

O'SHEA, JOHN AUGUSTUS (1839-1905)

John Augustus O'Shea was born in 1839 in Tipperary, the son of the *Clonmel Guardian* journalist John O'Shea. J. A. O'Shea and was educated at Dublin's Catholic University. Briefly training as a doctor, O'Shea abandoned his studies to enlist with the Irish Battalion of Pius IX. He moved to London in 1859 and began work as a journalist, frequently signing his articles 'The Irish Bohemian'. O'Shea's writing became renowned for its impressive wit and anecdotal approach. In 1865 he made an unsuccessful political bid, before turning to journalism. A contributor to publications such as *The Irishman* and *The Shamrock* (both owned by Richard Pigott), *The Universe* and *The New York Herald*, from 1869 O'Shea's journalism was almost exclusively special correspondence published by *The Standard*. At Metz during the Franco-Prussian War, O'Shea was captured and sentenced to death for spying by Marshall Bazaine. An appeal to the Emperor by other special correspondents garnered his release, after which he went through the Siege of Paris. Between 1873-5, he covered the Carlist war in Spain, and also portrayed the famine of 1877-78 in Bengal. For *The Standard*, he also covered several tours by royalty and dignitaries, accompanying the Prince of Wales on his Irish visit and later depicted General Grant's visit during his world tour marking the conclusion of his term as President of the United States. In addition to his contributions to *The Standard*, O'Shea wrote occasionally for the *Freeman's Journal* and Dublin's *Evening Telegraph*. In 1885, O'Shea was voted president of the Southwark Irish Literary Club and became involved in London's Gaelic revival. In later life, O'Shea wrote *An Iron-Bound City* (1886), based upon his special correspondence about the Siege of Paris, and several memoirs including *Roundabout Recollections* (1892) and *Leaves from the Life of a Special Correspondent* (1885). A traffic accident left O'Shea paralysed in the final years of his life. He suffered a stroke in 1905, and died 13 March in Clapham, London. **AD**

References:

- O'Donoghue, D. J. 'O'Shea, John Augustus (1839–1905).' Rev. Marie-Louise Legg. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed. Lawrence Goldman. 1 Dec. 2013. www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35337.
- O'Shea, John Augustus. *Leaves from the life of a special correspondent*. London: Ward & Downey, 1885.
- . *An Iron-Bound City: or, five months of peril and privation during the siege of Paris*. London: Ward & Downey, 1886.
- . *Romantic Spain: A Record of Personal Experience*. London: Ward & Downey, 1887.
- . *Roundabout Recollections*. London: Ward and Downey, 1892.