

"Should scariate these 'careless' individuals—oppressors of the poor—until they should be forced out of the precincts of every decent community."

"A sweet thing!" he said meditatively.

"The chief will like that. Juckins' aristocratic notions have lately made some of the people think we are going over to the bloated bondholders. I know that he has a long 'story' on the first page about the swells that have taken boxes for the Italian opera. This will even things up a bit."

He pushed the "copy" into the tube that led to the printing department, and, humming a tune, took up several letters which he had not yet had time to read. Then he yawned—for it was after midnight—took up his pen and answered them.

III.

"DEAR RED:—When I looked at the signature of your letter—which I always do—and saw the old scrawl, 'Redmond O'Connor,' it gave me new energy: for I was almost fagged out by a night's work. You ask me whether anything has happened to me. Nothing much. The most interesting event was the receiving of your letter, and another one to-night after I had finished my work on the paper. It was a little note containing one of those silver medals you Catholics are so fond of—a representation of the Virgin (after all I don't see why I should hesitate to call her blessed, since the Scripture does so) with outstretched arms.

The note was made up of a few words. It had no signature, but I recognised the delicate handwriting—not at all like the big sprawling English style that ladies of fashion have adopted—as that of one of the most interesting young gentlewomen I have ever seen. She only said 'Thank you,' and I shall never see her again, but I shall never forget her. You think all this is very romantic coming from a materialistic and utilitarian fellow like me, don't you?

"The other day the chief asked me to go up to the Brevoort House and do an 'interview,' which I hate. But in journalism one has to do what one is expected to do, so of course I went. It was hard work; for whenever the dignitary said anything particularly interesting, he always paused and said that he told it to me as a gentleman and not as a reporter. This was very unpleasant, and I went away in a gloomy state of mind.

"I was trying to disentangle the parts of his talk that were for the public from those that were not, and feeling that his views on the tariff question were about as incomprehensible as possible, when I heard a little scream. I looked up. There was an elderly man looking pale and helpless, in the middle of the street, in a regular tangle of drays, waggons and street-cars. The policeman was looking after a group of ladies who were just crossing, and the old man seemed utterly bewildered by the shouts of the drivers and the turmoil around. You know, Red, that as a New Yorker, I know my Broadway: it is like the proverbial nettle—you must attack it boldly if you want to come out unscathed.

"The old man's foot slipped in the slimy mud; he went down almost under the forefeet of a huge dray horse. But I had the horse by the bridle in an instant. I pulled the old man up. Then the policeman with charming coolness cleared a space, and together we dragged him to the sidewalk. The old man thanked me and asked for my card, which I gave him in a courteous impulse. As I did this I noticed a young woman by his side. I saw her for only a moment—just a glimpse of her face. It was she who had screamed. She took her father's arm and gave me such a look of gratitude! Oh, my dear boy, a look that makes a man look chivalrous! I did not make note of the colour of her eyes, but I know they were the colour I like—that is—whatever colour they were I like—that is—but never mind sneering at me; I am a confirmed bachelor.

"I shall never see her again, and, besides, she is a Catholic: the old man smiled a little and said: 'St. Raphael sent this young gentleman.' And his daughter—of course she is his daughter—answered: we must thank them both."

"She would not marry a Protestant, nor would I a Catholic. You people are right in your objections to mixed marriages. I am not a bigot, but I could not endure a wife who prayed to saints, and who would interrupt a dinner party to say the Angelus, and who would amaze her Protestant friends by giving them pious little pictures. It would not do. There must certainly be a great discord in the married life of two people of different religious practices.

"It was so kind of the unknown to send me this medal! I shall always wear it. I do not see why I should not. I fancy you are sneering at my inconsistency. I am a Christian, although I have never thought much about religion. I do not have time. I fancy if I were married I would adopt my wife's form of belief—not if she were a Catholic, though; I really could not go that far. But at present there is no chance of my marrying, as the French poet says:

"Si vous croyez que je vais dire
Qui j'ose aimer,
Je ne saurai, pour un empire
Vous la nommer."

"You ask me if I would not like to go back to the law and work over Blackstone with you in a musty old office again. No; as you say, a journalist has great responsibilities, but I bear them without acquiring those deep lines of care which you seem to think ought to furrow my brow. Perhaps if I were a Catholic, and scrupulous about many things, I might lie down under the weight of my fears, and hesitate a long time before I wrote a paragraph or even a line. But my conscience is not abnormally tender, and I write about what comes in my way without troubling myself about it. I suppose I do some harm occasionally; but a man has to 'fill space,' and what is the use of bothering?"

"You ask me what the twentieth century will bring forth if we young men continue to doubt. Nothing, my dear boy—nothing. We shall all have committed suicide by that time, and your Church will remain alone in the ruins like Macanlay's New Zealander. Of course I'm a Christian, if I'm anything; but I don't know anything. And you cannot blame me from your Papal height of certitude. I have been educated to believe only what I see.

