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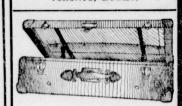
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THE RULING PASSION

BY HENRY VAN DYKE.

THE REWARD OF VIRTUE.

I. Waen the good priest of St. Gérôme christened Patrick Mullarkey, he lent himself unconsciously to an innocent deception. To look at the name, you would think, of course, it belonged to an Irishman; the very appearance of it was equal to a certificate of member hip in a Fenian society.

But in effect, from the turned-up toes

of his bottes sauvages to the ends of his black mustache, the proprietor of this name was a Frenchman -Canadian French, you understand, and therefore even more proud and tenacious of his race than if he had been born in Normandy. Somewhere in his family tree there must have been a graft from the Green Isle. A wantering lumberman from County Kerr had drifted up the Saguenay in Kerry to the Lake St. John region, and married the daughter of a habitan, and settled down to forget his own country and his father's nouse. But every visible trace of this infusion of new blood had vanished long ago, except the name; and the name itself was transformed on the lips of the St. Géromians. If you had heard them their pleasant droning Patrique accent. you would have supposed that it was made in France. To have a guide with such a name as that was as good

Even waen they cut it short and called him "Patte," as they usually did, it had a very foreign sound. Everything about him was in harmony with it; he spoke and laughed and sang and thought and felt in French-the French of two hundred years ago, the language of Samuel de Champlain and the Sleur de Monts, touched with a strong woodland flavor. In short, my guide, philosopher, and friend, Pat, did not have a drop of Irish in him, unless, perhaps, it was a certain—well, you shall judge for yourself, when you have heard this story of his virtue

and the way it was rewarded.

It was on the shore of the Lac à la Belle Rivière, fifteen miles back from St. Gérôme, that I came into the story, and found myrelf, as commonly happens in the real stories which life is always bringing out in periodical form, some where about the middle of the plot. But Patrick readily made me acquaint ed with what had gone before. Indeed,

it is one of life's greatest charms as story teller that there is never any trouble about getting a brief resume of the argument, and even a listener who arrives late is soon put into tone with the course of the narrative.

We had hauled our canoes and camp stuff over the terrible road that leads to the lake, with much creaking and groaning of wagons, and complaining of men, who declared that the mud grew deeper and the hills steeper every year, and vowed their customary v never to come that way again. never to come that way again. At last our tents were pitched in a green copse of balsam trees, close beside the water. The delightful sense of peace and freedom descended upon our souls Prosper and Ovide were cutting wood for the camp fire; Francois was getting ready a brace of partridges for supper Patrick and I were unpacking the provisions, arranging them conveniently for present use and future transports

'Here, Pat," said I, as my hand fell on a large square parcel—"here is some superfine tobacco that I got in Quebec for you and the other men on this trip. Not like the damp stuff you and last year—a little bad smoke and too many bad words. This is tobacco to burn—something quite particular, you understand. How does that please yon?"

He had been rolling up a piece of salt pork in a cloth as I spoke, and courteously wiped his fingers on the outside of the bundle before he stretched out his hand to take the package of tobacco. Then he answered, h his unfailing politeness, but more solemnly than usual:

"A thousand thanks to m'sieu'. But this year I shall not have need of the good tobacco. It shall be for the

The reply was so unexpected that it almost took my breath away. For Pat, the steady smoker, whose pipes were as invariable as the precession of the equinoxes, to refuse his regular rations soothing weed was a thing unheard of. Could he be growing proud in his old age? Had he some secret in his old age? Had he some secret supply of cigars concealed in his kit. which made him scorn the golden Vir ginia leaf? I demanded an explana-

"But no, m'sieu'." he replied : "it is not that, most assuredly. It is something entirely different, something very serious. It is a reformation that commence. Does m'sieu' permit that should inform him of it?" very

Of course I permitted, or rather, warm-ly encouraged, the fullest possible unfold-

ing of the tale; and while we sat among the bags and boxes, and the sun settled gently down behind the sharp pointed firs across the lake, and the evening sky and the waveless lake glowed with thousand tints of deepening rose and amber, Patrick put me in possession of the facts which had led to a moral revolution in his life.
"It was the Ma'm'selle Meelair, that

young lady-not very young, but active like the youngest—the one that I con ducted down the Grande Décharge to Chicoutimi last year, after you had gone away. She said that she knew gone away. She said that she knew m'sieu' intimately. No doubt you have a good remembrance of her?

