

FATHER PAT

[FROM THE ORPHAN'S BOUQUET.]

"I wish yer riveness 'ud spake to my little boy. Me heart's broke with him, so it is, an' I can't get any good of him at all."

"What has he been doing?"

"Och, I declare I'm ashamed to tell ye, sir, but he's always at it, an' he doesn't mind me a bit, though I do be tellin' him the earth 'll maybe open some day and swalley him up for his impudence."

"Dear, dear, this is a sad case. Where is the little rogue?" And Father Shehan swung himself off his big bony horse, and passing the bridle over a neighboring post, stood looking at Widow Brophy in affected perplexity.

"I'd be loth to trouble yer riveness, but if ye'd step as far as the lane beyant," jerking her thumb over her shoulder, "ye'd see him at it."

She led the way, an odd little squat figure of a woman, the frill of her white cap flapping in the breeze, and her bare feet paddling sturdily along the muddy road. Father Shehan followed her, smiling to himself, and presently they came in sight of the delinquent. A brown-faced, white-headed, bare-legged boy, standing perfectly still opposite the green bank to the right of the lane. A little cross made of two peeled sticks tied together was stuck upright in the moss, in front of which stood a broken jam pot, while a tattered prayer book lay open before him. A large newspaper with a hole in the middle, through which he had passed his curly head, supplemented his ordinary attire; a rope was tied round his waist, and a ragged ribbon hung from his arm. Behind him, squatting devoutly on their heels, with little brown paws demurely folded, and tips rapidly moving, were some half a dozen smaller urchins, while one, with newspaper decorations somewhat similar to young Brophy's, knelt in front.

They were all so orderly and quiet as possible, and Father Shehan was at first somewhat at a loss to discover the cause of Mrs. Brophy's indignation. But presently Pat turned gravely round, extended his arms, and broke the silence with a vigorous "Dominus vobiscum!"

"At cum spiritu tuo," went the urchin at his side in like-like imitation of his elders at the hill-side chapel.

The mystery was explained now; Pat was saying Mass!

"Did you ever see the like o' that, Father?" whispered Mrs. Brophy in deeply scandalized tones; then making a sudden dash at her luckless offspring, she tore off his vestments and flung them to the winds, and with her bony hand well twisted into his ragged collar—the better to administer an occasional shake—she hauled him up for judgment.

"Gently, Mrs. Brophy, gently," said the priest. "Don't be frightened, my poor lad. I'm not going to scold you. That is a very curious game of yours—are you pretending to be a priest?"

"Aye, yer riveness."

"Ah, ye young villain," began his mother, but Father Shehan checked her.

"Hush, now, hush, my good woman. Tell me, Pat, do you think it is right to make fun of holy things?"

"I wasn't makin' fun, sir," whimpered Pat, touched to the quick. "I was just thinkin' I raly was a priest, an', an', sayin' Mass as well as I could."

"Well, well, don't cry, that's a good boy. Maybe you really will be saying Mass some day. Who knows? But you must be a very good boy—and you must not think you are a priest yet. You will have to be ordained, you know, before you can say Mass. Now, run off and find some other game."

Pat grinned gratefully through his tears, wrenched himself from his mother's grasp, and surrounded by his ragged followers disappeared over the hedge.

"I wish we could make a priest of him," said Father Shehan as he retraced his steps. "he is a good lad."

"Why thin he is, yer riveness, he is," agreed the mother, with the delightful inconsistency of her kind. "He is, indeed, very good. An' why wouldn't he be good. Sure I bait him well. Troth ye'd hear him bawlin' at the cross roads many a time. But is it him a priest? Ah now, that's the way ye do be goin' on; ye like to be makin' fun of us all, yer riveness, so ye do. The likes of him a priest? Well now!"

She burst out laughing very good humoredly, for in spite of her assumption of severity, there was not, as she would have said herself, "a better natured crathur" anywhere than Mrs. Brophy.

"Stranger things have come to pass," said Father Shehan. "But I fear there is not much hope in this case. To make him a priest you must give him an education, and to give him an education, you must find money. And as neither you nor I know where to look for that, it's a poor lookout."

"Troth it is, yer riveness. God bless ye, ye always say somethin' pleasant to us anyway. Good evenin', yer riveness, safe home!"

