

A Confession on No. 73.

Father Ridsdale, in the gathering darkness, walked up and down the country depot platform, waiting for the arrival of the train which was to take him home to his own parish.

The glow and enthusiasm of the mission he had just finished was still with Father Ridsdale, and he immediately addressed the young man.

"Good evening, Pat," said the priest. "Good evening, sir—good evening, Father," said the person addressed.

"No—no, not lately, Father." "How long since, Pat?" "A good long time, Father."

"A bad long time, rather, eh? But how long is it, Pat?" "Oh, a long time, Father."

"Bout—seven—years," came the unwilling acknowledgment. "Oh! Pat, and your old mother, every night, saying her beads for you that you, her boy, may be faithful to his God and to his Church!"

The chance shot had struck home, Father Ridsdale knew human nature well, and Irish nature better. Pat Sweeney's warm heart was touched, and the priest saw he had struck the right chord.

When they were left alone, Father Ridsdale began again on the question of confession. He saw that the young man beside him was of a naturally good disposition, and learned that, as a section hand on the railway, he was thrown into rough and frequently bad company.

Long and earnestly he talked to the young man, and tried to arouse him to a sense of the danger of his state, but with apparently little effect.

The Father knew enough of the young man already to be sure that if he made a promise to the priest he would certainly carry it out, and he himself had great confidence in the promises of our Divine Lord to the Blessed Margaret Mary that those priests who cultivated the devotion to the Sacred Heart should be able to move the most hardened sinners.

Pat would not give the required promise, and Father Ridsdale then took from his pocket a scapular of the Sacred Heart.

"If you will not promise to do this you will at least do one thing for me; will you not, Pat?" "What is that, Father?"

"Just wear this scapular always in honor of the Sacred Heart." Pat Sweeney's faith was not dead. He nodded assent, took the scapular and put it on almost mechanically.

And Sweeney? Of what was he thinking? He was unwontedly silent and now his thoughts flew back to the feast of the Sacred Heart years ago when he had made his first communion.

"Come, Father, come quick." "What's the matter," said the priest, as he ran to the door.

"The express is down the bank at Honey Creek bridge—at least the engine and one car. There has been a washout there this afternoon, and the first span gave way.

"Why, Pat, there is a moral certainty that she does." "And do you think those prayers do me any good? Of course they do."

"Well, I've just been thinking that I'm a pretty hard case. I haven't been to mass or confession for seven years, and—"

"Is not God's mercy infinite. One word, one sigh up to heaven and the evil can all be undone." "If I thought—if I could—if I were in church now—I'd—confession," mumbled poor Pat.

Father Ridsdale saw there was no time to lose. Beckoning the conductor, he slipped a dollar into his hand.

"Give me the key of a stateroom, for half an hour—be quick," he said. The conductor looked at first surprised, and then noticing the Roman collar of the priest, a look of intelligence stole over his face.

"This way, sir," he said. "Come, Pat," said Father Ridsdale. Pat Sweeney followed in a dazed sort of way, half reluctantly, half willingly.

Locking the door of the stateroom Pat Sweeney followed in a dazed sort of way, half reluctantly, half willingly.



Daily Spasms. Since a child 6 years old I was subject to St. Vincent's and spasms, and seeing an advertisement of Father Koenig's Nerve Tonic I concluded to try it.

Mr. W. F. Hackey, of Bathurst Village, N. B., says that his little girl had from two to three attacks of fits a day for five or six months, but since she took Father Koenig's Nerve Tonic she has only one in ten months and none since.

FREE. A valuable book on Nervous Diseases and a sample bottle to any address. Poor patients also get the medicine free.

And drawing the curtains, Father Ridsdale said, "Now, my son, kneel down at that chair, and I will sit here, and I will help you make your confession."

And Pat, with the help of the zealous priest, made his confession with tears of compunction and gratitude.

Father Ridsdale had scarcely divested himself of his travelling clothes, and donned his cassock, and had sat down to his teatable with a sigh of comfort at being home again when a heavy and rapid knocking was heard at the front door.

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"God—sent—you, Father, to—hear—my confession," said the dying boy.

"Yes—yes. Thy kingdom come. Into Thy hands—my spirit," were the last words that Pat Sweeney uttered. In a minute more he was dead.

"Are you the mother of Pat Sweeney," said Father Ridsdale, as he came up to the sorrowing woman.

"I am, your reverence, and it's sorrowful now it is with him, I'm afraid."

"In that you're mistaken, mother," and in a few words he told her all that had happened on the night down express.

"Oh! glory be to God for this goodness! Sure it's a happy woman I am now. Patsey's safe, Patsey's safe! He died in the grace. Glory be to God!"

And those who knew not her Irish faith marveled at her fortitude.

"I don't wish anybody to be invited. The minimum prescribed by law is enough for me."

"Your wish shall be governed by mine, sir. Sit down here and give me a list of your friends."

"I think it isn't at all becoming for you to treat the matter so frivolously."

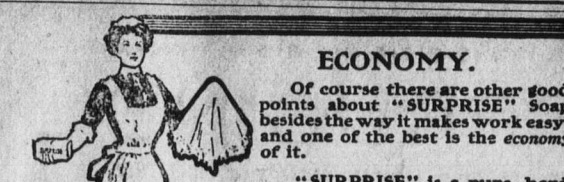
"Well, to be candid with you, Margaret, this circus parade feature of it doesn't appeal to me very strongly, even if it is only a oneering affair."