admitted an acquaintance with the societies for ethical agitation-a long woman, with short hair and eye glasse and a great thirst for tea; not very good in a cance, but always wanting to run the rapids and go into the dangerous places, and talking all the time Yes; that must have been the one. She was not a bosom friend of mine, to speak accurately, but I remembered he

Well, then, m'sieu'," continued rick, "it was this demoiselle who Patrick, "it was this demoiselle was changed my mind about the smoking changed my moment, you understand it was a work of four days, and she

The first day it was at the Island House; we were trolling for on anniche, and she was not pleased, for she lost many of the fish. I was smoking at the stern of the canoe, and she said that the tobacco was a filthy weed, that it grew in the devil's garden, and that it smelled bad, terribly bad, and that it made the air sick, and that even the would not eat it."
could imagine Patrick's dismay as

he listened to this dissertation; for in his way he was as sensitive as a woman, and he would rather have been upset in his canoe than have exposed himself to the reproach of offending any one of his patrons by unpleasant or unseemly con-"What did you do then, Pat?"

asked.

" Certainly I put out the pipe-wha could I do otherwise? But I thought that what the demoiselle Meelair has said was very strange, and not true— exactly; for I have often seen the tobacco grow, and it springs up out of the ground like the wheat or the beans, and it has beautiful leaves, broad and green, with sometimes a red flower at the top. Does the good God cause the filthy weeds to grow like that? Are they not all clean that He has made? The potato—it is not filthy. And the onion? It has a strong smell; but the demoiselle Meelair she ate much of the onion-when we were not at the Island House, but in the camp.
"And the smell of the tobacco—this

is an affair of the taste. For me, I love it much; it is like a spice. When I come home at night to the camp fire. where the boys are smoking, the smell of the pipes runs far out into the woods to salute me. It says, 'Here we are Patrique; come in near to the fire. The smell of tobacco is more sweet than the smell of the fish. The pig loves it not, assuredly; bu; what then? I am not a pig. To me it is good, good, good, Don't you find it like that, m sieu'? I had to confess that in the affair of

taste I sided with Patrick rather than with the pig. "Continue," I said—
"continue, my boy. Miss Miller must have said more than that to reform

you." "Truly," replied Pat. "On the second day we were making the lunch at midday on the island below the first rapids. I smoked the pipe on a rock apart, after the collation. Mees Meelair comes to me, and says: 'Patrique, my man, do you comprehend that the tobacco is a poison? You are committing the murder of yourself. Then she tells me many things-about the nicoline, I think she calls him: how bones and into the hair, and how quick-ly he will kill the cat. And she says, very strong, 'The noobacco shall die!' ' The men who smoke the

That must have frightened you well, Pat. I suppose you threw away

your pipe at once."
"But no. m'sieu'; this time I continue to smoke; for now it is Mees Meelair who comes near the pipe voluntarily, and it is not my offence. And I remember, while she is talking, the old bonhomme Michaud at St. Gérône. He is a capable man : when e was young he could carry a barrel of flour a mile without rest, and now that he has seventy-three years he yet keeps his force. And he smokes—it is astonishing how that old man smokes ! the day, except when he sleeps. If the tobacco is a poison, it is a poison of the slowest—like the tea or the coffee. For the cat it is quick—yes; but for the man it is long; and I am still young

only thirty one.
But the third day, m'sieu'—the third day was the worst. It was a day of sadness, a day of the bad chance. The demoiselle Meelair was not content but that we should leap the Rapide des Cédres in canoe. It was rough, rough—all feather white, and the big rock at the corner boiling like a kettle. But it is the ignorant who have the most of boldness. The demoiselle Meelair she was not solid in the cance. She made a jump and a loud scream. I did my possible, but the sea was too high. took in of the water about five buckets. We were very wet. After that we make the camp; and while I sit by the irs to dry my clothes I smoke for com-

" Mees Meelair she comes to me once more. 'Patrique,' she says with a sad voice, 'I am sorry that a nice man, so good, so brave, is married to a thing so bad, so sinful! At first I am mad when hear this, because I think she means Angélique, my wife; but immediately she goes on: 'You are married to the she goes on: You are married to the smoking. That is sinful; it is a wicked thing. Christians do not smoke. There is none of the tobacco in heaven. The men who use it cannot go there. Ah, Patrique, do you wish to go to the hell with your pipe?' "

"That was a close question," I commented; "your Miss Miller is a plain speaker. But what did you say when she asked you that?"

