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O'Connell's "St. Patrick"

By BERNARD QUINN

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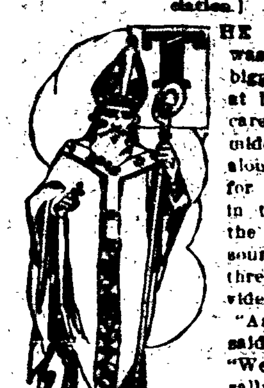


THE smallest girl was sick, and the biggest must stay at home to take care of her, so the middle sized one alone was dressed for the holiday in the best that the combined resources of the three could provide.

"Are you ready?" said Uncle Pat. "Well, then, we'll sally forth to seek our fortunes."

He spoke jestingly, but the subject itself was grim. Patrick Doyle was in a mighty bad way, and he knew it. He was the victim of circumstances and a quick temper. Here are the circumstances:

About two years ago his sister and her husband died in one month, and there was nobody to take care of the three orphaned children but Pat. They came to him with nothing but the clothes on their backs.

He rented a little tenement, and the eldest girl, who was eleven, "kept house." Pat was twenty-five, a metal worker earning fair pay, but suffering from labor's bane, unsteady employment. Expenses are never laid off, rent works every minute, but wages and savings are subject to interruption.

In the house where Pat and his newly acquired family first lived there was a solitary old man who was reputed to be a miser. One day Pat did a little job of tinkering for this man for nothing. There was a stove in the room, but no fire, though the weather was cold.

"I suppose you have that thing to keep your money in," said Pat, touching the stove with his foot.

Singularly enough, this was true. The money was in the lower part of the stove, and a small fire could be built without endangering it.

On an evening in that week the miser was knocked senseless in his room, and the stove was almost pulled to pieces by a thief in a hurry, but the board had been transferred to another hiding place as a result of Pat's jest. So in reality Pat saved the miser's money for him.

The old man survived his injuries, and as soon as he learned what had happened to the stove he accused Pat, even claiming to have recognized him. The fact is that he had not seen his assailant, who struck from ambush.

Pat was arrested, and, though his three little girls and a neighbor were with him at the undoubted time of the assault, he spent nearly three months in a cell, at the end of which period of misery he was released without trial.

In every considerable company there will always be one fool who thinks that such an experience as this is a proper theme for endless gibes. Pat was not quarrelsome, but he was perhaps a bit too ready, and, what was worse, he always had the better of the other fellow, whether with his tongue or his fist. So of course the other fellow had to "get square" in some underhand fashion, and the result would be that Pat would lose his job. He had been out of work a few days, just long enough to have the cold fact settle into him, when the good old 17th of March came around. It will be understood that Pat's gayety was not more than skin deep when he went out with his little niece to view the celebration.

Reflecting upon his situation, he perceived that he ought to move to another city where his story was not known. But how could he do it without money? Alone, yes, but not with the children. Neither could he leave them behind, and if he stayed how could he take care of them with this blight upon him?

"I wonder," said he, not irreverently, "if St. Patrick himself can see any way out of this."

He bought the little girl a five cent bag of candy, and then they walked uptown to save car fare. "So, you see," said Pat, "we've made a nickel by that transaction, for it costs you nothing to ride on my shoulder when you're tired."

Presently they were posted in an eligible spot on the avenue, the child, perched on Pat's shoulder, clasping the remains of the bag of candy in one hand and Pat's hair or sometimes his ear in the other, while she gazed wide eyed at the approaching spectacle.

After awhile Pat was aware that he was the object of a peculiar scrutiny. It was no new thing for him to be stared at, but this was different. A man of thirty-five or thereabout, richly but rather oddly dressed, with a heavy jacket of fine cloth, a rolling collar, a flowing tie and a soft hat, was studying Pat from various points of view. He kept his eyes half shut, yet they had a strangely searching look, which finally affected Pat with that familiar nightmare sensation of being on a crowded street in painfully insufficient attire.

This was getting on Pat's temper when suddenly the stranger walked up to him and offered a card on which were the name Stephen O'Connell and an address, with the word "Artist" written in pencil.

"Did you ever pose?" asked O'Connell.

"No," answered Pat.

"Never were asked? Well, that's strange. Would you be willing to pose for me? Religious subject. It would be a chance to make some extra money in the evenings. I suppose you're employed?"

"Not just now."

O'Connell seemed highly pleased. He explained what he wanted and named his price, which was much above the usual rate, but Pat did not know that. He knew only that in his present situation he would have posed on the peak of the cathedral spire yonder for half of the money. A few weeks at that figure and he could save enough to get away and make a fair start at his trade somewhere else.

TOUCHING THE STOVE WITH HIS FOOT.

"And there'll be nobody to bother me this time," he said to himself. "I can keep this job till it's over."

