myself these questions, to study a little political economy, to ask what is God's law as to the maintenance of His family down here below."

To the answering of these questions Dr. McGlynn gave his best thought and energies. Never failing to help the poor and needy, making and keeping himself constantly poor as a consequence; convinced of the inadequacy of mere alms giving to wipe out the horrors of involuntary poverty; this already famous American citizen and beloved priest taught that "the highest form of charity is the doing of justice."

In the views of Henry George, set forth in *Progress and Poverty*, Dr. McGlynn saw a satisfying explanation of cause and cure, and, regarding these views as the economic expression of the Gospels, he advocated them with fervor and wondrous eloquence regardless of cost to himself. He was then in the fulness of power and influence. Henry George often spoke of him as a "Peter the Hermit" and "An Army with Banners."

Dr. McGlynn was convinced that

"God has made ample provision for the needs of all men during their residence upon earth, and that involuntary poverty is the result of human laws that allow individuals to hold as private property that which the Creator provided for the use of all."

He declared that

"It is a noble charity to help bring about such lawful social adjustments, based upon a sound political economy, as will create a greater and a steady demand for labor and raise wages while diminishing the cost of living, and thus largely diminish suffering, of which there will always necessarily be enough in the world for the exercise of Christian charity."

Dr. McGlynn in 1882 supported the Irish Land League and Michael Davitt; advocated the teachings of "Progress and Poverty," urged the nomination of Henry George and took a leading part in the remarkable campaign of 1886, was one of the founders and President of the Anti-Poverty Society (1887-1893). And for this he suffered suspension from the exercise of his faculties as a priest, removal from his church and excommunication (July, 1887). Truly, no one at that time made greater sacrifices for conscience sake than he.

But all was changed, five years later, when Pope Leo XIII sent his most intimate and trusted friend, Archbishop Satolli, as his Ablegate to the Church in the United States. Three years earlier (1889) Monsignor Satolli had visited America as the Pope's representative at the celebration of the centenary of the Catholic Hierarchy and the inauguration of the Catholic University. On his way home, while stopping at Archbishop Corrigan's residence, Monsignor Satolli telegraphed Dr. McGlynn, asking that he favor him with an interview. Dr. McGlynn, on a lecture tour, did not receive the telegram for several days. He immediately sent it to Dr. Burtzell with a letter asking him to call on Monsignor Satolli in his name, to express his regret at not being able to see him in person, and to say that he would give immediate attention to whatever the Monsignor might have to say to Dr. Burtzell. But meanwhile Monsignor Satolli had sailed for Rome, so Dr. Burtzell wrote to him, explaining these circumstances.

When Monsignor Satolli returned to America in 1892 as Papal Ablegate, Dr. Burtzell called upon him and reminded him of his telegram and Dr. McGlynn's letter. Monsignor Satolli remembered both and immediately stated that he had

been commissioned to inquire into the matter. When Dr. Burtzell brought some important facts before him, the Ablegate said he would ask the Holy See to grant him all the power necessary to finally settle the case. Monsignor Satolli received this full power about December 12, 1892.

"A full, explicit and unreserved exposition of the Single Tax doctrine with an Italian translation was submitted by Dr. McGlynn to Monsignor Satolli, considered by him and submitted to four theologians of the Catholic University at Washington, who gave written attestation that the exposition contained nothing contrary to Catholic teaching." Dr. McGlynn's restoration by the Papal Ablegate followed on December 23, 1892, and announcement was made that

"at nine o'clock P. M. Dr. McGlynn was declared free from ecclesiastical censures and restored to the exercise of his priestly functions, after having satisfied the Pope's legate on all the points in his case."

All the details of the settlement were sent to the Holy Father. Three weeks later, on January 14, 1893, Pope Leo appointed Monsignor Satolli Apostolic Delegate, the first in this country. The same day the new Delegate, in the course of a lengthy statement, said that

"Dr. McGlynn had presented a brief statement of his opinions on moral-economic matters and it was judged not contrary to the doctrine constantly taught by the Church, and as recently confirmed by the Holy Father in the Encyclical, 'Rerum Novarum.'"

This declaration Monsignor Satolli reaffirmed in the following year (1894) when contradicting as "false" the statement in an English paper "that he had called upon Dr. McGlynn to retract and disown his teaching."

There being no doctrine to retract, there had been no retraction. So was confirmed the claim that Dr. McGlynn had made in his first Anti-Poverty address, May, 1887, "that the doctrine had not been condemned and, better still, could not be condemned." In similar strain Cardinal Manning had spoken to Henry George. Catholics are free to hold the doctrine or not to hold it as they see fit.

On Christmas morning, 1892, Dr. McGlynn, for the first time in more than five years, officiated at the altar, saying the three masses usual on that great festival. In the evening he addressed an immense gathering of the Anti-Poverty Society in Cooper Union. This he continued to do until he went with

his dear friend, Bishop John Moore, to Florida and preached a course of Lenten Sermons in the bishop's cathedral in St. Augustine. He also spoke in Washington, St. Louis and Chicago.

