

FORSAKED THE WORLD.

The Simple Story of How Good Mrs. O'Brien Influenced Jimmy Miles to Become a Priest.

J. F. DONNELLY, in THE CELTIC MIRROR.

JAMES MILES, as he wrote it, was treading his way from Mulberry street, through the heaps of piled up snow and slush. He inwardly was cursing at the fate that brought him into that region. For he was rich and lived in fashionable uptown New York. But he had political aspirations, and at last the dearest wish of his heart was realized--he having been elected to a minor position by "his peers"--he had to go to police headquarters for his proofs of election. The first day of the year was rapidly approaching when he would assume his official title of justice, and on the morning we are dealing with he got up at 8 o'clock--an unusual proceeding--and after having satisfactorily settled his business in the White Palace--the name given to police headquarters by its frequenters--he was hastening to the city buildings on Chambers Street, where he would have his papers duly endorsed and signed.

As he hastened along, winding in and out through a maze of rubbish and ash barrels, he wondered how human beings could live year in and year out amid such filth and stenches. He had not quite forgotten yet that it was in or near this very region that he first saw the light of day, and it was here that his father had "made his pile" as a junk dealer. As he walked along he began to realize that he was near familiar surroundings.

Yes, there was old St. Patrick's. How well he knew it. Its brown, towering form and high brick wall, how often he and the other boys had played in its shadow and how careful they were even in their maddest freaks never to pass by its centre door without raising their hats in homage to him who dwelt therein. As he approached the door, Mr. Miles' hand unconsciously, almost, reached for his silk hat and with a glance around he raised it just the least bit.

He could not help scanning the brick wall that enclosed the grounds to see if he could find his initials which he scratched on it one day in the long ago, but like all earthly things they had faded away.

At a black lower down there was a commotion. As he arrived at the scene, he saw two burly deputy sheriffs piling up the furniture of a poor woman who had been turned out for non-payment of rent. She was sitting on a chair in the doorway, watching with a hopeless expression the work of the men. It was too common a sight in this locality to attract much attention. No one cared to brave the bitter weather to offer the woman sympathy, and as Mr. Miles looked at her, his way having been barred for a moment by the transfer of the furniture, he saw two tears steal down her thin cheeks. He was on the point of moving on when a window was raised across the street and a head popped forth.

"Biddy, hello, there, Biddy," and as he turned to look, he saw a face that he thought he recognized. The old woman on the chair was too deeply sunk in her own misery to notice the summons, and the window was slammed to, but the woman inside indicated by a pantomime that she wished Biddy to go over to her house.

"Madama," said Mr. Miles approaching her and raising his silk hat, "I think your friend opposite wishes to see you."

"Yes--the same," said Mr. Miles with an effort, as he did not very much relish the digging up of his antecedents, but could not avoid feeling thankful for the commendation so naively given to his father's memory.

"Well, what of him? I hope he's not come to a bad end. I heard he had put on heaps of style since he moved up town. That he had a house on Fifth Avenue and a nigger of a coachman."

"I am he."

If a bomb had suddenly exploded under Mrs. O'Brien's feet, she could not have been more surprised. At first it was plain to Mr. Miles that she did not believe him. But soon the look faded away and genuine pleasure took its place as she grasped Mr. Miles' hand in hers and surveyed him from head to foot. She hurried about and got him a chair and with many apologies asked him to be seated. The half hour that passed in questions and answers, regrets and joys was an interesting one to Mr. Miles. He had been so used to the thin veneer of society that it was a positive relief to let his thoughts and fancy have free rein, and he talked about his prospects and plans to the simple hearted Irishwoman as he had never ventured to express himself to even his most intimate and particular friends.

The talk drifted on to the time when Bill (who had been dead and buried these twenty years) and he had served Mass for the holy man Cardinal McCloskey.

"And do you remember the day when Bill and you headed the procession on Holy Thursday. Why you looked like a little saint then and were so pious that folks thought you would be a priest sure."

