

eyes. But his good nature, his courtesy, and his outflowing humanity made him widely beloved. Nobody delighted more to do the honours of parliament; and his erudition there and elsewhere, though not always exact, was generously available. Few figures in the House of Commons were better known or better liked than this eccentric, warm-hearted Irish protestant gentleman.

A cartoon of MacNeill by 'Spy' appeared in *Vanity Fair* 13 March 1902.

[*The Times*, 25 August 1926; J. G. S. MacNeill, *What I have Seen and Heard*, 1925; private information; personal knowledge.]

S. GWYNN.

M'TAGGART, JOHN M'TAGGART ELLIS (1866-1925), philosopher, was born at 28 Norfolk Square, London, 3 September 1866, the second son of Francis Ellis M'Taggart, county court judge, by his wife, Caroline Ellis. He was educated at Clifton College and Trinity College, Cambridge. At Cambridge he studied the moral sciences under Henry Sidgwick [q.v.] and James Ward [q.v.] and was placed alone in the first class of the moral sciences tripos in 1888. He was an active member of the Union Society, of which he was elected president in 1890. He continued to be a member of the library committee of this society until his death, and his long connexion with it is commemorated in the library by a bookcase of eighteenth-century memoirs, purchased by subscription, and by a brass memorial plate. In 1891 he was elected to a prize fellowship at Trinity, and in 1897 he was appointed college lecturer in the moral sciences.

M'Taggart's writings fall into three groups. His earlier work was devoted to expounding and defending the method, and some of the results, of Hegel's *Logic*. The dissertation by which M'Taggart gained his fellowship dealt with the dialectical method, and his first book, *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic* (1896), was an expanded form of this dissertation. This was followed in 1901 by *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*. In this book M'Taggart discusses and criticizes certain applications which Hegel and others had made of Hegelianism to ethics, politics, and religion. He also attempts to determine by Hegelian methods, more definitely than Hegel himself had done, the nature and structure of the Absolute. In 1910 M'Taggart published his *Commentary on Hegel's*

*Logic*. In this he takes the detailed argument of Hegel's *Greater Logic* category by category from Pure Being to the Absolute Idea. He tries to expound in intelligible English the characteristic content of each category, and to explain and criticize the transitions from one category to another. M'Taggart considered that the dialectical method, within the *Logic*, can be defended, both as to its validity and its fruitfulness, if it be regarded as a means of gradually making explicit what is implicit in every rational mind. He also held that Hegel's transition from Logic, through Nature, to Spirit can be defended on similar lines. He was convinced that the Absolute Idea, the highest category of the *Logic*, as interpreted by himself, expresses the complete nature of reality, so far as this can be determined by purely *a priori* reasoning. But he rejected many of Hegel's particular steps; he thought that Hegel often deceived himself and his readers by giving to his categories names taken from concrete empirical facts; and he rejected almost all the applications which have been made of Hegelianism to ethics, politics, and religion.

The second group of M'Taggart's writings contains only one book—*Some Dogmas of Religion*, published in 1906. This is the only popular philosophical work which he wrote. M'Taggart was at once an atheist and a convinced believer in human immortality. He held, on philosophical grounds which he developed in his *Hegelian Cosmology* and his *Nature of Existence* (1921 and 1927), that the Absolute is a perfect society of spirits, each of whom loves one or more of the others. He also held that each of these spirits is eternal, and that each human mind, as it really is, is one of these spirits. He thought it most probable that the eternal and timeless existence of these spirits would appear, under the partly delusive form of time, as a series of successive lives of finite duration. In *Some Dogmas of Religion* he takes the doctrine of pre-existence, rebirth, and post-existence as an hypothesis, and defends it with great ingenuity against the more obvious objections. In this book he also discusses Free Will and Determinism, arriving at a completely deterministic conclusion, and the Omnipotence of God. On the latter subject he concludes that the existence of a non-omnipotent and non-creative God is the utmost that can be granted to be philosophically possible. In *The Nature of Existence* his conclusions are even more definitely atheistic.