Dr. McGlynn visited Rome and was most cordially received by the Pope in June, 1893, "when," to use his own words, "the Holy Father, in a gracious audience, affectionately confirmed with the Apostolic Benediction the already completed act of my reconciliation."

After his return from Rome, Dr. McGlynn attended, and, with Henry George, addressed the Second National Single Tax Conference in the Art Institute, Chicago, August, 1893. As part of his address he read his Statement to Monsignor Satolli. In the succeeding years he spoke with Henry George, Thomas G. Shearman, Judge James G. Maguire, Tom L. Johnson and Louis F. Post at the Jefferson Day Dinners of the Manhattan Single Tax Club and other such gatherings, delivered several speeches to immense audiences in the Delaware Single Tax Campaign (1896) and was the most noted figure and eloquent eulogist at the funeral of his great friend, Henry George, in 1897.

In January, 1895, Dr. McGlynn became pastor of St. Mary's, at Newburgh, N. Y., where he died in his sixty-third year, Sunday afternoon, January 7, 1900. He was known to be seriously ill and prayers had been offered that morning for his recovery, not only in Catholic, but in Protestant churches, whose ministers in the evening referred feelingly to him in their sermons.

In Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church the Rev. F. C. Iglehart, pastor of the church, said:

"A shadow has fallen on Newburgh and on our land in the death of Father McGlynn. A look at Dr. McGlynn's face would indicate that he was no ordinary man. The invisible fingers of high thoughts and holy ambition had carved his features. His heart was as large as his race and his service for the poor was only measured by his ability. He belonged to the Roman Catholic Church and was large enough to be the property of universal Christendom. He was a true American, devoted to American institutions. He had firm faith in the revealed will of God and was a tireless minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. I offer this word of sympathy for the parish here which worshipped him and for his old parish in New York which so idolized him."

The announcement of his death profoundly stirred the whole country, the many splendid tributes to his memory in the press and in hundreds of telegrams from distinguished citizens, showing how widespread was the respect in which he was held by men of every denomination and creed.

In Newburgh thousands looked upon the well beloved features as the body lay in state in St. Mary's Church throughout the night of the 8th, church societies forming the Guards of Honor.

Two funeral services were held, one in Newburgh, January 9th, the other on the following day in New York.

The Solemn Requiem Mass in St. Mary's was attended by an immense throng. A most unusual event was the presence in reserved pews of eighteen Protestant clergymen and a Jewish Rabbi, who had assembled at one of their own churches and marched in a body to St. Mary's. Archbishop Corrigan presided and hundreds of priests, members of religious orders and members of his family were present.

Rev. Thomas McLoughlin, of New Rochelle, was celebrant of the Mass; Rev. Dr. Patrick F. McSweeney, of St. Brigid's, New York, Deacon; Rev. Charles G. O'Keeffe, of Highland Falls, Sub-Deacon, and Rev. Dr. Daniel F. X. Burke, of Bedford Park, Master of Ceremonies—all of them his loyal friends.

The Eulogy was delivered by Rev. Dr. Richard Lalor Burt-sell, who had been Dr. McGlynn's dearest friend for half a century.

When the funeral ceremonies were concluded, church and civic societies and the people walked in procession to the train for New York. In that city a similar procession met and escorted the body of Dr. McGlynn, to St. Stephen's Church, East 28th Street, where it lay in state until far into the night, while 45,000 persons, it was said, looked for the last time upon the face of their beloved priest and friend.

Next morning in this great church of his tenderest affection, another Mass was celebrated, Rev. Dr. Charles McCready being the celebrant. The Lessons were read by Bishop (now Cardinal) Farley, Rev. Dr. James T. Curran and Rev. Michael Henry; the cantors, as at Newburgh, were Rev. Thomas P. McLoughlin and Rev. Thomas F. O'Connor, all good friends of Dr. McGlynn. The Eulogist on this occasion was Rt. Rev. Joseph F. Mooney, Vicar General, and the final blessing was given by the Archbishop in the presence of the greatest assem-

blage of priests and people ever assembled there. Immense throngs gathered in front of the church and overflowed into the neighboring streets, where they stood on both sides while the funeral procession of men and women, "old parishioners," church and civic societies, the New York Letter Carriers and the Honorary Pallbearers accompanied the body to the East 34th Street Ferry. The funeral then proceeded to Calvary Cemetery, Long Island City, where in a grave, beside that of his brother George, was buried all that was mortal of Rev. Dr. Edward McGlynn. Each year, on Decoration Day, the Dr. McGlynn Monument Association, the Grand Army of the Republic and Letter Carriers have decorated it, and tribute has been paid to his memory by some noted citizen.

Great memorial meetings, addressed by men of varied beliefs—political, economic and religious—were held in New York in the Academy of Music and Cooper Union; in Chicago in the Central Music Hall, and in Worcester, Mass., where William Lloyd Garrison was the orator. Extracts from the speeches will be found in the succeeding pages.

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