Mrs. O'Brien seemed to read his thoughts. She had, in her warm-heartedness, forgotten how different their positions were and only remembered that he had been the bosom friend of her Bill.

"Jimmy," she said, laying her hand on his shoulder, "I hope your dear old mother's prayers have not been in vain and that you are still a good Catholic."

"Oh! good enough, I guess," said he.

"We can't be too good," said Mrs. O'Brien. "Don't you remember the day when you and Bill joined St. Aloysius Society and how you two little chaps came into our house to show your medals. Have you it yet?"

Mr. Miles was very much ill at ease. He wished he was out of the house, and still he wished she would go on and "pitch into him," as he mentally expressed it. It would do him a deal of good, he thought.

Mrs. O'Brien was practical. She did not continue her questioning. She went into an inner room and brought out a little package carefully tied up. She loosened it and laid a medal to which was attached a faded white ribbon in Mr. Miles' hand. He recognized it as the one Bill got on the day he joined St. Aloysius Society. Where his was he knew not. He tried to assume a look of indifference but failed miserably.

"That is a great treasure of mine," said Mrs. O'Brien. "But for the sake of old times you can have it, and here's another which was also a great favorite of Bill's. Look, it says: 'Cease, the Heart of Jesus is with thee.' He always wore the two together. Here, let me put it on the ribbon also and I'll put it around your neck. There, that's right. The ribbon is all out of sight now. I'll pray every night for you and so will grandmother and Mrs. Donohue there. Won't you, grandmother?" Grandmother gave a mumbled assent.

Mr. Miles suddenly remembered that his engagement was pressing and hurried off, not forgetting to see the deputy sheriffs who had just completed the removal of the furniture and making arrangements to have it all put back, and paying all the arrears and several months ahead.

slow to show their admiration, and none could claim that he manifested any preference. The first rippling strains of a new fangled dance were echoing through the rooms. Mr. Miles secured a partner and was soon in the full enjoyment of the fascinating measure.

He was considered one of the best dancers in his set, and the young lady he chose as his partner was to be envied.

As he glided in and out keeping perfect time to the music he seemed to be floating through rosy dreamland. His face betokened the pleasure he felt.

Suddenly he put his hand to his head. His face became deathly pale, and he sank to the floor in a heap. The lady with whom he had been dancing gave a piercing cry. The music suddenly ceased. The dance was over. Quickly willing hands lifted the limp form, which was borne to a bedroom on an upper floor.

There was a doctor in the crowd, who, after sending every one out of the room, except an old butler, hastily went to work to disrobe the patient. The cause was apparent to the doctor. Mr. Miles had a stroke of apoplexy.

As they gently took off his garments the butler gave an exclamation-- "He's a Catholic!"

"One glance and the doctor nodded assent. "Send for a priest," was his only comment.

The butler, himself a devout Catholic, quickly dispatched a messenger. The throng downstairs--it having been considered not well to make it appear serious--were told it was merely a faint, and the revelry was continued without interruption.

Unobserved, amid the crashing strains of the orchestra as they hurried through the measure, the holy priest bearing the victim entered through a rear door.

The doctor who had been laboring unceasingly had brought his patient to a degree of consciousness. Mr. Miles looking about him in a bewildered way. Without word or comment the old butler prepared a table for the proper reception of the Lamb of God. As Mr. Miles looked around his eyes fell on the lighted candle and the crucifix. He gave a start and looked at the doctor.

"Keep quiet," said he, "the priest will be here in a minute."

Like lightning it flashed through Mr. Miles' brain that he must be seriously ill. What could the matter be? How long had he been laid up? Where was he? Was he about to die? Was this the end of all his expectations? How empty and vain seemed the things of the world.

Ah! yes, he remembered it all. He was at the ball on Christmas eve. How long ago was that? He attempted to raise and question the doctor, but found himself helpless; he could move neither his limbs or his tongue. He felt as if invisible chains bound him to the bed and that he had no tongue. The priest comes in. He takes in the situation at a glance, and the doctor with a few whispered comments leaves the room.