Long after the priest was out of sight Mrs. Brophy stood at the door with a pleasant smile on her face. Only for the education which would cost money, only for that that Pat was fit to be a priest. Didn't his riveness say so? It was a great thought. Her little white-headed Pat, in spite of the tricks and "mischievousness" in which he indulged to the full as much as any other lad of his age, even he might one day stand before the altar, his hands have clasped the chalice, his voice called down the Redeemer from on high. Tears of rapture filled her eyes at the mere thought of a priest: a priest of God! To the simple faith of this good poor woman there was no greater height of blessedness or grandeur.

"Oh, mother, if I could only be a rale priest!" Pat had sighed many a time. And she had bidden him "glong out o' this an' not dar' say such a thing!" But now it was a different matter. Only for the money Father Shehan had said the thing was possible. Only for the money!

Just what she had not got. Ah, if a mother's heart's blood would have done as well!

But one never knows what strange things come to pass in this queer world! Father Shehan had distinctly said that he could not find the funds needful for Pat's education for the priesthood, and yet, through his instrumentality, the boy was enabled to follow his vocation.

Lo and behold! Father Shehan had a friend who lived in Liverpool, a very rich man, who was also very pious and charitable. Of this good gentleman the worthy priest suddenly bethought himself one day when Mrs. Brophy spoke the intense wish which her boy still had, and the manner in which he was accustomed to "mother" her respecting it. To the rich Liverpool friend the poor Irish priest accordingly wrote, with the result that the former agreed to undertake the cost of Pat's education, merely stipulating the lad was to be brought up at St. Edward's College, and to devote his services when ordained to the Liverpool diocese.

The rapture, the gratitude of both son and mother, cannot be described. The long separation which must ensue, the life of self-denial which lay before the one, of perpetual poverty to which the other was now doomed—for Pat was her only son, and she had formerly looked to the days when he would be able to help and work for her—all was accepted not only with resignation, but with joy. Was not Pat to be a priest?

The day after his departure Mrs. Brophy, donning her cloak and big bonnet, with its violet ribbons and neat border, forcing her feet, moreover, into the knitted stockings and stout boots, which regarded for bunnions caused her to reserve chiefly for Sundays, Mrs. Brophy, I say, went to call on Father Shehan and to make a request.

She wanted "a bades," a rosary which was to be kept till such time as Pat, endowed with full authority, would be able to bless it for her.

Father Shehan laughingly produced a large, brown, serviceable one, which the widow reverently kissed and then tucked away in her bosom.

"Now, whenever I feel a bit lonesome, I'll be havin' a look at this," she said, nodding confidentially to her pastor.

"I'll take out me holy bades, an' I'll rattle them an' kiss them, and say to myself, 'cheer up, Biddy Brophy, yer own little boy'll be blessin' them for ye some day, with the help o' God.'"

"Well done, Biddy! I hope you won't be often lonesome," said the priest with a smile, in which there was a good deal of compassion, for there were tears on her tanned cheeks though she spoke gaily. It was to God this good, brave little woman had given her all—but it was her all nevertheless.

"Isn't it well for me?" said Biddy. "Bedad I do be thinkin' I'm dhramin' sometimes!"

And with her old-fashioned courtesy-bob the widow withdrew, but as she walked down the road the priest remarked that she held her apron to her face.

One day, a month or two afterwards, Father Shehan met her on the road, and stopped to speak to her.

"Yer riveness, you're the very wan I wanted to see," she said. "D'ye know what I do be thinkin'? Will I have to be callin' Pat, Father, or yer riveness, whin he's a priest? Troth, that'll be a quare thing!"

"I think, Biddy, in this instance it won't be necessary to be so respectful. You may venture safely to call him by his name."

"Ah, but he'll be a rale priest, ye know, yer riveness, as good as was as ye yourself," cried the mother, a little jealous of her boy's dignity, which the last remark appeared to set at naught.

"Musha, it wouldn't sound right for me to be callin' him Pat! Pat, an' him a priest! I'll tell ye what!"—struck by a sudden thought—"yer riveness, I'll call him Father Pat. That'll be it, Father Pat."

