

# NOTES ON IRISH LITERATURE.

## "THE BELL FOUNDER."

(BY A SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR.)

In a previous issue the readers had a brief synopsis, told in rugged prose, of the interesting story of the "Bell Founder." This week we will take the first section of that story and tell it, as nearly as is possible, in the words of Denis Florence McCarthy. Should any error, or omission creep in, we beg to be excused on the score that we write entirely from memory, and it is now more than fifteen years since last we read the poem. As stated last week, the poet commences by asking Erin to pardon him, in the midst of the famine years, he leaves his own Isle to seek a subject in another land; in so doing, however, he paints a vivid picture of the situation in Ireland and laments the disunion that is destroying the national cause. It is thus the story runneth—

"Oh, Erin! thou desolate mother,  
The heart in thy bosom is sore,  
And wringing thy hands with despair,  
Thou dost roam 'round a plague-stricken shore!  
Thy children are dying, or flying,  
Thy great ones are laid in the dust,  
And those who survive are divided,  
While those who control are unjust.  
Wilt thou blame me, dear mother, if I  
Turn mine eyes from such horrors away,  
I look through the night of our wretchedness,  
Back to some bright vanished day;  
When, through sorrow, which ever is with us,  
Was heavy and dark on the land,  
Hope twinkled and shone like a planet,  
And Faith was a sword in the hand?"  
"Not now rings the song like a bugle,  
Midst the clashing and splintering of spears,  
Or the heart-piercing keen of the mourner,  
O'er the grave of green Erin of tears;  
Not to strengthen the young arm of freedom,  
Or melt off old slavery's chain—  
But to flow through the soul, in its calmness,  
Like a stream o'er the breast of the plain,  
Changing, though calm, be its current,  
From its source to its haven of rest,  
Flowing on through Italy's vineyards,  
To the emerald fields of the West,  
A picture of life and its pleasures,  
He troubles, its cradle, its shroud,  
Now bright with the glow of the sunshine,  
Now dark with the gloom of the cloud."

Such then is aspect of the story's current, from Italy to Ireland. Mark the apostrophe to that sunny land when the poet transports us, to the banks of the Arno.  
"In that land where the heaven-tinted pencil  
Giveth shape to the splendor of dreams;  
Near Florence, the fairest of cities,  
And by Arno, the sweetest of streams,  
Lived Paolo, the young campaner,  
The pride of his own native vale;  
Hope changed the hot breath of his furnace  
As into a sea-wafted gale;  
Peace, the child of employment, was  
With him,  
With prattle so soothing and sweet;  
And Love, while revealing the future,  
Strewed her sweet roses under his feet."

We will not here reproduce the grand tribute to labor, which has so often been quoted in those columns, and which thus closes—  
"The true ruler and conqueror,  
He the true lord of his race,  
Who nerves his arm for life's combat,  
And looks a strong world in the face."

Moreover the lines that we skip, for sake of brevity, may be found in several collections of Irish ballads, as well as in many school-books—we prefer to give what is almost absolutely unknown. The story then goes on—  
"And such was young Paolo;  
The morning, ere yet the faint star-light had gone,  
To the loud-ringing workshop beheld him  
More joyfully, lightfooted on:  
In the glare and the roar of the furnace,  
He toiled, till the evening star burned;  
And then back again through that valley,  
As glad, but more weary, returned.  
One moment, at morning, he lingers  
By the cottage that stands by the stream:  
Many moments, at evening, he tarries,  
By the casement that woos the moon's beam:  
For the light of his life and his labor,  
Like a lamp from that casement shines,  
In the glorious eyes that look out  
From the purple-clad trellis of vines."

What a picture the following:  
"Francesca sweet, innocent maiden,  
Thy not that thy young cheeks are fair,  
Or thy eyes shine like stars at evening,  
Through the curls of thy wind-woven hair;  
Tis not for thy rich lips of coral,  
Or even thy whiteness of snow,  
That my song shall recall thee,  
Francesca,  
But more for thy good heart below.  
Goodness is beauty's best portion—  
A dower that no time can reduce;  
A wand of enchantment and happiness,  
Brightening and strengthening with use."

"Francesca and Paolo are plighted—  
And they wait but a few happy days,  
'Till uniting the hearts of each other,  
They walk through life's mystical ways;  
'Till joining their hands together,  
They move through the stillness and noise,  
Dividing the cares of existence,  
But doubling its hopes and its joys.  
Sweet days of betrothment that lengthen,  
So slowly to love's burning noon,  
Like the days of spring that grow longer  
The nearer the fulness of June;  
You stir o'er the lives of the lovers,  
And pass with a slow-moving wing,  
You are lit with the light of the morning,  
And decked with the beauties of spring."