The priest kneels by the bedside of the patient and prays aloud. Two tears are seen to slowly steal down the pallid cheeks of Mr. Miles. The priest, as he finishes his devotions, says-- "Mr. Miles, can you speak?"

Mr. Miles moves his eyes from right to left.

After a few more questions, the priest proceeds to administer extreme unction. As he concludes his final prayer and prepares to leave, the silver incense burner is broken by the chiming of a nearby church tower.

The priest, pressing Mr. Miles' hand, says "Do you hear the Christmas bells?" The eyes show he understands. As he lays there listening to the bell music his thoughts wander back to the time when he anxiously waited for the sound of St. Patrick's chimes, and how he in the darkness of the morning hastily dressed. How he and his father proceeded to Mass. Yes, he hears his father's solemn voice chanting the old and oft repeated refrain--

"God bless ye, merry gentlemen, Let nothing ye dismay, For Christ, our God and Saviour, Was born this merry day."

The doctor has another look at his patient before he goes, and is surprised at the quick improvement. But he only sees the surface. Could he penetrate deeper, he would see how the reclaimed soul yearns and struggles to atone for the long neglect of the only thing to live for.

The doctor prophesies he will soon be on his feet again. As to what passes

EASY QUICK WORK SNOWY WHITE CLOTHES. SURPRISE SOAP MAKES CHILD'S PLAY OF WASH DAY

ed through the soul of Mr. Miles during his confinement only God knows, but when he was again able to leave the bed he was a changed man. His first act, as soon as he regained the use of his arms, was to grasp the medals that were still suspended around his neck and press them to his lips. Then he made the sign of the cross with them and during his waking hours he kept them firmly clasped in his hand.

It was weeks before he was able to go out in the streets, and one of his first acts was to go to headquarters and announce his intention of not serving as Justice. This created a flutter of surprise and excitement in political circles, as Mr. Miles' future "was assured."

And so he disappeared from the sight of his political and social friends.

On a Christmas eve six years after the incidents recorded, Mrs. O'Brien is living in loneliness in the same apartments. Grandmother three years ago paid the great debt to Nature, and after a well made confession in preparation for the morrow, Mrs. O'Brien is devotedly saying her rosary before the picture of the Virgin Mary.

She says a decade for the souls in purgatory, another for a friend in need and so on till she comes to the last.

"It is for Jimmy Miles," she says aloud, and as she finishes the rosary and bundles the beads in her pocket, she was startled by a rap at the door. A tall figure in the garb of a priest stands without.

"Don't you know me?" asks the stranger.

For an instant there is hesitation. Then with a cry of joy which swells up from a thankful heart she clasps Father Miles in her arms, and as in the long ago he kisses her on one cheek and then on the other.

There is no restraint now. Jimmy is a boy again. She first scolds and then pets him. "Why hadn't he told her? It was grand! It was wonderful! How did it all happen?"

And briefly he tells everything. She manifests no surprise, aside from this simple comment-- "Sure, didn't granny and I give all our prayers and good works for your welfare?"

And in St. Patrick's the next morning what a grand voice it was that sung the Mass.

Mrs. O'Brien in a front pew could scarcely take her eyes off the stalwart form. And as she received the Bread of Life from His hand, she could not contain her emotion.

The merry Christmas she enjoyed that day was topped off by a visit, after benediction, from "her boy Jimmy." She is never tired of hearing him tell about his studies in Rome and how his constant thought and prayers were for her, and when, at last, he leaves, his last words are-- "The ways of God, are ways of mercy still, And many a blessing comes from seeming ill."

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St. Ann's Young Men's Society. Organized 1885. Meets in its hall, 157 Ottawa Street, on the first Sunday of each month, at 8:30 p.m. Spiritual Adviser, REV. E. STRIBBE, C.S.S.R.; President, JOHN WHITTY; Secretary, D. J. O'RILL, Delegates to St. Patrick's League: J. Whitty, P. O'Sullivan and M. Casey.