"Yes, that will do very nicely, indeed," said the priest composing his features to a becoming gravity, though there was something as comical as touching in the widow's sudden respect for the imp whose person but a short time before she had been wont to beat with scanty ceremony. "At this moment, Mrs. Brophy,"—consulting his watch—"it is probably recreation at St. Edward's, and Father Pat is very likely exercising those fine sturdy legs of his at cricket or football, and trying the strength of his healthy young lungs by many a good shout. But it is well to look forward."

"Ah, Father, sure where would I be if I didn't look forward? It isn't what me little boy is doin' now that I care to be thinkin' about, but what he's goin' to do, glory be to God!"

It was indeed chiefly the thought of good times to come that kept Mrs. Brophy alive during the many long hard years which intervened.

"Bad times," hunger, loneliness, rapidly advancing age, on one side, and on the other her blessed hope, her vivid faith—and Pat's letters. Oh, those letters! every one of them from the first scrawl in round hand to the more formed characters, in which he announced his promotion to deaconship, beginning with the hope that she was quite well as he was at present, and ending with the formula that he would say no more that time—such items as they further contained being of the baldest and simplest description—were as documents so treasured before? So tenderly kissed, so often wept on, so triumphantly cited as miracles of composition! Mrs. Brophy was a happy woman for weeks after the arrival of these letters, and was apt to produce them a dozen times a day in a somewhat limp and crushed condition from under her little plaid shawl for the edification of sympathetic neighbors.

"I heard from Father Pat to-day," she would say long before her son could claim that title, while to the young and such as she wished particularly to impress she would allude to him distantly as "his riveness."

What was Biddy's joy when he at last wrote that he was really to be ordained at a not distant date, and named the day on which he was to say his first Mass? How she cried for happiness, and clasped her hands backward and forward! How proudly she got out "the bades" and rattled them, and kissed them, and hugged herself at the thought of the wonderful blessing which her "little boy" would so soon impart to them.

"If you could only hear his first Mass, Biddy," said Father Shehan, when she went to rejoice him with the tidings.

"Ah, Father, jewel, don't be makin' me too covetous. Sure that's what I do be shirvin' to put out o' me head. I know I can't be there, but the thought of it makes me go wild sometimes. If it was anywhere in ould Ireland I'd thramp till the two feet dropped off me, but I'd be there only the say, yer riveness, the say is too much for me intirely! I can't git over that. Saint Pether himself 'ud be hard set to walk that far."

Here she laughed her jolly good-humored laugh, wrinkling up her eyes and wagging her head in keen enjoyment of her own sally, but suddenly broke off with a sniff and a back-handed wipe of her eyes.

"Laws, Father, it 'ud make me too happy!"

"Do you really mean that you would walk all the way to Dublin if you had money enough to pay your passage to Liverpool?"

"Heth I would, an' twice as far, your riveness. Wouldn't I stage it? If I had the price o' me ticket, there'd be no houldin' me back. I can step out wid the best whin I like, an' sure anyone 'ud give me a bit an' a sup whin I told them I was goin' to see me little fellow say his first Mass."

After this, strange to say, "the price" of Biddy's ticket was forthcoming. Poor as Father Shehan was, he managed to produce the few shillings needful to frank her from the North Wall to Clarence Dock. Her faith in the charity and piety of her country folk was rewarded, the "bit an' the sup," and even the "shake-down" in the corner, were willingly found as often as she needed it, and in due time, tired, dusty, and desperately sea-sick, she arrived in Liverpool.

"Glory be to God!" ejaculated Biddy, delighted to find herself once more on dry land. Then she chuckled her black velvet bonnet forward, shook out the folds of her big cloak, clutched her bundle, and set out undauntedly for Everton, pausing almost at every street corner to enquire her way.

"Lonneys! isn't England the dirty place!" she said to herself, as she tramped along through the grimy Liverpool slums. But as she drew near her destination wonder and disgust were alike forgotten in the thought of the intense happiness which was actually within her grasp. She was to see Pat, upon whose face she had not looked once during all these years, and to see him a priest! To be present at his first Mass, to ask his blessing—ah, to think that her little boy would be able to give her "the priest's blessing!"—and last, but not least, she would give him her thanks to bless.

She had not told him of her intention to be present on this great occasion, partly because, as she told Father Shehan, "it was better not to be distractin' him too much," and partly because she thought his joy at seeing her would be heightened by his surprise. No wonder that Widow Brophy walked as though treading on air, instead of greasy pavements.