The days of betrothment are over;  
And now, when the evening-star shines,  
Two faces look lovingly out  
From that purple-clad trellis of vines.  
The merry laughter is doubled,  
Two voices steal forth on the air,  
And blend in the soft notes of song,  
Or the sweet, solemn cadence of prayer."

The lines descriptive of the children that, with years, came to enliven the cottage, have escaped our memory—they are only four in all. Now we are taken to the workshop to witness the labors of Paolo.

"In the heat of the rich-glaring chamber  
The proud master anxiously moves,  
And the quick, and the skillful he praises,  
And the dull and the laggard reproves;  
And the heart in his bosom expandeth,  
As the hot-bubbling metal up-swells—  
For, like to the birth of his children,  
He watcheth the birth of his bells."

"But Paolo is pious and grateful,  
And he vows, as he kneels at her shrine,  
To offer some token of labor  
To Mary, the Mother benign.  
Eight silver-toned bells will he offer,  
To toll for the quick and the dead,  
From the tower of the church of Our Lady,  
That stands on the cliff over-head."

"Tis for this that the bellows are blowing,  
That the workmen their sledge-hammers wield,  
That the firm-settled moulders are broken,  
And the dark-shining bells are revealed,  
That the cars with their streamers are ready,  
And the flowery-harnessed necks of the steers,  
And the bells, from the cold silent workshop,  
Are borne amidst blessings and tears—  
By the sweet-scented bowers of marble,  
By the olive-trees fringing the plain,  
By the orchards and vineyards are wending  
The gift-bearing, festival train;  
And the sounds of music are blending  
With the joyousness now on the gale—  
As they wend to the church of Our Lady  
That stands at the head of the vale."

Only a Catholic could pen such a description as the following—  
"Now they enter, and now more divinely  
The Saints' painted effigies smile;  
Now the acolytes, bearing lit tapers,  
Move solemnly down through the aisle;  
Now the thrifter swings the rich censor,  
And the white-curling vapor up floats,  
And hangs round the deep-pealing organ,  
And blends with the tremulous notes;  
In a white-shining alb comes the Abbot;  
He circles the bells round about;  
And with oil, and with salt, and with water,  
They are purified inside and out;  
They are marked with Christ's mystical symbol,  
While the priests and the choristers sing;  
And are blessed in the name of that God  
To whose honor they ever shall ring."

Then comes an intimation of the bells—  
"Toll! toll with a rapid vibration,  
With a melody silvery and strong;  
The bells from the sound-shaken belfry,  
Are singing their first maiden song  
Not now for the dead, or the living,  
For triumphs of peace or of strife,  
But a quick, joyous outburst of jubilee,  
Full of a newly-felt life.  
Rapid, more rapid the clapper  
Resounds to the sounds of the bells,

Far and more far o'er the valley,  
The enter-tuned melody twells;  
Quivering and broken the atmosphere  
Trembles and twinkles around,  
Like the eyes and the hearts of the hearers,  
That glisten and beat to the sound."

This is followed by a description of the effect of the bells at morning on Paolo—  
"At that sound he awoke and arose,  
And went forth on the bead-bearing grass;  
At that sound, with his darling Francesca,  
He piously knelt at the Mass!"

"And at noon, as he lay in the slumbers,  
Under his broad-leafy limes,  
For sweeter than murmuring waters  
Came the toll of the Angelus chimers—  
At that sound he piously arose,  
And uncovered his reverend head,  
And thrice was the Ave Maria,  
And thrice was the Angelus said.  
Sweet came the South still retaineth,  
To turn for a moment away,  
From the troubles and cares of existence,  
From the troubles and cares of ex-day,  
From the sorrows, without and within,  
To the peace that abideth on high,  
When the sweet, solemn tones of the bells  
Come down like a voice from the sky."

"And thus round the heart of the old man,  
At morning, at noon, and at eve,  
The bells, with their rich woof of melody,  
The net-work of happiness weave.  
But age will come on with its winnowing,  
Though happiness hideth its snows—  
And if youth has its duty of labor,  
The birth-right of age is repose.  
May no harsh-grating sounds of the bell  
With such love and happiness blend!  
Sure, evening so calm and so fair  
Will glide peacefully on to end!  
Sure the current of Paolo's life,  
Like his own native river must be,  
Flowing down through a valley of flowers,  
To its home in the far distant sea!"

This closes the first chapter of the Bell Founder's story. But no such peaceful ending is in store for the "Bell Founder."