"I suppose that is final. But these moments are too precious to spend in that sort of drudgery. I have a great many more interesting things to talk about."

"Oh! it doesn't matter how much I may drudge about it."

"Of course it does, dear; don't you drudge a bit. I'll come over again to-morrow evening."

"But the cards should be in the mail to-morrow evening."



ECONOMY. Of course there are other good points about "SURPRISE" Soap besides the way it makes work easy, and one of the best is the economy of it.

"SURPRISE" is a pure, hard soap, and it takes only a little to do a big lot of work. Some people who use it say they don't know which wears the best, the soap or the clothes they wash with it.

And it's just as good for general housework as it is for the laundry; in fact, there isn't a thing washable that can't be cleaned with "SURPRISE" Soap, better, easier, and cheaper than it could be done in any other way.

When this is understood, most everybody is surprised that "SURPRISE" costs no more than common soaps.

NEXT MORNING. "Let's take the tables and chairs out under the trees, girls; there isn't much breeze, and it will be pleasanter. I have a list made, and all you will have to do is to follow my dictation. I tried to have Dick help me make this list, but he begged off on the plea that I knew all his friends, and now the list contains a surprise for him. Without saying anything to him, I am making a special effort to have every member of both camping clubs attend. They are widely scattered, but I think most of them will come."

"You had better arrange to have police present, too," remarked Kate. "If that crowd gets together they will forget that there is a difference between the civilization of Providence and the wilderness of Echo Lake. We have never had a reunion, have we?"

"No, and that is one reason why I think they will come."

"I hope Jack Barry comes. Where is Jack?"

"In Boston. I see advertisements of Barry & Son, Contractors, once in a while. You know it was his intention to go into business with his father when he graduated."

"Who is Jack Barry?" asked Ellen.

"Who is Jack?" exclaimed Kate. "He is one of the manliest, jolliest, best chaps in the world."

"My! How did he escape you?" "He escaped us all. We all loved Jack, but our Cupid's arrows were forged in the fires of heresy and were scattered against the armor of the Church."

"Was he a Catholic?" "Indeed he was. He always carried a string of beads with a little cross attached to them, but nobody ever saw him praying to them."

"Traying to them? The idea! You Yankee Protestants can be more ignorant and insulting about things Catholic—and be so ingenious about it. Catholics pray only to God and His saints, Miss Kate. Please index that in your memory, so that you can refer to it readily when you are again tempted to accuse Catholics of idolatry."

"If you are done quarrelling, we might begin writing these addresses," interrupted Margaret.

"I've finished, although I shall probably say something about St. Patrick or Saint somebody else before we get through with this that will get me into trouble again. I wonder if Ellen and Jack won't find something to quarrel about when they meet. It is a pity they have not met before. Oh, say, Margaret, why not assume one of your duties ante-nuptially and make a match between them?"

"I wish I could. It would be ideal."

"Of course it would. Try it."

"What can I do?" "Tell him about her when you write him—and leave the rest to the Lord. The Celestial Matrimonial Bureau has had a hand in this from the dawn of time, and you are plainly its terrestrial agent. It is your duty, Margaret."

"Well, I have formed very rigid resolutions about the duties of my new state, Ellen, and it would not do to begin by shirking them."

"If you say a word about me to your old paragon," threatened Ellen, "I'll never speak to you again, and I won't go to your wedding."

"How do you think this will do, Kate?"

Mr. John Barry, Boston, Mass. Dear Jack: You will see by the enclosed that Mr. and Mrs. Dixon formally say they would like the pleasure of your presence at the marriage of their daughter Margaret to Mr. Richard Lane, but informally I want you to be sure to come. I asked Dick to help me send out the invitations, but he begged off on the plea that I knew his friends as well as he. He is the most exasperating man! I do believe he would choose midnight in a cemetery as the hour and place if he had the choice.

Well, now that he has left it to me I want to give him a surprise. Without saying anything to him I am trying to have every member of both camping clubs attend. He may not expect you, so please do not write him.

You don't deserve to be honored. Why have you so utterly forsaken me? Except for an occasional newspaper reference to "Barry & Son," I have not heard a word of or from you since you and Dick graduated in '96.

But I'll forgive you if you come to the wedding. I will remember that building railroads is very busy work. Very sincerely yours, MARGARET DIXON.

Providence, R.I., June 1st, 1906. P.S.—I am very anxious to have you meet Ellen Manning, my old school chum. You have never met her. She has always worked during vacation and could not come to camp. She is the very best and dearest girl in the world, but she is Irish. I have always said, you know, that it is a pity so many nice people are Irish. I remember how the wiles and charms of our poor heretics were wasted on you, but she is a good Holy Roman Catholic, and if you do not fall in love with her I shall believe you are hopeless. Yours, M.D.

THREE DAYS LATER. "Such jolly news, Ellen. Read this letter."

"Aloud?" "Certainly. You may need Kate's advice."

Miss Margaret Dixon, Providence, R.I. My Dear Margaret: It is very kind of you to include me among your select, and I will move heaven and earth to be present. I knew Dick swam to his fate that day when, in fulfilment of your destiny, you dutifully fell out of your boat into the waters of Echo Lake. But how stereotyped and un-

usually. (Continued on Page 6.)

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