

Gerald attacked their fish ; the former giving the latter a kick under the table as he heard Flanagan ordering meat.

As his name would indicate, Flanagan was a Catholic ; but his fellow-clerks had long noticed that if any member of the firm for whom they worked should be present at lunch on a fast day, he invariably ordered meat. Now Donovan, who was a belligerent Nova Scotian, much given to speaking his mind in season and out of season, had long been aching to give the backsliding Flanagan a bad five minutes, and he thought the present too good an opportunity to be lost. Looking across the table at his victim, he said innocently :

" I can recommend the trout to-day, Flanagan ; it's the best fish they've given us on Friday for some time."

The " Boss " — otherwise Mr. Archland — looked at the speaker and broke with his hearty voice :

" Oh, I say, Donovan, why didn't you keep quiet a little longer ? Flanagan has just ordered roast lamb and you've gone and reminded him it is Friday."

It was characteristic of Flanagan that he grew white instead of red with anger. He was white at that moment, but his voice was as smooth as usual as he said coolly :

" I don't think I shall change the order now. Any way, fish does not agree with me and I rarely eat it."

" You must have a bad time in Lent," remarked his tormentor. " I suppose, though, you get a dispensation?"

At that moment, Flanagan felt as if he could have assisted cheerfully at Donovan's funeral. Ever since he had entered the Archland firm it had been his endeavor to keep his religion in the background. Without actually becoming a Protestant, he had done his best to seem one. Although the greater number of his fellow-clerks were Catholics, he had got it into his head that his religion would prove a barrier to his advancement and he had resolutely kept it out of sight. To have it dragged out publicly as Donovan now seemed bent on doing was positive torture to him, and