The later years of M'Taggart's life were spent in elaborating his own system of constructive metaphysics. This is contained in *The Nature of Existence*, the first volume of which appeared in 1921, the second and concluding volume being published posthumously in 1927. This is a complete system of deductive philosophy of extreme acuteness and ingenuity. It arrives at much the same conclusions as the writings of the Hegelian period by an entirely different method. The turning-point of the argument is a principle about the endless divisibility of substance, which M'Taggart called the Principle of Determining Correspondence. The work is remarkable for the strenuous attempt which the author makes to deal satisfactorily with the existence of error and illusion, particularly the illusion of time and change, in a world of eternal beings perfectly related to each other. A clear but highly condensed account of the system will be found in M'Taggart's contribution to *Contemporary British Philosophy* (edited by J. H. Muirhead, vol. i, 1924).

M'Taggart married in 1899 Margaret Elizabeth, daughter of Joseph Bird, civil servant, of Taranaki, New Zealand. They had no children. He retired from his lectureship at Trinity College in 1923, after completing twenty-five years' service. He continued to give some of his courses of lectures until his death, which took place, after a short illness, 18 January 1925 in a nursing home in London.

M'Taggart was a man of great wit and great business ability. He felt a passionate affection for his friends, for his country, and for his school and college. He was for many years an active member of the governing body of Clifton College, and he gave great help to Trinity College in drawing up the new statutes imposed upon it by the statutory commission. Although an atheist, he was a keen supporter of the Church of England, being in ecclesiastical matters an Erastian whig. In national politics he was a free-trade unionist, in university politics a strong feminist. He had an extraordinary knowledge of English novels, both past and contemporary, and of eighteenth-century memoirs. The honorary degree of LL.D. was conferred on him by the university of St. Andrews in 1911 and he was elected a fellow of the British Academy in 1906. A portrait of M'Taggart by his friend, Roger Fry, was presented to Trinity College by his widow, and hangs in his old lecture-room. In the college chapel there is a brass to his

memory, near to those of Sidgwick and Ward, with his favourite quotation—*Homo liber de nulla re minus quam de morte cogitat; et ejus sapientia non mortis sed vitae meditatio est*—from Spinoza and an inscription by his friend, Nathaniel Wedd, of King's College.

[C. D. Broad, J. M. E. M'Taggart, 1866-1925, in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. xiii, 1927.] C. D. BROAD.

MAGRATH, JOHN RICHARD (1839-1930), provost of Queen's College, Oxford, was born at St. Peter Port in Guernsey 29 January 1839, the third son of Nicholas Magrath, surgeon in the royal navy, by his wife, Sarah Mauger Monk. He was educated at Elizabeth College, Guernsey, whence he won, at the age of seventeen, a classical scholarship at Oriol College, Oxford. At Oxford he followed a custom then not unusual, of reading both classics and mathematics, with the result that he obtained a first class in *literae humaniores* and a fourth class in mathematics in 1860. The same year he won the Stanhope essay prize, his subject being 'The Fall of the Republic of Florence', and was elected a fellow of Queen's College. In 1861 he began to read theology, and won the Johnson theological scholarship, finding time also to be president of the Union. He was ordained deacon in 1863 and priest in 1864. His tastes lay mainly in the direction of *literae humaniores*, especially Aristotelian philosophy, and for some years he was well known as a 'Greats' tutor, numbering amongst his pupils Edward Talbot, afterwards warden of Keble College and bishop of Winchester, and W. G. F. (afterwards Lord) Phillimore. These, and many more, looked back with gratitude to Magrath's long vacation reading parties at Beddgelert.

In 1864 Magrath succeeded to a tutorship at Queen's College, and thenceforward for many years he confined his academic activities to that college. From 1864 till 1877 he held the office of dean, and drastically, but with tact and patience, reformed the discipline of the college. He was also chaplain of the college from 1867 to 1878, and in 1874 he assumed the office of bursar, which then combined the work which is now divided between the estates and the domestic bursars. But although he was bursar only for four years, he retained to the end of his life a knowledge of the college estates of which successive bursars were glad to