### ON THE SHANNON.

Athlone, in addition to its topographical fame as the central capital of Ireland, has many other interesting associations, connected with it. The very derivation, or rather, the origin of its name, takes us back to a remote period of Irish history. It is told that in the days of Con of the Hundred Battles, who flourished about the year A.D. 180, a house of entertainment—a tyosda, as it was called—was kept close by a ford of the river Shannon, where its waters are now spanned by the Bridge of Athlone. The hospitable proprietor's name was Luan, which, being familiarly coupled with the Celtic word ath, meaning ford, gave rise to the name of Athlone, or the "Ford of Luan." From the position of Athlone, as guarding the pass between the two divisional kingdoms of Ireland—Leinster and Connaught, it was from immemorial times a point of military defence. The original fortress was no doubt a dun or Cathair of earthenwork, disposed in the manner of so many of those forts to be met with in Ireland. The importance of Athlone at a very early period made it the centre of religious foundations, around which a population quickly gathered, and built their homes. As with so many cities and towns in Europe, the present Athlone owes its origin to the monasteries, whose sites here lay on each side of the River Shannon. As many of our readers are aware, the town is partly situated in two provinces, in two dioceses, in two counties and baronies, and necessarily in two parishes. Both portions are connected by a fine viaduct, which replaced, in 1844, the interesting and historic bridge constructed in the days of Elizabeth, and on which a monument stood commemorative of its erection, and bearing the escutcheon of the Virgin Queen. While, from an antiquarian point of view, we regret the disappearance of this venerable memorial, it is not likely—with the student of Irish history, at least—that the existence of the former Bridge of Athlone will ever be quite forgotten. It was not "a Bridge of Fancies," but one of bitter memories. It spanned far more than the waters of the Shannon, for its arched shadows were cast over many a crimson page of the current of Ireland's history. To-day Athlone presents a picture of greater interest than many Irish cities or towns. Its normal population is some 10,000 inhabitants but its importance as a military station often swells this aggregate. This latter circumstance gives a very distinct feature to Athlone. The town is generally bright and gay with the strains of martial music, while ever and anon the volley practice of artillery keep the echoes of the Shan non busy recalling on its scene—in our peaceful days—the stirring memories of the warlike past. Athlone gives the traveller all the characteristic impressions of some of the fortress towns of the Rhine or the Moselle, for it was long a frontier town between two belligerent kingdoms, and under the regime of the Conqueror, it became and continues to be the central citadel of a conquered land. The Castle is the most striking feature of the place. Seven hundred years ago its bastion towers and curtain towers were erected by John de Grey, Bishop of Norwich. Lord Judiciary of Ireland in the reign of King John. It stands on the site of the Celtic fort, for which the O'Connors, the O'Kellys and the Melaghins of Meath, many a time fought fierce and hard. During its erection we learn from our records that Lord Richard Tuit, the founder of the Cistercian Abbey of Granard, was killed by the falling of one of the towers. The site of the Castle was part of the Abbey Lands of St. Peter's—style the Abbey de Innocentia—for which the Abbot received in recompense a grant of estates in County Westmeath. However, it acquired a strange commemorative in the ways of history, its steeple being one of the devices—shown on a medal struck by order of King William III., to commemorate the fall of Athlone. This border-castle of the Shannon was the theatre of many a changeable scene. At times the native Irish held it; again the successors of its alien builders took turn in getting possession of it. Its tenancy seems to have been submitted to a continuous process of military evictions down to the time of the Wars of the Roses, when England was too busy with her home troubles to look after Ireland, and the Norman settlers becoming "more Irish than the Irish themselves," the fort by common consent was held by successive commanders in the native interest. In the days of Elizabeth, Athlone Castle became the seat of the Presidency of Connaught, where the residence of the governors was established. Within its walls, the O'Connor Don of that day was imprisoned as a hostage for his clan, but romantically effected his escape. On the abolition of the Presidency with all its appurtenances was assigned to the grandson of Lord Benagh, its last governor. The siege of Athlone (1690-91) has invested this fortress with a long-lived historic fame. It is needless here to dwell on this too well-known chapter of Irish history. The town, now held for King James II. by Colonel Grace, and after one of the bravest defences on record, was successfully stormed by De Ginkelle, the Dutch General of the Prince of Orange. The magnitude of the operation may be somewhat realized from the fact that the besiegers expended upwards of fifty tons of powder, six hundred shells, twelve hundred cannon balls, and innumerable tons of stone shot. The Castle was completely shattered

Protestants as Catholics present. The Presbyterian minister followed Dr. Byrne's coffin to the vault, and was accompanied by the elders of the Kirk, whilst the Anglican Church was represented by Dean Marriott. The Salvation Army was also present.

