

ventures of war, etc. Will you please tell me what follows practically from these premises?"

"Our books contain not only the things you mentioned so flippantly, they also contain the often repeated advice to shun bad and do good, to be liberal and kind and the like. Are not these principles calculated to direct the will in the proper groove?"

"They would do so if these books gave us a standard to judge what is good and what is bad. Do they do so?"

"They do not, and cannot do it, because the standards differ. We believe things allowed which you consider forbidden, and *vice versa*."

"Then all the morality your books inculcate is a vapid thing without substance. It tells you to do right, but does not tell you what is right, it cautions you against wrongdoing, but leaves it doubtful what constitutes a wrong. It has no base, no clearly defined lines, no definite scope; it is an intangible, hazy phantasmagory, a bubble that bursts whenever it is touched, and I never yet could convince myself that a bubble is a ball."

"You are unmerciful in your deductions, Mick."

"I am only logical, sir, and you yourself praised logic as a development of the mind. However, I am not through yet. What I said applies to the common elementary schools, and it is bad enough. The scoundrels who swindle and cheat the government and their fellow citizens most, were very proficient in your schools. The inmates of prisons, penitentiaries and brothels show a large quota of public school children, and, as we shall know the tree by its fruits, the results hitherto obtained by public school education are nothing to be proud of. But matters get worse when we look at the high schools and non-sectarian colleges. The principles of morality taught there are taken from pagan philosophers, chiefly Plato, and any students that give time and attention to these studies, will leave the school confirmed infidels."

"Don't go too far, Mick, in making such sweeping assertions. How many splendid men, ripe scholars and Christian gentlemen, successful ministers, or barristers, or merchants have been educated in these schools. They disprove you."

"They do not. If they escaped their

studies unscathed, it was not by what was taught them then, but by the traditions and examples of homelife, or private studies at variance with their schoolbooks. They remained or became Christians, not through the schools, but in spite of them, and this is the severest condemnation, that can be flung at your vaunted schools. Tobelievers in any religious creed the public schools are death, and it is almost incredible, how this patent fact could escape the eyes of Protestant ministers. Instead of realizing the danger to themselves and their flock, they join in the general alarm and wail, for fear the Catholics would be able to educate their children without bearing the burden of double taxation. It is literally a case of biting off one's nose to spite one's face. They are the grave diggers of their own denominations. Their churches are getting more and more empty, the younger generation becomes more and more estranged from any positive faith, and yet they fail to see the signs of the times. All right, gentlemen, just stick to your principles. Another fifty years of public schools according to the present system, and your occupation will be gone; there will be only infidels and Catholics in the country, and what this means, the French revolution of a century ago demonstrates."

"Well, Mick, your prognostications are certainly gloomy enough."

"It is the logical development of your own American premises. But their chief objection, that of a want of practical moral principles, is not the only one. I have a good many other objections to your public schools, which I am willing to discuss when we meet again. For the none believe me, that Catholics object to your schools, not because they are not in their hands, but through an earnest regard for the present and future well-being of their children. Morality is interlinked with religion so that the two are inseparable. The pagan countries of Greece and Rome show what becomes of a morality divorced from religion, and history repeats itself, because human nature remains the same, if left to itself. The nursery rhyme taught to the babe-class of elementary schools in Germany: 'With God begin, with God do end, to God all earthly things shall tend,' contains more sound morality than you get in your public schools through all its grades. Good-bye for the present."