Accordingly he went to the studio address next day with a high heart. It was in an eight story business building, rising like a square tower from a small corner lot. A single elevator served the tenants, and who should be looking out of the door of it—in a blue suit with brass buttons and a uniform cap—but Johnny Hacker, a bull necked cockney Englishman who used to live in the same building with Pat and knew all about the miser and his stove.

Pat stood back and stared at this man, oppressed by the mystery of human destiny.

PERCHED ON PAT'S SHOULDER.

"Well, there's no getting away from it," he said to himself, and then aloud, "How are you, Johnny?"

"My hye," responded Hacker, "if 'ere hain't the stove fixer! No; nothink in your line today. We 'eat by steam."

"It sticks in my mind," responded Pat, "that you used to heat by gin mostly. You'll find steam more wholesome for your complexion."

"Dear me! And 'ow's all our friends in the jyle?"

"Well, the last I heard they were wondering what kept Johnny Hacker away. I'm blessed if I ever knew."

And they continued to exchange compliments while Pat rode up to the eighth floor in the car.

A double surprise awaited him—first, to find at the top of a plain business building the most luxurious and beautiful habitation that he had ever seen; second, to learn that the painting in which he was to figure was of his own patron saint and that it was destined for the walls of the cathedral.

"My conception is of St. Patrick in early manhood," said O'Connell. And he proceeded to speak of the projected work in a spirit of reverence that filled Pat with awe. Was it right for him to pose for such a picture, he that had been in prison on a hideous accusation from which his name had never been cleared?

"You have precisely the face and figure that I want," continued O'Connell. "It's the happy-go-lucky, care free expression that will bother me. For a saint we need some recognition of the world's sorrow and evil, and that I must supply from my own inner consciousness."

"Well, you don't seem to be having much hard luck right now," remarked Pat, glancing around the room.

"Oh, I'm rich, if you come to that," answered O'Connell lightly, "but there are other things than money in the world."

"Yes," said Pat. "I've had 'em, never the money."

It may have been O'Connell's notion of him as an easy going fellow who had never taken any sorrow to heart that diverted him from telling any part of his story. In such circumstances it would sound like a wail, an appeal for sympathy, and Pat despised a whiner. Therefore he held his peace.

"It's like enough that Johnny Hacker will tell him if he gets the chance," thought Pat. "I must not quarrel with that fellow. It's my little girl's bread that I'd be quarreling with. I'll not ride in his car. I'll walk up and down."

This was the most momentous decision that Pat ever made. He walked down that day when O'Connell dismissed him for luncheon. "And, by the way," said the artist, "whenever you're up here at any mealtime it's 'on me.' That's only fair." So Pat fed well that day and felt quite equal to climbing seven flights of stairs when he came back. But what surprised him was that a very pretty girl chose to climb six of those flights along with him, and in the balance of that week the same thing happened twice.

"Now, why does she do that?" said Pat to himself. And he vainly cudgeled his brains about this mystery.

She was a girl of his own race, with the incomparable Irish blue eyes, fine spun dark hair, [illegible] faint rose in each cheek and bright red lips—a healthy girl, but not overly robust. It couldn't be that she regarded climbing six flights of stairs as an agreeable exercise.

"DID YOU EVER POSE?"

The fourth time he saw her start to walk those stairs Pat's curiosity broke bounds, and he asked the girl point blank.

"Is it anything to do with that animal that runs the car?" said he. And after much hesitation the girl admitted that such was the fact.

"I was in an accident once," said she. "A car fell, and I was hurt, but not very much. It has made me very nervous, and that man knows it. He makes the car jump to frighten me."

"Come right back here," said Pat. And she obeyed him, wondering at herself for doing so, and they waited for the car.

"Now, Johnny Hacker," said he, "I've found out what you've been doing, and if you ever annoy this young lady again there'll be not a whole bone in your skin. You have my word for that."

This was the beginning of an acquaintance that cost Pat many a pang. It was hard to put love out of his heart, to drive the thought of it from his mind, to remember his situation and the responsibilities that were upon him and the meager, uncertain promise of the future. In the course of a few weeks it had come to the point that he could wish not to see her again. She looked upon him kindly, how kindly he couldn't know, but the light in her eyes was torment to him for the hopelessness of it all.

"MY WORD FOR THAT."

One day when Pat came to the studio there was a man with O'Connell, a very quiet, inconspicuous person, sitting in a corner.

"Pat," said O'Connell, "a week or two ago I received this." And he gave a half sheet of soiled paper on which was scrawled:

"Your saint is a jailbird."

"Well," said Pat, "It's true."