I am what I have been made. Good-bye; it is 3 o'clock in the morning."

IV.

"The curse has come upon me,' dear Red—the curse of weariness of all things. During the chief's vacation I took his place, and when he came home he complimented me and said he could not have done better, and he sent me off to this town to recuperate. It is a quiet spot, as all watering places are in April, I suspect.

"Here I am at Atlantic City, with my pipes and a few books. I can look at the sea from my window all day long. But I am tired of it, as I am tired of everything. Life it not worth living. The only other persons in the house from New York, too. They are a young girl and an old man or woman, I believe. But I don't care. I shall get back into 'the journalistic harness as soon as I can.

"Why didn't I write? Because I did nothing I could help doing. Now do not try to convert me (although I am under obligations for the books you sent me). I never read books; and it's too late for me to try to go against the spirit of the age. I don't know; and the Christians I meet seem to have as little reason for the faith that is in them as I have for going occasionally to the Episcopal Church, which is very well served here by a gentlemanly rector.

"The wind is howling, and you should see the sea! It tears along the beach and upon it with a fury truly awful. Just think of it! A thin pane of glass separates me from the cold, the pitiless wind, and the rush of water outside my room! A thin pane of glass! But, old fellow, the partition between life and death is thinner."

V.

"What an April! I have been on the outskirts of this queer, straggling city a week. The wind still howls. Every morning I see one of the other inmates of this cottage go out early through the howling storm. I asked the landlady where she goes. She said to church. I concluded that she must be a very advanced Ritualist. 'She's very "High Church," I suppose,' I said.

"High!" said the landlady, 'She's a Catholic. I never met anyone else who would run out in weather like this just to go to church. But she does, and I never met a kinder or sweeter girl. She takes care of that father of hers as if he were a baby.'

"It's strange I never met them."

"People don't go promenading on the beach in a storm like this,' she answered; 'and they take their meals in their room. I'd like them better if they were not so particular about having meat on Fridays; but we all have our weaknesses.'

"The day after this I was up earlier than usual. The boom of the waves was like the sound of the dead march of some giant beaten out of colossal drums. The spray splashed against the gray sky. I thought that a morning like this would certainly keep my neighbour at home. It did not. She went out closely wrapped up, and was soon lost to sight in the mist and spray. This amazes me. It is the first time I have seen a woman look upon church-going as a serious business, unconnected with new bonnets or new frocks."

(To be concluded in our next.)

STEPPING-STONES OVER BIG DIFFICULTIES.

ROUND ABOUT HELL.

(BY REV. FATHER CASSIDY, NEW PLYMOUTH.)

(Continued.)

THE mercy of God cannot defeat His justice, neither can His love prevent the punishment that those deserving it may receive. On the contrary, God's very love demands the existence of Hell. Yes, divine love reigns supreme even at the august tribunal where so many are condemned to the darkness of eternal night. The print of the nail is in the very hand that waves away the lost into perdition, and the voice that so often tenderly invited the impenitent now commands them to depart. We need not feel surprised at this since in everyday life we witness the same. We see a fond sorrowing father out of love for his children, or to guard them from a brother's contaminating influence, forced to pronounce a sentence of banishment on his son, and to drive him from his home for ever, thereby inflicting a wound on his sorrowing heart, that balm cannot heal, and time can never close. It is better that one child be lost, than that the whole family should perish. The lambs must be protected from the wolf, and he must be driven from the fold. It is then the highest exercise of parental love, to save the innocent by the expulsion from among them of one unworthy of their society and undeserving of their home. And as the father's love for his good and faithful children demands the banishment of the unworthy son, so the divine love of God demands the separation of the wicked from the good, and if it builds up a heaven for the one, it must also form a hell for the other. The justice and mercy of God cannot stand in antagonism to each other. It is not mercy but injustice that is irreconcilable with justice; it is cruelty, not justice, that stands opposed to mercy, and so the justice and mercy of God must remain, as the two eternal pillars of the everlasting Throne. In all the works of God we find justice and mercy blended together, and even when God must punish, we find divine kindness mingling with the strokes of His chastisement. There was mercy mingled with justice in the Garden of Eden, and in the first great trial of the angels in Heaven; there was mercy mingled with the justice that swept the wicked from the world at the time of the Flood. Even in that great scene, where the stern justice of God appals us, what mercy do we not witness? What patient long-suffering kindness shown? What warnings given, what mercy despaired? There was mercy mingled with every drop of justice that swelled into the terrible wave of vengeance that then rolled over the world, when the waters rose, and crowding closer on the narrow spaces of lessening hill tops, men and beasts fought fiercely for standing room; there was mercy blended with every groan and every tear. When the thunders pealed loudest and the lightnings