### THE STORY OF A NOVENA.

Travelling on a railroad train, alone, the other day, the autumn scenery attracted my attention and the gorgeous colors of the woods—purple and scarlet and brown, green and yellow and pink—thrilled me with delight. What infinite variety of hues! What bewildering beauty of scene, as one picture after another frames itself in the car-windows!

I occupied a seat near the middle of the coach. There were only five other passengers in it, although the rest of the train was crowded—two men in the seat just back of me, and two ladies with a boy in the rear seats.

As we rushed onward, drawn by that clamorous locomotive, past field and village and town, past meadow and mountain, past orchard and forest, and from one side to the other of a turbulent mill-stream, my mind withdrew from the outside world to ponder the mystery of life and to marvel at the test to which our faith is often put when we pray and pray for what seems to be a necessary grace, yet apparently get no answer.

Singularly enough, as a coincidence, just as my thoughts reached that perplexity, one of my neighbors who had been listening, with little to say himself, to his more talkative companion, said, in a fairly low but clear and penetrating tone, and as if in reply to some statement that had been made by the other—

"Well, I never did. Never! I don't remember ever getting anything immediately as a direct response to prayer."  
"Oh," thought I to myself, "I'm not the only one that's tried, and he's worse off than I am, for I certainly have received, from above, light and grace and guidance in answer to appeals."  
My cogitations were cut short by my other neighbor, who spoke up—

"Let me relate an incident in my own experience."  
"You know I'm a marble-worker with considerable skill in designing altars and building fine monuments. About a year ago I lost my position. After paying some small bills, I returned home on Saturday night with sixteen dollars in my pocket. That money was my total possession outside of a wife, five children, some clothes and a few sticks of furniture. At the house, a poor sewing-woman was waiting for three dollars due her. I owed rent, a grocery bill, a doctor, etc., etc."

"After my last wages were all gone, I obtained credit for some time in all the near-by stores that would trust me. Meanwhile I tried in every possible way to get employment. But I had no success. Everywhere that I sought a job, the reply was 'No!' First I became down-hearted, next I lost courage, and finally I was almost frantic. I couldn't eat for worry, and, to tell the truth, there wasn't much on the table to tempt one to gluttony. I couldn't sleep at night. I grew to look haggard, but my anxiety was more for my poor wife and children than for myself. When I was just about desperate, my good wife, to whom God has given her faith since our marriage, suggested that we make together a novena to the Sacred Heart, for whom I'm not given to piety, by inclination, but I couldn't refuse her since the novena though it brought no other good. Besides, I do believe in God and I do believe that He answers prayer: and I did have faith that He could grant us what we asked and that He would do so if it was best for us, according to His plan."

"We began the novena, hoping by a resolute act of the will against the doubt and darkness and despair that encompassed us. We prayed fervently, and strove to cheer each other up."

"On the third day a young woman who was then a comparative stranger to us, but who is now a cherished friend, came unexpectedly to my wife and volunteered the loan of fifty dollars that she had saved up, saying that she knew that I was out of work and that she would be pleased if we could use the money."

"It seemed to me like a godsend dropped straight from the heavens. 'But what was that to our need?' I handed it all over to the landlady, who was threatening to put us out, for I thought that it was best to keep a shelter over our heads, even though we had to go hungry."

"Well, the novena went on day after day, but the first answer seemed to be the only one that we were to receive—I couldn't get anything to do at any kind of employment and the grocery were dunning us with their bills. The outlook was certainly discouraging."

"The last day of the nine came. We both felt low-spirited, but we went to Holy Communion together and said the final prayers."

"Don't lose hope," pleaded my wife, "we may yet get something in a day or two."

"Shortly after breakfast I started out as usual to look for a job, but went by the church to pay a visit to the Blessed Sacrament in thanksgiving for my Communion."

"While I was kneeling in a pew near the door, with my face hid in my hands and my heart in the tabernacle pleading for my suffering children, a gentleman touched me on the arm and I looked up. I was acquainted with him only by reputation as one of the prominent and wealthy Catholics of the city, and he knew me only by sight, as the son of my father, who had once done some marble-work for him. He whispered to me—

"Can you come to my office some time to-day?"  
"Yes, sir," I answered, and out he went. In a dull sort of way I wondered what he wanted with me, but my mind was so taken up with the misery that haunted me, that I could not think about it. So I resumed my prayer and finished it as best I could. Then I left the church and proceeded to the gentleman's office."