"I said, m'sieu'," replied Patrick, lifting his hand to his forehead, " that I must go where the good God pleased to send me, and that I would have much joy to go to the same place with our Curé, the Père Morel, who is a great smoker. I am sure that the pipe comfort is no sin to that holy man when he returns, some cold night, from the visiting of the sick-it is not sin, not more than the soft chair and the warm fire. It harms no one, and it makes quietness of mind. For me when I see m'sieu' the Curé sitting at the door of the presbytere, in the evening coolness, smoking the tobacco very peaceful, and when he says to me, 'Good day, Patrique; will you have a pipeful?' I cannot think that is wicked

There was a warmth of sincerity in the honest fellow's utterance that spoke well for the character of the curé of St. The good word of a plain fisherman or hunter is worth more than a degree of doctor of divinity from earned university.

I too had grateful memories of good

men, faithful, charitable, wise, dev -men before whose virtues my heart stood uncovered and reverent, men whose lives were sweet with self sacrifice, and whose words were like stars of guidance to many souls-and I had often inviting pleasant, kindly thoughts with the pipe of peace. I wondered whether Miss Miller ever had the good fortune to meet any of these men. They were ers of the societies for agitation, but they were profitable men to know. Their very presence o know. Their very presence was nedicinal. It breathed patience and fidelity to duty, and a large, quiet

"Well, then," I asked, "what did she say finally to turn you? What was her last argument? Come, Pat, you must make it a little shorter than she did.

friendliness.

"In five words, m'sieu', it was this The tobacco causes the poverty. The fourth day—you remind yourself of the long dead water below the Rapide Gervais? It was there. All the day she spoke to me of the money that goes to the smoke. Two plastres the month. Twenty-four the year. Phree hundred—yes, with the interest, more than three hundred in ten years! Two thousand plastres in the life of the man But she comprehends well the arithmetic, that demoiselle Meelair; it was enormous! The big farmer Tremblay has not more money at the bank than that. Then she asks me if I have been at Quebec? No. If I would love to go? Of course, yes. For two years of the smoking we could go, the good wife and me, to Quebec, and see the grand city and the shops, and the many people and the cathedral, and perhaps the theatre. And at the asylum orphans we could seek one of the little ound children to bring home with us, to be our own: for m'sieu' knows it is no child. But it was not Mees Meelair who said that—no, she would not under stand that thought."

Patrick paused for a moment, and rubbed his chin reflectively. Then continue1:

"And perhaps it seems strange to you also, m'sieu', that a poor man should be so hungry for children. It is not so everywhere: not in America, I hear. But it is so with us in Canada. ot a man so poor that he would not feel richer for a child. I know not a man so happy that he would not feel happier with a child in the house. It is the best thing that the good God gives to us; something to work for; something to play with. It makes a man more gentle and more strong. And a woman her heart is like an empty nest, if she has not a child. It was the darkest day that ever came to Angélique and me when our little baby flew away, four years ago. But perhaps if we have not one of cur own, there is another some where, a little child of nobody, that bene goes into the blood and into the longs to us, for the sake of the love of children. Jean Boucher, my wife's cousin, at St. Joseph d'Alma, has taken two from the asylum. Two, m'sieu', I assure you; for as soon as one was twelve years old, he said he wanted a baby, and so he went back again and got another. That is what I should like to do.'

"But, Pat," said I, "it is an expen

sive business, this raising of children. You should think twice about it."
"Pardon, m'sieu'," answered Patrick; I think a hundred times and always the same way. It costs little more for three, or four, or five, in the house than for two. The only thing is the money for the journey to the city, the choice, the arrangement with the nuns. For that one must save. And so I have thrown away the pipe. I smoke no more. The money of the tobacco is for Quebec and for the little found child. have already eighteen plastres and twenty sous in the old box of cigars the chimney piece at the house. year will bring more. The winter after the next, if we have the good chance, we go to the city, the good wife and me, and we come home with the little how or maybe the little girl. Does m'sieu approuve? 'You are a man of virtue. Pat." said

I; "and since you will not take your share of the tobacco on this trip, it shall go to the other men; but you shall have the money instead, to put into your box on the mantel piece.