It was touching to see her kneeling in the church, with eager eyes fixed on the sacristy door and the rosary clutched fast between her fingers, but it was still more touching to watch her face when the door had opened and her son at last came forth. So that was Pat! "Bless us an' save us," would she ever have known him? And yet he had very much the same face as the little bare-legged child who had first "celebrated" under the hedge, a face as innocent and almost as boyish, if not quite so brown; but he had certainly grown a good deal, and his Latin was of a different quality, and there was moreover about him that which the mother's eyes had been so quick to see, the dignity of the priest, the recollection of one used to familiar converse with his God. Who shall describe the glory of that first Mass for both son and mother? Who indeed could venture to penetrate into the sacred privacy of that son's feelings as he stood thus before the altar, his face pale, his voice quivering, his young hands trembling as they busied themselves about their hallowed task! But the mother! groaning from very rapture of heart, beating her happy breast, praying with so much fervor that the whole congregation might hear her, weeping till her glad eyes were almost too dim to discern the white-robed figure of her son—surely we can all picture her to ourselves.

When the young priest was unvesting after Mass, there came a little tap at the sacristy door, a little, modest, tremulous tap, and on being invited to enter a strangely familiar figure met his gaze.

"Father Pat," said Biddy, in a choked voice, and dropping a shaking courtesy, "I've come to ax your riveness if ye'll bless me bades for me, an' an' will you give me yer bless—"

She tried to fall on her knees, but the mother instinct was too strong for her, and with a sudden sob she flung her arms round his neck.

"Me boy!" she cried, "sure it's me that must bless ye first!"

M. E. FRANCIS.

THE LONGEST BRIDGE.

The longest bridge in the world is the Lion bridge, near Sangang, in China. It extends five and a quarter miles, over an area of the Yellow Sea, and is supported by 300 huge stone arches. The roadway is 70 feet above the water, and is enclosed in an iron network. A marble lion 21 feet long rests on the crown of each pillar. The bridge was built at the command of the Emperor Keing Long.

EARL DUNRAVEN.

The Earl of Dunraven, who had charge of the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill in the House of Lords, is a man of many parts. He has been successively a famous steeplechase rider, a Life Guardsman, and a war correspondent. Lord Dunraven is as clever as he is wealthy. A few years ago, when everybody was talking about strikes and strikers, he took the workingman under his patronage, and used to address Ben Tillett familiarly as "Ben." As peers go, he is a downright good fellow; and on the Sweating Commission did excellent and memorable

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service. At one time Lord Dunraven appeared likely to devote himself whole-souled to politics; but the fascinations of yachting took him away from Westminster. As everybody knows, he was the principal owner of the three Valkyries. His usual tact appeared to have temporarily deserted him when Valkyrie III. was defeated in the race for the America Cup. His lordship has interests in every section of the United Kingdom. He is Lord Lieutenant of a Scottish county, and has a lovely Irish mansion (in county Limerick) and a noble Welsh castle, which stands out in lonely and impressive isolation on an eminence overlooking the Bristol Channel.

HOW LONG TO SWIM.

A physician, talking last week to the editor of this department, said:—"Advice all boys who are looking forward to swimming every day this summer that in fresh water twenty minutes should be the limit of time for the daily bath. Boys think because they feel all right at the moment, that it is proper to stay in the water as long as they like. This is a great mistake. They do not feel the ill-effects at the time, but afterwards. I have recently lost a young patient, a lad of whom I was very fond, whose death was directly due to imprudence in bathing last summer. Not always fatal results ensue, but more often than boys are aware very serious consequences follow. I know a boy who has a permanent affection of the hip, which has lamed him for life, that was produced by persistently remaining too long in the water. The many cases of fever which the early fall months develop are largely accounted for in the same way. Swimming is fine sport; there's none better, but it should be enjoyed rationally, and not abused."

SALT KILLS HIM.

A Rome, N.Y., farmer discovered that the army worm is killed when it comes in contact with salt. To confine the worms where they are operating he is putting a wind row of salt around the field; or, to protect a growing crop that is not infested, he will run a line of salt around that. From experiments he made, in which several worms were killed, he is confident that when the worms undertake to crawl over the row of salt enough of the salt will adhere to the worms to destroy them. The result of the experiment will be given to the public.

