

is one of the shining points in our history, gleaming through the general darkness, on whose brightness Irish eyes love to dwell." "Fortunately," says an Irish author, "for the fame of Hugh O'Neill, and for the Irish nation in whose history he played so memorable a part, the life of that illustrious man has been written in our generation by a biographer worthy of the theme. Amongst the masses of Irishmen, comparatively little would be known of that wondrous career had its history not been popularised by John Mitchell's "Life of Hugh O'Neill." The dust of centuries had been allowed to cover the noble picture drawn from life by the master-hand of Don Phillip O'Sullivan Beare, a writer but for whom we should now be without any contemporaneous record of the most eventful period of Anglo-Irish history, save the unjust and distorted versions of bitterly partisan English officials. Don Phillip's history, however, was practically inaccessible to the masses of Irishmen, and to Mr. Mitchell almost entirely owing the place O'Neill now holds—his rightful prominence—in popular estimation."

"At last," says Mitchell, "the time had come, and Dungannon with stern joy beheld unfurled the royal standard of O'Neill, displaying, as it floated proudly on the breeze, that terrible *Red Right Hand* upon its snow-white folds, waving defiance to the Saxon Queen, dawning like a new aurora upon the awakened children of Heremon." "With a strong body of horse and foot O'Neill suddenly appeared upon the Blackwater, stormed Portmore, and drove away the garrison 'as carefully,' says an historian, 'as he would have driven poison from his heart,' then demolished the fortress, burned down the bridge, and advanced into O'Reilly's country, everywhere driving the English and their adherents before him to the south (but without wanton bloodshed, slaying no man, save in battle; for cruelty is nowhere charged to O'Neill), and finally with Macguire and Macmahon behind close siege to Monaghan, which was still held for the Queen of England."

Over several of the subsequent brilliant engagements in 1596-7 I must pass, unnoticed, to reach the most important event in the career of O'Neill—the great battle of *Beal-an-atha-bui*, or the "Yellow Ford." To Mr. Mitchell, whose vivid narrative I have so far been quoting, we are indebted for the following stirring description of O'Neill's greatest battle, ever memorable *Beal-an-atha-bui*.

(To be concluded in our next.)

STEPPING-STONES OVER BIG DIFFICULTIES.

ROUND ABOUT HELL.

(BY REV. FATHER CASSIDY, NEW PLYMOUTH.)

(Continued.)

We know that the moral emotions exert a wonderful influence on the body, we know that violent passion exhibits all the marks of fire, and that despair, above all the others, shows every symptom of it. We know that the fires of despair will burn for ever in the souls of the lost, and it is quite natural to expect that as the body during life is fired by the souls of emotions, so the resuscitated bodies of the damned should also be inflamed by them. But we need not question here what may be this fire, nor endeavour to discover whence it may arise, since the nature of the fire of hell, is still a disputed and unsettled question, even among the most dogmatic. Though there are many conjectures on the nature of the punishment of the damned, and many hypotheses are made to support one theory or the other, still there is one fixed, certain, and central point of chastisement—that the lost must suffer. All sensible persons, all logical men, all Christian minds agree in believing that those who die unlike God, that those who die unworthy of Him, that those who die deprived of His friendship and of His love, that those who wilfully, knowingly, and deliberately refused to obey, to worship, to love and remain with Him during life, shall be eternally separated from Him when life is over. The deep thinking mind of the present, the scholars of past centuries, the principal Christian theologians, and the eloquent Fathers of the Church of God agree in asserting that this eternal separation from God constitutes the chief punishment of the damned. The conscious loss of God is a punishment so terrible we need no other, and if we try to feebly realise what that punishment must be, if we only take a passing glimpse of the world around us, or try by imagination to penetrate the rim of the visible creation we will find that all other punishments compared with the conscious loss of God, will sink into insignificance. Brimstone and scorpions, chains and straight jackets, gridirons and fire shovels, sulphur and sledge-hammers, with all the barbaric paraphernalia of the pagan hell, and all the horrid imaginings of the iron ages of early Christianity, all look childish to the mind that can admire beauty and appreciate love, or can feebly picture the sublime splendour of God, and then fancy eternal separation from Him. It is universally admitted that the soul on its separation from the body somehow sees God and all agree, that when time will come to an end, when the Creator will change the existing order of things and put an end to all human life, then at least we will see God as He is in all the splendour of Heaven. But what that splendour may be, what that Heaven may be, we cannot tell. It is there, we know. We see it with the eye of faith as we see the brightest planet that girds the heavens. It is set there, a star of beauty on the night of mystery in which we move, and though it is now separated from us by an immeasurable distance, though it is so far above the storms and clouds of earth, that we can never understand it till we have torn ourselves from the palace of clay that moors us to this world, and with our souls unchained and free as thought, we roam the vast universe from end to end, and swift as lightning and softly as the falling dew pass on from world to world of our Father's kingdom. But though that heaven is so little known to us now, though it is so far away, are we not moving along its threshold, and by one step we are lost amidst its splendour and its immortal light? Ere the coldness of death comes upon us, and the sobs of sorrowing friends are hushed into silent sorrow, the song of heaven has begun, if we are worthy of our Father's home there is no

