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## **Death of Dr. Matthew T. Gaffney**

By George L. Rusby

The death of Mathew T. Gaffney, M. D., at his home, 211 Plain St. Newark, N. J. on Monday evening, April 16th., 1906, marked the close of a lamentably brief but exceptional career. He was born March 11th, 1870, and received his early educational training in the Christian Brothers School and in a local business college. Later he took a course in the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City, graduating in 1897.

Although but 35 years of age he had achieved prominent success in two difficult fields. The first of these was art, in which as a painter in oils he won distinction when still little more than a boy. His paintings won prizes at exhibition contests upon more than one occasion.

Love of science lured him away from art as a chosen field for his chief activities, and attracted him to the study of medicine. He completed his studies in Europe and returned to Newark, where in an almost incredibly short time, he built up a very large practice. Careful application and thorough scientific methods were responsible for his success, which consisted in a large practice. Dr. Gaffney was constantly called upon to serve as medical expert in cases that had been carried into the courts.

It was, however, a rarer quality than that of success in a chosen vocation, that made Dr. Gaffney a distinguished character and an exceptionally useful member of society.

Love of justice was the predominating trait of this man. It is still fresh in the memory of the people of Newark, how Dr. Gaffney championed the cause of Mrs. McCarren, who had in his opinion been unjustly arrested, imprisoned and fined upon the charge of mendicancy.

So aroused was Dr. Gaffney over the evident injustice of the charge and its accompanying sentence, that at his own expense, he employed counsel, and carried the case from court to court; from the highest tribunal of the State a decision was recently rendered reversing the sentence by which Mrs. McCarren had been unjustly punished, and thus vindicating the Doctor. It is fortunate that he lived long enough at least to learn of the outcome of this case, taken up by him out of pure love of justice, which made it impossible for him to rest in the knowledge of an injustice done a poor and friendless woman. The legal expenses, which were heavy, were borne by the Doctor himself alone.

It was this same predominating trait in Dr. Gaffney's character, coupled with that exceptional degree of moral courage which in certain individuals makes it possible

for them to live up to their convictions, that formed the basis of one of the chief epochs in his life. The chapter referred to was that in which he became a devoted admirer and staunch supporter of Dr. McGlynn at the time of the latter's controversy with his church, growing out of McGlynn's determination to publicly preach the economic reform advanced by Henry George.

Gaffney was but a boy at that time, and fresh from the Roman Catholic school in which he had been pursuing his studies. His attention was naturally drawn to the McGlynn case and his heart was won by the courage of this Priest, who dared to defy without fear of consequences, the most powerful church of history in its demand that he desist from preaching the economic truths enunciated by George. Warned by the priest of his own parish that prompt excommunication awaited anybody and everybody who might attend a McGlynn meeting, young Gaffney took the first train for New York to attend a meeting of the anti-poverty society that same evening, at which McGlynn was the principal speaker. Gaffney's admiration for McGlynn increased with time. Copies of every sermon and of every address, together with everything bearing upon the historical features of the McGlynn case were carefully collected and treasured. These were afterwards systematized and used as the basis of a book entitled "Priest, Orator and Martyr, Life and Sermons of Dr. Edward McGlynn".

When in the study of Henry George's philosophy, Gaffney discovered that in the application of the Single Tax lay the remedy for present unjust social conditions, he became devoted to one great life's ambition to advance that reform. How active and loyal he has been in pursuing that ambition is now made painfully obvious to those who have been associated with him in the work, and who must proceed without his ever ready assistance.

At the time of his death Dr. Gaffney was Secretary-Treasurer of the New Jersey Single Tax League, the Convention of which, Tuesday night, March 20th, was the last occasion of the Doctor's activities. The next day he was taken sick and never again left his home. His sickness began with quincy sore throat, followed by kidney trouble, and finally heart-failure. His life was an inspiration to those who strive toward high ideals and his unceasing activity in the advancement of a chosen cause was a rebuke to the lukewarm and the half hearted. He was a man of strong convictions, and an exceptional degree of courage in expressing the same, and was governed by one over-whelming desire to assist in making the world better. He was one of those the loss of whom must leave the world appreciably poorer.