

II.

The spacious Exhibition Hall of the college was crowded with the *élite* of Oshawa that evening, and the members of the graduating class, in academic costume, occupied the stage. The orchestra played an overture "just long enough," said Tom Harman, the President of the Jocosi Club, "to give the poor fellow who speaks first, time to get properly nervous."

There were no traces of nervousness about Frank Byrne, however, as he stepped to the footlights. There was not even a tremor in the hand which held his manuscript, a fact which could not escape the observant and admiring Harman.

"I'm all wrong," he whispered to his neighbor, "that fellow is 'as cool as an iceberg and as firm as the rock of Gibraltar'; as a friend used to say, I bet he would hit a dime at fifty yards just now."

As the supposed possessor of a skill worthy of Mr. Barnes of New York, or the Honorable Colonel Cody, began to read in a well-modulated voice, his essay on "The Catholic Church and European Civilization," there was silence in the hall, and it was soon evident that the audience were to hear something superior to the "regulation" Commencement essay. The division of the subject showed the trained mind of the logician, the manner of treatment and wealth of illustration evinced a deep knowledge of philosophy and history, while the dress in which the lofty ideas were clothed was of exquisite texture, the work of a consummate master of language. The applause which followed this splendid effort might well have turned a weaker head.

The remainder of the exercises, whether musical or oratorical, was of the character usual on such occasions. The "Renaissance", "Pauperism", "The 18th Century in English Literature", were treated of in a manner more or less crude and unsympathetic. Gerald O'Neill, who delivered the Valedictory, made some happy allusions to games and other college associations, and succeeded in "bringing down" the galleries, which were filled with under-graduates.

Then came the distribution of medals. The galleries were silent now, and there was anxious suspense while the first name

was being called. As Dr. Malone read, "Gold Medal for highest honors in Moral Philosophy, graciously offered by His Holiness, Leo XIII, awarded to Mr. Francis Byrne," Gerald O'Neill rose from his seat and raising his hand to the galleries cried, "One! two! three!" and at the magic words a triple O-s-h-a-w-a! rah! rah! rah! given with a will, startled the vast audience, and caused more than one anxious glance to be cast towards the roof.

At the close of the exercises the graduates were addressed by His Grace, the Archbishop of Oshawa, and the Fifty-fourth Annual Commencement of Oshawa College was over.

At the dinner of the Alumni Association that evening, to which the members of the graduating class were invited, the Hon. Patrick McKenna, Judge of the Superior Court, and Chairman of the Board of Governors, in proposing the toast of the class of '82, felt called upon to make a special complimentary reference to the brilliant prospects which lay before the essayist of the evening, whose future career would doubtless reflect the highest credit upon his Alma Mater.

Frank, as spokesman of the class, replied in a few words of modest self-deprecation. He retired that night with unclouded brain, and a heart unaffected by the applause which had been so liberally showered on him.

III.

On Frank Byrne's arrival home, his father sent him off to the mountains. "You have been working hard, and need to brace up a bit, my boy," he said. When he returned, after a fortnight's absence, with a healthy russet tinge in his cheeks, his mother said, "Now, Francis," she never called him Frank, even when a little boy, "I have a number of visits to pay, and have been waiting for you to accompany me. I have had many inquiries about you, and you must answer them yourself."

If there was anything Frank had hated, it was paying formal visits. Until now he had never been subject to the tyrannical sway of society. He had been a quiet, studious youth, fond enough of all boyish