delay, no waiting for an exert to travel that brilliant path. Angels unseen are moving in the chamber of death, looking on with tearless eyes, where all else are weeping, and with the last quiver, and the last breath, they are away with their new comrade to the throne of the great King. The shout of Jubilee that once greeted the conqueror from his cross, is still ringing along the dazzling arches, and the poor weary traveller of life on angels' wings is borne to his eternal crown and his everlasting resting place. He is at home. To be at home is the wish of the seaman, on his lonely watch on the dark stormy ocean. His heart is fixed on some cottage where his wife and little ones pray and long for his return. The soldier sighs for home, and what tender visions of it mingle with the troubled dreams of trench and trenched field. Where the palm tree waves its graceful form in the brightness of the morning, and birds of brilliant plumes glitter in the cloudless sunshine; where wealth and plenty flow around, the exile sits staring on vacancy: a far-off country lies on his heart, borne away on the wings of fancy over intervening seas and continents he reaches home, hears again the songs of the birds in his father's fields, sees again the young friends of his childhood, and dreams and longs again for that old home where his eyes first saw the light. Home, the emblem of rest and happiness. How we all long for the home where rest and happiness are eternal, where the innocence of childhood dwells for ever, where the song of joy rolls on in celestial harmony, where the father is crowned King, and the children sport amid the endless sunshine of heavenly pleasure and immortal love, where no tears of sorrow are seen, no heart sighs heard, or no sad farewells. The saint and the sinner, the pagan and the believer, the poet and the philosopher, the dreamer and the toiler, the infidel and the Christian some way or other long for that home. They look around them and see no real home in life, no fixed resting place, and in their thinking moments, in their best hours, they sigh for heaven. They see the world full of suffering, they are distressed with its sorrows, or suffer from its sins, and they turn their restless eyes heavenwards, and sorrowing ask if they will be happy there some day. The saint is always dreaming, thinking, and working for that home; his heart yearns for it truer and stronger than the soldier, the sailor, or the exile for the paternal roof. The saint is always preparing for it, like the bird getting ready to emigrate to sunny lands, where no bleak winter sheds its snow or strips the grove, or chains the dancing stream; every sight in life reminds him of it, and every voice in creation tells him of that destiny and assures him that God will some day bring him home at last. The Father has promised a happier home for his children, than any they can form in life or even imagine and to that promise the children always cling. God will keep His promise. Everything to the mind of the saint reminds him of the divine fidelity. He hears the voice of God assuring him of heaven in the voice of every storm that, like an angry child, weeps and wails itself to sleep. He hears it in the voice of every shower that changes into sunshine, or in the ocean's wail as it breaks in sighs along the lonely shore. He hears it in the voice of the seasons as they march in unbroken succession to the music of the spheres. He hears it in the cry of sorrow, from the death-beds of the rich or poor from the deserted graves and from all the groans of suffering humanity. That voice is the source of all his joy and that promise the source of all his confidence. When the good ship reels to and fro on a stormy sea, and struggling as for life in the arms of death, she plunges and groans through the waves, while the furious wind screams through the rigging, and the boom and splash of billows break fiercely over the bows, while the blocks rattle, and the staves and planking creak, and the cries of children, and the shrieks of frightened women, bursting from the decks, mingle with the roar of the tempest; yet amid this fierce commotion, while the good ship strains to her work, and struggles to shake off the storm, brave men grow timid when timid ones grow pale, you will see calm confidence sitting on the brow of the weather-beaten man who leans upon the wheel and steers her through the tempest, and when his ear catches the "All's well" from the lookout, that voice of confidence mingling with the roar of the elements and piercing through the darkness of the night makes him smile at danger, and laugh at the fury of the storm. So in the storm of life, in the commotion of passion, in the struggles of the soul, in the tempest of care, trouble and temptation, when wind and wave rise high to sink into indolence or indifference, or to throw down for ever immortal hope in heaven, on the calm brows of the saints unswerving confidence sits, and in their ears are ever ringing "All's well," we are going home. Heaven is the home of the blest, and to know the pain it is to be lost for ever to it, we must first have tasted its pleasures and enjoyed its repose. There is there, says St. Gregory, "light without darkness, joy without grief, desire without punishment, love without sadness, satiety without loathing, safety without fear, health without disease and life without death." It is easy to conceive the frightful despair which the sight of what he has lost in losing God and in being driven from heaven, must awaken in the soul of the damned. We see every day the terrible anguish that the loss of even trifling things occasions. If a man is threatened with the loss of sight, what anguish does he not feel; the very thought of being unable to see any more the mountains and the valleys, the green fields or the merry birds, or the dazzling sunshine, or the face of those he loves breaks his heart, and forces him to look on his future life as the exterior darkness where there is nothing but weeping and gnashing of teeth. But if the loss of being deprived of the power of seeing what one has already seen and of what one has already known of this poor world is so great, what anguish must be the thought of being eternally separated from the heaven of infinite glory, where infinite beauty dwells, where every thing shines in limitless splendour, where all is fair and good occasion. To see no more all that is fair and beautiful and bright, to see God in all His glory, to see all the wonders of His majestic creation, and then to lose sight of that vision of loveliness for ever. We can never imagine the terrible longing that must arise in the soul, to look on that ocean of beauty once more, and the loud of sadness that must overwhelm it when it recalls, that glory is lost to it for eternity, that sight it will never see again. If we turn our thoughts to the worlds that move around us what a glorious sight it would be even to see them feebly as they shadow the great loveliness of God. The beauty, the