After supper that evening I watched him with some curiosity to see what he would do without his pipe. He seemed restless and uneasy. The other men restless and uneasy. The other men sat around the fire, smoking; but Patrick was down at the landing, fuss-ing over one of the cances, which had been somewhat roughly handled on the road coming in. Then he began to tighten the tent-ropes, and hauled at them so vigorously that he loosened two of the stakes. Then he whittled the blade of his paddle for a while, and cut it an inch too short. Then he went into the men's tent, and in a few min utes the sound of snoring told that he had sought refuge in sleep at 8 o'clock without telling a single caribou story or making any plans for the next day's sport.

For several days we lingered on the Lake of the Beautiful River, trying the

fishing. We explored all the favorite meeting places of the trout, at the mouths of the streams and in the cool spring holes, but we did not have re markable success. I am bound to say that Patrick was not at his best tha year as a fisherman. He was as ready to work, as interested, as eager, ever; but he lacked steadiness, persist Some tranquillizing ence, patience. Some tranquillization influence seemed to have departed fro him. That placid confidence in the ultimate certainty of catching fish, which is one of the chief elements of good luck, was wanting. He did not appear to be able to sit still in the The mosquitoes troubled him terribly. He was just as anxious as a man could be to have me take plenty of the largest trout, but he was too much in a hurry. He even went so far as to say that he did not think I cast the fly He even went so far as to as well as I did formerly, and that I was too slow in striking when the fish rose. He was distinctly a weaker man without his pipe, but his virtuous resolve held

There was one place in particular that required very cautious angling. was a spring hole at the mouth of the Rivière du Milieu—an open space, about a hundred feet long and fitteen feet wide, in the midst of the lily pads, and surrounded on every side by clear, shallow water. Here the great trout ssembled at certain hours of the day; but it was not easy to get them. must come up delicately in the cance. and make fast to a stake at the side of the pool, and wait a long time for the place to get quiet and the fish to re-cover from their fright and come out from under the lily-pads. It had been our elstom to calm and soothe this expectant interval with incense of the Indian weed, friendly to meditation and a foe of "Raw haste, half-sister to de-lay." But this year Patrick could not endure the waiting. After five minutes he would say:
"But the fishing is bad this season!

There are none of the big ones here at Let us try another place. It will go better at the Rivière du Cheval,

perhaps. There was one thing that would really keep him quiet, and that was a conversation about Quebec. The glories of that wonderful city entranced his thoughts. He was already floating, in imagination, with the vast throngs of people that filled its splendid streets, looking up at the stately houses and churches with their glittering roofs of tin, and staring his fill at the magnificent shop-windows, where all the luxuries of the world vere displayed. He had heard there were more than a hundred shops -separate shops for all kinds of separ ate things; some for groceries and some for shoes, and some for clothes. knives and axes, and some for some for guns, and many shops where they sold only jewels—gold rings and diamonds, and forks of pure silver. Was it not so? pictured himself, side by side

with his good wife, the salle a mange of the Hotel Richelieu, ordering their dinner from a printed bill of fare Side by side they were walking on the Dufferin Terrace, listening to the music of the military band. Side by side they were watching the wonders of the play at the Théâtre de l'Etoile du Side by side they were kneel ing before the gorgeous altar of the cathedral. And then they were standing silent, side by side, in the asylum of the orphans, looking a brown eyes and blue, at black hair and yellow curls, at fat legs and rosy cheeks and laughing mouths, while the Mother Superior showed off the little boys and girls for them to choose This affair of the choice was always a delightful difficulty, and here his This affair fancy loved to hang in suspense, vi-brating between rival joys. Once, at the Rivière du Milieu, after

considerable discourts upon Quebec, on my shoulder with a conv there was an interval of silence, during and pointed up the stream. which I succeeded in hooking and play ing a larger trout than usual. As the fish came up to the side of the canoe, Patrick netted him deftly, exclaiming with an abstracted air, "It is a boy, with an abstracted air, "after all. I like that best."