Ancient Order of Hibernians. DIVISION No. 2. Meets in lower vestry of St. Gabriel New Church, corner Centre and Laurier streets, on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month, at 8 p.m. President, ANDREW DUNN; Recording Secretary, THOS. J. SMITH, 484 Richmond Street, to whom all communications should be addressed. Delegates to St. Patrick's League: A. Dunn, M. Lynch and B. Connaughton.

A.O.U.-Division No. 3. Meets the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month, at Hibernian Hall, No. 242 Notre Dame St. Officers: H. Wall, President; P. Curroll, Vice-President; John Hughes, Fin. Secretary; Wm. Raw, Treas. Secretary; W. P. Stanton, Treas.; Marshal, John Kennedy; T. Ervine, Chairman of Standing Committee. Hall is open every evening (except regular meeting nights) for members of the Order and their friends, where they will find Irish and other leading newspapers on file.

A.O.U.-Division No. 4. President, H. T. Keegan, No. 32 Desorimier ave. Vice President, J. P. O'Brien; Recording Secretary, P. J. Finn, 15 Kent Street; Financial Secretary, P. J. Tomlity; Treasurer, John Traynor; Sergeant-at-arms, D. Macdonough, Sentinel, D. White; Marshal, F. Guerin; Delegates to St. Patrick's League, T. J. Donohue, J. P. O'Hara, J. Heenan; Chairman Standing Committee, John Costello. A.O.U. Division No. 4 meets every 2nd and 4th Monday of each month, at 1113 Notre Dame Street.

C.M.B.A. of Canada. C.M.B.A. of Canada, Branch 74. Organized March 14, 1888. Branch 74 meets in the basement of St. Gabriel's new Church, corner of Centre and Laurier streets, on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. Applicants for membership, or any one desirous of information regarding the Branch, may communicate with the following officers: Rev. Wm. O'Meara, P. P., Spiritual Adviser, Centre Street. Capt. Wm. DREGAN, President, 15 Fire Station. MAURICE MURPHY, Financial Secretary, 77 Fort St. Wm. CULLEN, Treasurer, Bourgeois Street. JAMES TAYLOR, 217 Prince Arthur street.

C.M.B.A. of Canada, Branch 26. (ORGANIZED, 13th November, 1883.) Branch 26 meets at St. Patrick's Hall, 93 St. Alexander Street, on every Monday of each month. The regular meetings for the transaction of business are held on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month, at 8 p.m. Applicants for membership or any one desirous of information regarding the Branch may communicate with the following officers: MARTIN EAGAN, President, 577 Cadieux St. G. H. FRENCH, Treasurer, 19 Sherbrook St. G. A. GABRIEL, Fin. Sec., 511 St. Lawrence St. JAS. J. COSTIGAN, Secretary, 325 St. Urbain St.

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Catholic Benevolent Legion. Shamrock Council, No. 320, C.B.L. Meets in St. Ann's Young Men's Hall, 157 Ottawa Street, on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month, at 8 p.m. M. SILEA, President; T. W. LESAIGE, Secretary, 447 Berri Street.

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St. Patrick's Court, No. 95, C.O.F. Meets in St. Ann's Hall, 157 Ottawa Street, every 2nd and 4th Monday, at 8 p.m. Chief Ranger, JAMES F. FOSBERG, Recording Secretary, ALEX. PATTERSON, 157 Ottawa Street.

Total Abstinence Societies. ST. PATRICK'S T. A. & B. SOCIETY. Established 1841. The hall is open to the members and their friends every Tuesday evening. The society meets for religious instruction, in St. Patrick's Church, on the second Sunday of each month at 4:30 p.m. The regular monthly meeting is held on the second Tuesday of each month, at 8 p.m. Officers: Sec'y, J. A. McALLAN, S.B. Rev. President: JOHN WALSH, lat Vice-President: W. P. DOYLE, Secretary, 254 St. Martin Street, Delegates to St. Patrick's League: Messrs. John Walsh, H. Feeley and William Bawler.

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