"I want you to fix the marble steps at my house," he said; "they're out of order. And, by the way, I'd like to get a neat but simple tombstone for my uncle. About what would it cost me?"

"I made a rough outline of several styles of headstones, and he, having first been told the prices, selected one of them. Then he inquired in an off-hand way—  
"How's business?"

"When I replied that I was not in any business, he seemed so surprised that I had to make some explanation and then he seemed so sympathetic that one remark or inquiry of his, after another, drew out from me pretty much the whole story."

"How much money would you need to get a start?" he asked abruptly.  
"I told him."

"Is that all?" said he, with a glance at me of astonishment; and without another word he turned around to his desk and wrote me out a cheque for the amount. Handing it to me, he remarked—  
"Pay me when you can well afford it, and if that isn't enough, come back for more."

How I got out of his office, I don't know to this day. I was just completely overwhelmed with emotion and wanted to cry and to laugh. But I couldn't utter a word. He offered me his hand and my grasp of it spoke more than words.

"Well, I went back to the church for one good minute and then I rushed home to my wife. I won't say a word about what happened when I told her the good news, except that she fell on her knees and called down God's blessing on our benefactor in words that gushed from an affectionate and grateful heart."

"So I hired a shop, moved my family into rooms above it, paid the most pressing debts, procured some stones and began work on the gentleman's orders."

"I wasn't through with them before other commissions commenced to come in.  
"But that wasn't all my good fortune. To provide the capital necessary to carry on and develop the business, two kinsmen of mine, relatives by marriage, seeing that I had a start in my old line, came in of their own accord, and, each not knowing what the other had done, offered me financial assistance. With their aid I have been enabled to pay back the first two loans, wipe out all other outside indebtedness, support my family and carry out all work entrusted to me, involving thousands of dollars' worth of credit. To-day I have a fairly flourishing business. I attribute it all to the Sacred Heart and to that novena."

"Well, if that isn't as good as a story!" observed the other man. "It has put new faith into me."

The train had reached its terminus by this. My neighbors and I got off together, but they were soon lost to me in the crowds that surged out of the other cars. There and then they dropped out of my life most probably for ever, but the story that the one told and the other listened to, abides with me yet. Whenever I recall it, I remember also the comment of the other man and I echo it with equal fervor and conviction, saying, as he did—  
"It has put new faith into me!"—  
L. W. Reilly, in Donahoe's Magazine.

—IN—  
Monument National,  
St. Lawrence St.  
2 30 P.M.  
AND  
8 00 P.M.

REV. P. J. O'Donnell,  
Pastor of St. Mary's Church,  
Counsel

Dear Priest, per O'Donnell. Pure was that bond at the manliness marked his Charity, piety, his brow

On tablets of engrave gratitude orphans have a deep spirit mate his No ostentation as a child Nor stranger, f ever break To Our Lady loved to no

No doubt, it w did his m And radiate h beams of l The children l him; like o They ga; and to the And for Christ sacrifice he Oh children of forget no

"Ego to absol of Christ's The sinner's he Holy Spir When pain an upon the b His pure, cheer Oh, Lord! upon pure, and Sure, his edify ed us all v

"As citizen, a cl O'Donnell. Ever honored l counsel and His virtue, loar sanctity an Shed lustre a glorifi He loved his h loved his h No-son of dea love her m

Now he his hol der-loved Sweet Mother o his heart Sons and daug will oft thi Enshrine the tou with gams Keep him i while life's A friend in h O'Donnell

THE WEARING  
A Leaf From th  
Iris

"Will my soul On its way to Just outside t England—un burg's Convent quaint old hous ant prince may Tudor times. N the aged poor— those who have stony.

"Among the d is an aged dame had spent its fur side the world. erine Maloney; days come rou up and says: "road to Tim, fat me mind Tim."

And I tell her is never forgotte bared at the altie en of by one o whom God had i I turn to my i piece together When Catherine among us she w was bright, kin and steady boy.

Mike, her hus layer's laborer, a dark winters, wh ed, the Maloney hard time of t Catherine's indu good God can br though Maloney's common earthen the honey of ha "Shure," the s

"There's no strang and Mike is will a little robin rep woman I am in old Ireland, h the fisherwom the song in the shawls on thei paradise after Catherine often a Then came the it."

Mike lost his trying to save a compelled by dr make what he c water." And wh had been laid to lie part of the lo about finding a market for the son.

Our Irish peop I may say mite, tant than, and received Cathedr up with a mang eral store. Littl errand boy in a ers' factory, a threads were uni Young as he w

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