Our camp was shifted, the second week to the Grand Lac des Cedres: and there we had extraordinary fortune with the trout : partly, I conjecture, because there was only one place to fish, and so Patrick's uneasy zea could find no excuse for keeping me in constant motion all around the lake. But in the matter of weather we were not so happy. There is always a conflict in the angler's mind about the weather—a struggle between his de-sires as a man and his desires as a fisherman. This time our prayers for a good fishing season were granted at the expense of our suffering human na ture. There was a conjunction in the zodiac of the signs of Aquarius and ture. Pisces It rained as easily, as sudden-ly, as penetratingly, as Miss Miller ly, as penetratingly, as Miss Miller talked; but in between the showers the trout were very hungry.

One day, when we were paddling

ome to our tents among the birch trees, one of these unexpected storms came up; and Patrick, thoughtful of my confort as ever, insisted on giving me his coat to put around my dripping shoulders. The paddling would serve instead of a coat for him, he said : it would keep him warm to his bones. slipped the garment over my back, something hard fall from one of the pockets into the bottom of the canoe.

It was a briar wood pipe.

"Aha! Pat," I cried; "what is this? You said you had thrown all your pipes away. How does this come in your pocket?"

"But, m'sieu," "he answered "this is different. This is not the pipe war.

is different. This is not the pipe pure and simple. It is a souvenir. It is the one you gave me two years ago on the Metabetchouan, when we got the big caribou. I could not reject this, keep it always for the remembrance." At this moment my hand fell upon a

small, square object in the other pocket of the coat. I pulled it out. It was a cake of Virginia leaf. Without a word, I held it up, and looked at Patrick. He began to explain eagerly:
"Yes, certainly, it is the tobacco, m'sieu'; but it is not for the smoke, as you suppose. It is for the virtue, for the self-victory, I call this my little

ple se of temptation. See; the edges cut. I smell it only; and are not cut. I smell it only; and when I think how it is good then I speak to myself, 'But the little found shild will be better! It will last a long time this little piece of tempta tion; perhaps until we have the boy at

cur house—or maybe the girl."

The conflict between the cake of Virginia leaf and Patrick's virtue must have been severe during the last ten days of our expedition; for we went down the Rivière des E that is a tough trip, and full of occasions when consolation is needed. a long, hard day's work cutting out an abandoned portage through the woods, or tramping miles over the incredibly shaggy hills to some outlying pond for a caribou, and lugging the saddle and hind quarters back to the camp, the evening pipe, after supper, seemed to comfort the men unspeakably. If their temper had grown a little short under stress of fatigue and hunger, now they became cheerful and g again. They sat on logs good-natured before the camp fire, their stockinged feet stretched out to the blaze, and the puffs of smoke rose from their lips like tiny salutes to the comfortable flames or like incense burned upon the altar of gratitude and contentment.

Patrick, I noticed about this time, liked to get on the leeward side of as many pipes as possible, and as near as the could to the smokers. He said that this kept away the mosquitoes. There he would sit, with the smoke drifting full in his face, both hands in his pockets, talking about Quebec, and debating the comparative merits of a boor a girl as an addition to his hous hold.

But the great trial of his virtue was yet to come. The main object of our trip down the River of Barks-the terminus ad quem of the expedition, so to speak-was a bear. Now the bear as an object of the chase, at least in Canada, is one of the most illusory of phantoms. The manner of hunting is It consists in walking about through the woods, or paddling along a stream, until you meet a bear : then you try to shoot him. This would This would eem to be, as the Rev. Mr. Laslie called his book against the desists of the eighteenth century, "A Short and Easie Method." But in point of fact there are two principal difficulties. The first is that you never find the bear when and where you are looking for him. The second is that the bear ometimes finds you when-but you

We had hunted the whole length of the River of Barks with the utmost pains and caution, never going out, ven to pick blueberries, without having the rifle at hand, loaded for the ex-pected encounter. Not one bear had we met. It seemed as if the whole ursine tribe must have emigrated to Labrador.