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MORAL: Diamond Dyes are the best and most profitable. Carefully avoid what some dealers call just as good.

TRINITY COLLEGE AND IRELAND'S FUTURE.

W. F. P. Stockley, M.A., in Donaboe's.

Needless to say, the beginnings of Trinity College were in the midst of strife. The waters of the century of religious upheaval were boiling and still rising; and the subduing of Irish-speaking, Celto-Norman Ireland was being undertaken by the "great" queen, the conqueror of Desmond and the deceiver of O'Neill.

The foundation of Trinity College was part of this policy of political and religious conversion which was tried for so long in Ireland by martial law, plantations, penal law, and coercion; hence the complex Ireland of to-day and the complexity of that Irish question whose infinite variety no age can wither, nor any custom stale.

Hence also the Trinity College of to-day, eighty five per cent of whose students are members of the Church of Ireland, that is, of the Anglican Church disestablished in 1871, which yet numbers only fifteen per cent of the population. Of the remainder of the students, five per cent are Catholics and five per cent are Presbyterians.

Trinity College is not unpopular in Ireland notwithstanding all the past. There is something pathetic in what seems not only a general respect in Ireland for Trinity College, not unnatural—but also a positive pride in its existence, and a pleasure in thinking of it as an Irish institution. Perhaps one may see in that sentiment not only an expression of the sympathetic heart of the people, but also a sign of their desire to be allowed to take interest in learning, and of their respect for what is not to be had for money; and one may also see there one of the proofs that, stormy as the air seems to be in Ireland still, yet comparative calm might come before long, and suddenly, if Irishmen of various creeds and classes found within their own Ireland institutions to which their loyalty and patriotism might cling, and to which their sentiments might bind them in common.

And another proof of what has been said is indeed seen in the very manner of the proposals made by the Catholic hierarchy with regard to University education in Ireland. Every foreigner would agree that the present state of things is unsatisfactory. Trinity College is nominally open to all; it is of course actively and distinctively Protestant, at least non-Catholic. What Protestant would naturally send his sons to a college distinctively non-Protestant? What Irish Protestant would do so?

The Catholic bishops have proposed another college for Catholics within the University of Dublin, or the founding of a Catholic University.

The attempt to settle this Irish University question have resulted for the present in the foundation of the Royal University of Ireland, which is an examining board in Dublin, with a system of affiliated colleges throughout the country where candidates for examination study. But where is the university where Catholics may or will study? And surely, as Mr. Matthew Arnold said when speaking of this matter, the object is to provide means of study that will be taken advantage of. It is useless to legislate for imaginary or abstract beings without such and such beliefs, customs or prejudices.

The Archbishop of Dublin says: "The bishops, as the responsible guardians of the religious interests of the Catholics of Ireland, have put forward a definite claim for equality as regards all the privileges and emoluments enjoyed by the Queen's colleges or by Trinity College."

The object is the education of the people. The means must be, as Burke tried to teach rulers in his day, by understanding and acknowledging people's ideas, circumstances, and even prejudices.

DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.

An analysis of the division list on the second reading of the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill in the House of Lords, yields some curious results. It is remarkable that of the Roman Catholic peers, five—Lords Biron, Denbigh, Camoys, Morris, and Russell of Killowen—voted with the majority in favor of the Bill; while only two, the Duke of Norfolk and the Marquis of Bute, were found in the minority.

THE OLD STORY.

Frederic Harold, in a cable letter from London, says: "Since the rather extraordinary incident occurred of Catholic seamen belonging to the British Mediterranean squadron being received at the Vatican by the Pope in their uniform, the alarm at the previously

suspected Catholic movement inside the Anglican church in England has been spreading swiftly. One hears of Protestant parties organizing in various parts of England for the purpose of imposing an anti-Catholic pledge upon parliamentary candidates in the future, and all sorts of rumors are circulating about a secret understanding between Rome and a large section of Anglican clergy. Lots of ritualistic priests have been wearing berettes for a long time, instead of the old collegiate "mortarboards," but now it is said that the beretta is being taken up by numbers of the younger clergymen hitherto not prominent in the ritualistic movement. It will not be surprising if soon there is an organized 'no Popery' agitation throughout the country."



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