"I was rather afraid it might be," responded O'Connell. "You'd said so little about yourself that I had already scented a mystery. And it happened at that time that I had a few diamonds belonging to my mother in a drawer of that desk. I was going to have the settings repaired. So when I got this pleasant communication from some friend who didn't sign his name I opened that drawer. The diamonds were gone."

"You thought I took them."

O'Connell hesitated.

"The fact is," said he at last, "I didn't know what to think, being very fond of you by that time, my boy, so I employed this gentleman here to think for me. It's his business."

"And what do you think?" said Pat, turning to the stranger.

"I don't think; I know," responded that individual. "I've got the man and the goods. And in the course of that investigation I discovered who broke the store."

The blood sang in Pat's ears.

"The man that wrote that paper," said the detective, "is the man that got the diamonds, and he is the man that broke the store and the man that frightened the girl in the elevator car, and his name is Johnny Hacker. He's on about his last trip right now. I'm going to get him in a couple of minutes."

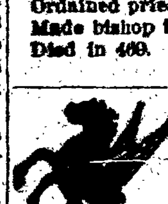
He glanced at O'Connell, who made a gesture, and the man went out.

"I'M GOING TO SAY SIX."

"And now, Pat," said the artist, "I did you a wrong in my mind, and I owe you a debt for that. I like you right well besides. I have the power and the will to help you. You have the character and the ability to rise. There's a future before you, Pat, my boy."

About St. Patrick.

Born in 396.
His father was named Calpurnius.
Captured by Picts in 411.
Ordained priest in 425.
Made bishop in 441.
Died in 469.



We have always been the leaders and here you'll always find the utmost satisfaction from Higgins "49."

Domestic Tactics

Here's a man who has developed and put over what he calls a heart-to-heart system for use in domestic skirmishing. He only puts the system into play when he's wrong and knows it.

He evolved the scheme a couple of months ago, and it worked out beautifully, just according to the plans and specifications.

On that occasion he had left the house about 7 o'clock in the evening to get a cigar at the shop around the corner. At the cigar shop he met a pal who exuded a buzz about a little four-bits limit game that was going to happen at the rooms of a mutual chummie that evening. The man who'd only left the house to get a smoke knew that if he went home and tried to frame up some scheme whereby he'd be able to get out for the night he had every chance on earth of falling down on it and would therefore miss the chance to kick in on the tidy little four-bits limit game. So he didn't go home at all, but accompanied the friend he'd met to the rooms where the game was to happen, figuring that he'd have to take his medicine when he got home, at the break-up of the game, for jumping his household at twilight "on pretense that he was going after a cigar," as he knew full well the matter would be expressed by his wife.

The game broke up along toward 2 o'clock in the morning, and the man with his wife yet to meet trudged home rather than wait for a car. He had plenty of time to think it all over on the traipse home.

"I'm wrong, of course," he reasoned out. "What he [illegible] to jump out early in the evening and stay so late—or early, I mean, without saying anything about it. Of course I didn't know I was going to stay out like this playing poker, but I'd never be able to convince her of that, and there'd be no use in the world for me to say it. Well, I know everything she's going to say—I've got it all discounted in advance—unless I can think of some way out. Let's see; she'll open up by saying [illegible]—by [illegible], that's the fine idea. I'll do it! I'll [illegible] it myself! I wonder how the scheme'll work out, anyway?"

He saw the bright light in the second-story windows when he came alongside his house, and he knew that she was waiting up for him, as he had confidently expected. He stepped briskly up the steps, didn't make any effort to creep or crawl or pad the sound of his footsteps as he mounted the stairs, and, when he entered the bed room, to see his wife, stretched out reading a novel, but with a hard look in her eyes, he rushed right over to her and deposited a most penitential kind of a lip salute on her left eye. She gazed at him in amazement, for she had been expecting him to slink in with a hang-dog air, prepared either to brazen it out and take his part in the scrap or to stand utterly mute under her upbraidings.

But he took her right in his arms and began to knock himself.

"Look here, my dear," he said, rapidly. "I'm a mean mutt, and you don't have to tell me that I'm one. I know it. I'm ashamed of myself. Never felt so ornery in my life as I've felt all this evening for staying away from you like this. I sure hate myself for it; honest I do!"

"Well," she began, "I should certainly think you'd—"

"Yes," he broke in quickly, "and I do, too. It was perfectly contemptible on my part—utterly snide and brutal. I don't blame you for being hot about it. I'd be as sore as a butcher myself if I were in your place. No use in trying to [illegible] about it, either—I was playing poker."

"But," put in his wife, viewing him suspiciously, "how did you happen—"

"Oh, it doesn't make any difference about how it happened, little one," he cut in. "I'm the mean dub for doing it, and there are no two ways about that end of it. The idea of me hiking off with a crowd of gambling bums and leaving behind the dearest and most considerate little woman on earth to sit up and wait for me and worry over me all this long time—somebody ought to put me to the bastinado for it and I'm just the bird that knows it."