At last we came to the mouth of the river, where it empties into Lake Kenogami, in a comparatively civilized country, with several farm houses in full view of the opposite bank. It was not a promising place for the chase; but the river ran down with a little fall and a lively, cheerful rapid into the lake, and it was a capital spot for fishing. So we left the rifle in the case, and took a canoe and a rod, and went down, on the last afternoon, to stand on the point of rocks at the foot of the

apid, and cast the fly.

We caught half a dozen good trout but the sun was still hot, and we concluded to wait awhile for the evening fishing. So we turned the cance bottom up among the bushes on the shore, stored the trout away in the shade beneath it, and sat down in a convenient place among the stones to have another chat about Quebec. We had just passed the jewelry-shops, and were preparing to go to the asylum of orphans, when Patrick put his hand on my shoulder with a convulsive grip,

There was a huge bear, like a very big wicked, black sheep with a pointed nose, making his way down the shere. He shambled along lazily and uncon-cornedly, as if his bones were loosely tied together in a bag of fur. It was the most indifferent and disconnected gait that I ever saw. Nearer and nearer he sauntered, while we sat as still as if we had been paralyzed. And the gun was in its case at the tent!

How the bear knew this I cannot tell; but know it he certainly did, for he kept on until he reached the cance, sniffed at it suspiciously, thrust his sharp nose under it, and turned it over with a crash that knocked two holes in the bottom, ate the fish, licked his chops, stared at us for a few moments without the slightest appearance of gratitude, made up his mind that he did not like our personal appearance and then loped leisurely up the mountain side. We could hear him cracktain side. We could hear him cracking the underbrush long after he was Patrick looked at me and sighed. I

said nothing. The French language as far as I knew it, seemed trifling and inadequate. It was a moment when nothing could do any good except the consolations of philosopay, or a pipe. Patrick pulled the brier-wood from his pocket; then he took out the cake of pocket; then he took out the cake of Virginia leaf, looked at it, smelled it, shook his head, and put it back again. His face was as long as his arm. He stuck the cold pipe into his mouth, and pulled away at it for awhile in silence. Then his countenance began to clear, his mouth relaxed, he broke into a laugh.

laugh.
"Sacred bear!" he cried, slapping his knee; "sacred beast of the world! What a day of good chance for her, he! But she was glad, I suppose. Perhaps she has some cubs, he? Bijette!"

III.

This was the end of our hunting and fishing for that year. We spent the next two days in voyaging through a half dozen small lakes and streams, in a farming country, on our way home. I observed that Patrick kept his souvenir already! And wi made from the tob ing the past month more than twentyall safe in the ciga the bank at Chico tion seemed to fill fragrance. It was t the fumes of their invisible wro enchanting vision walls, glittering people, regiments laughing eyes of

OCTOBER

When we came
La Belle Rivie
expanse of Lake
us, calm and bright the sinking sun. left, eight miles slendor steeple Gérô ne. A thic men; "the boys of themselves to be for a bonfire." ged lightly fo and came nearest evident that the village itself. I but not a genera too scattered an a fire to spread Perhaps the bla the bakery, pe down barn of th was not a large But where was i The question more anxious, arrived at the

boys, eager to had spied us fa the shore to me "Patrique! in English, to as great as "Come 'ome; k "W'at!" crie And he drove t out, and ran

village as if he men followed h boys to unloa em up on the would not chafe This took se helped me wi need to 'urry, me: "dat 'ouse ees hall burn' t'ing lef' bot d As s on as p up the stuff, co

tents, and lea steadiest of th the village and Mullarkey. of squared log curved roof with the morn up beside it l othing rema clay oven at t a heap of smot Patrick sat

stone that ba corner of the close to Angé looked almos his arm aroun came up. I he was quite he held the his right a k delicate slive he rolled to motion between pulled his p filled the boy

pretty house Patrick. At the mantel p fear - all terrible mis "I cannot slowly. "It has left m m'sieu', you pile of ashes of charred w

given me

pipe again".
The frag

pouring ou

enwreathed cloud aroun mountain a his face wa "My fait your mone; to Quebec, little orpha up so easily "Well." from his n around the well, the

new one t

without th

as regards

his seat up himself wi

fidence, A

not for an The golde in bloom a as I walke sunlight o to glorify rapture o fragrant v yellow clump of contented bells, "Si

sweeter-There farther b

one; and