"But didn't you stop to think of—"

"Did I? I never had my mind off of you the whole evening, but I was ahead of the game early in the evening—away out in front in fact and of course, I couldn't cash in and crawl out when I was so much to the good, especially as I couldn't get 'em to name an hour when the game was to finish, and so there I was, with a big double stack of chips in front of me, and no chance to vamp home here, even though I was frightfully nervous and bothered all the time, for I knew that you'd—"

"Yes, and I've been worried to death for three or four hours, for fear you'd—"

"I knew it all the time, and I kept looking at my watch, so as to give those fatheads in the game the hint that I wanted to get out; but they professed not to see my nervousness. I could picture my little baby doll just worrying herself to the verge of hysteria, and it put me into a perfect rage and fury with myself and I made up my mind right then that the next time I—"

"But when you thought of me here all alone with nobody to protect me in case of burglars or—"

"Did I think of it? Well, if I have[illegible] [illegible] a story [illegible] [illegible] it was [illegible] [illegible] by you—but what could I do? I know very well that you wouldn't have me such a mean piker as to get off the job and quit the game when I was 'way, 'way out in front and yet there were times when I felt like throwing my chips out of the window and rushing home to you anyhow. [illegible] have a grouch against myself for staying any old place away from you till such an hour in the middle of the night as this, and there's only one thing for me to do, and that is to try to square it with you; that's all. You just overlook it this time and you watch me—"

"Well, I must say, this is the first time that you've owned up to it that you weren't treating me right, but I—you—"

"No, I've been pretty pigheaded about it, I have no doubt, but I guess I can see as far through a stone wall as the next one, and I'm just the [illegible] that can climb to the [illegible] and admit things when I see I'm dead wrong. Yes, ma'am, that's [illegible]. What an ass a fellow is, anyhow, to stick around with a bunch of [illegible] when he might be spending a nice, pleasant, [illegible] evening at home with the dearest, the nicest and prettiest little wife on earth, and get in his full night's sleep, and—"

"Well, John, I certainly did mean to say a great many things to you about the way you have been treating me, but since you show that you really are sorry, why, of course, the only thing I can do is to try to forget—"

"That's it, precious—just forget it. I'm not going to be a mean, neglectful slouch all my life, you bet, and all you've got me that, and the next time I leave you in the lurch this way—. But, at that, I'll tell you what I did just to get back to you. I was still [illegible] to the good in the game when it got close to 2 o'clock, and I was determined to quit at that hour, no matter what the [illegible] in the game thought, and so I deliberately over-played two or three of my hands and lost my [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]... and then you [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] ... even being [illegible] by a [illegible] ... eager to get back and try to [illegible] myself [illegible] ... make a [illegible] of [illegible] ... [illegible]"

"Well, I must say, [illegible] ... a dear to [illegible] ... [illegible]"

This is what the man calls the [illegible] ... [illegible] —Washington Star.

[illegible]

Parrots in Nebraska.

Only a few naturalists and early territorial settlers know that parrots were once numerous in Nebraska, says the Lincoln State Journal. Years ago they were still seen along the Missouri [illegible] in [illegible] Nebraska, but disappeared [illegible] after the first [illegible] that region. [illegible] the Carolina [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. It had a beautiful [illegible] yellow plumage, so striking in [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] tion of the early settlers. [illegible] [illegible] were so [illegible] [illegible] that the [illegible] Add to this [illegible] [illegible] eating [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the Missouri [illegible] [illegible]

Yes Pigs [illegible]

A Pekin correspondent says: [illegible] no uncommon sight to see [illegible] thirteen enormous fat pigs with their legs tied huddled close together [illegible] ing a ride in a Chinese cart with some sort of light cargo on top of them and a man sitting on the [illegible]. The pigs are silent and [illegible] would think they [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Prevention of Cruelty to [illegible] fact is that the [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] turbed at their [illegible] [illegible] happiest are [illegible] [illegible] terrific [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] on Cats.

[illegible] in Berlin has [illegible] to pay a tax, which is [illegible] license, and each cat has to wear a metal disk round its neck as evidence that the tax has been paid. Any cat found on the streets without this metal disk is taken off to the municipal lethal chamber by the police. This method has already considerably lessened the number of cats in Berlin. The Emperor—who has a horror of cats almost amounting to a mania—is said to have induced the Berlin municipality to take action.

Professional [illegible].

"I should regret very much to think that anybody has ever offered me money for political influence."

"Yes," answered Mr. [illegible], "your hearing of it would indicate very crude work on somebody's part."

[illegible] ... A double [illegible] ... double trouble.