Martin O'Connor, Amanuensis

Why He Loved St. Patrick's Day.

By F. A. MITCHEL

Patrick O'Connor came to America when he was a mere lad and by dint of hard work and perseverance made a fortune. He left a sister in Ireland who married Daniel O'Malley, and she was separated from her brother for many years He was used to sending her money occasionally, and after awhile, when she had grown older, she would sometimes depute her adopted daughter, Aileen, who was coming to womanhood, to thank her brother for his benefactions. The truth is that the woman had not been very well educated, and Aileen, having more advantages, was better fitted for these replies. As the years rolled by and O'Connor became more and more prosperous it seemed to his sister that his letters showed a better education than at first. The fact is that he turned over a part of his correspondence to his son, Martin, and it occasionally became Martin's part to write these check bearing letters to his aunt, but he wrote them in his father's name.

One day Martin opened the mail in his father's absence and read a letter of thanks for a remittance. It was written in Mrs. O'Malley's name, but Martin saw plainly that it had not been written by her. It bore the impress of a young girl, and a very intelligent girl at that There was real gratitude in it, and it was overflowing with kindliness as well It seemed to Martin that an emanation from a lovely girl had been wafted across the ocean and entered his heart

The next time Mr O'Connor gave his son a check to send to Mrs O'Malley Martin wrote a letter which was meant for a reply to the one last received. One not knowing the relationship between the two correspondents would have supposed that it had been written to a girl instead of his aunt Mrs. O'Malley concluded that her brother was becoming very affectionate in his old age. It was couched in such kindly terms that she commissioned Aileen to express for her her appreciation of her brother's interest in her and assure him that his sister had not lost any of her affection for him during their long separation.

Aileen, feeling that she was writing from a sister to a brother, did not scruple to express all the affection her mother desired she should express for Mr. O'Conner When the recipient read it he wondered at this unusual demonstration of affection, but set it down to the fact—that his sister was growing old and as persons age their affection for those of their own blood ripens Being a man of business and undemonstrative, he handed the letter to his son and told him to reply in kind.

In this way a correspondence grew up between Martin O'Connor and Aileen, the one writing supposedly to her uncle, the other presumably to his aunt, which grew warmer and warmer till the letters between the brother and sister became almost lover like.

Whether Martin was really falling in love with his aunt or whether he suspected the old lady had employed an amanuensis doesn't appear, but one thing is certain—the letters he received became in time so affectionate that whenever he saw one delivered by the postman written in the well known hand he appropriated it to himself, and his father never saw it. It is quite likely that Aileen did the same with those letters that came from America.

When love's quicksilver had attained a considerable height Martin began to think that he would like to investigate this aunt of his to whom he was making a semi brotherly love and see if her earthly part was as beautiful as her soul. He began to express to his father a desire for a trip abroad and especially to visit the green isle where his ancestors had lived and died. He became very pathetic over a plot of ground his father had often described to him where the O'Connors were moldering. An O'Connor had been a bishop, and Martin expressed himself as desirous of visiting the grave of this eminent son of the church.

Mr. O'Connor, much pleased that his son should take this interest in his ancestors, who, by the bye, had from time immemorial been stalwart churchgoers, consented that Martin should go abroad in the early spring, and Martin suggested that it would be well for him to time his visit for St. Patrick's day.

"The very thing," said Mr. O'Connor. "You may attend services on that anniversary in the very church where Bishop O'Connor preached."

Martin sailed early in March, arranging to be with his aunt on the 17th, which every one with Irish blood in his veins knows is St. Patrick's day Before saying goodby to him his father whispered in his ear:

"Be sure to make it plain to your aunt that I'm very fond of her, and all that. You know how to say such things better than I do, and I rely on you to express my feelings."

"Trust me for that, father," said Martin. "I'll do it warmly."

A letter came from the young man postmarked London stating that he was about to leave for the home of the O'Connors the next day. Later a long letter was received describing his meeting with his aunt and how he spent St Patrick's day "In company," it said, "with that beloved woman who has written her brother such beautiful letters I attended services, sitting directly under the pulpit where our great Bishop O'Connor preached those soul stirring sermons. Later we visited the plot where the O'Connors are buried, and I sat beside my aunt on a stone beneath which Fergus O'Connor, my great-grandfather, rests. It seemed to me that the family affection for which our ancestors were marked was rising, a sort of ethereal aroma. Something struck a responsive chord in my heart and set it vibrating. So affected was I that I drew my aunt to me, kissed her and whispered in her ear, 'Dear heart, I bear you all the love of the O'Connors from the day when the first O'Connor spoke of love to our first mate that ancestor'"

This part of the letter met with an enthusiastic response from Patrick O'Connor and all his family The good man rejoiced that in his son he had one to make up for his own undemonstrative nature "I wonder," he said "that the boy could have felt so much affection for an old woman even though she be his father's sister."

"You forget," said Mrs O'Connor that Martin was expressing your feelings for his aunt.

"You're right," was the reply "I didn't think of it in that light. Martin is a very good boy and loves me as a son should love a father"

Martin's letters after that all shaded of that St. Patrick's day he had spent with his beloved aunt Everything that happened seemed to turn upon that eventful anniversary A package of books came across the ocean from Martin and every book was on the subject of St Patrick.

"The boy shows great enthusiasm for his church," said his mother "Please God he may be a priest"

If the cathedrals Martin visited in company with his aunt was any criterion he bade fair to be an archbishop He seemed to be forever dawdling about the grounds in which these holy edifices stood, and the depth of his feelings seemed to come through his aunt, who was always exciting to him some pure emotion

Martin's time abroad was limited. His father, who was getting old, relied much upon him in the conduct of his affairs and wrote him not on any account to overstay his leave On receipt of this letter Martin wrote that he had grown so fond of his aunt that it had become impossible to tear himself away from her He would not overstay his leave, but this was because she had consented to go to America with him to visit her dear brother

Patrick O'Connor was appalled at this So long as she was absent from him he could satisfy his demonstrative nature through his son, but if she were with him this would devolve upon himself As to embracing his sister sitting beside her holding her hand or with his arm around her waist, he could not do so even with his wife However he could think of no way to head off his sister's visit and prepared to show as much affection as possible.

It was the month of June when Martin sailed from Ireland St. Patrick's day had gone by three months before but Martin still harped upon it in his letters, and even the month of roses though it seemed to appeal very strongly to the young man was no more dear to him than the month of winds and dust Still, he had written that he could not possibly return till June and there appeared to be some especial reason for the delay

There were a good many things about the return of Martin O'Connor that his parents could not understand. In the first place he announced that he had decided since he had been away from home to live thereafter under his own roof tree and to go there as soon as he had reached home He would take his aunt with him for a housekeeper The only comfort to be derived by his parents from this was by his father, who was relieved to know that he would not have to sit holding his sister's hand, with an occasional kiss Martin was the apple of his eye, and, although he was loath to lose the boy from his home, he fitted up a house for him that it might be ready against his return.

Martin arrived in the evening and drove to his bachelor quarters, where the O'Connor family were waiting for him and his aunt. When the front door was opened and Patrick O'Connor saw his sister he exclaimed

"Upon my word, Nora, you're not a bit older than you were thirty years ago."

"I'm not Nora," she said on throwing her arms about Mr. O'Connor; "I'm Aileen O'Connor, your sister's adopted daughter."

A bewildered look came over the man's face, then an idea seemed to be boring its way into his brain. Turning to his son, he said

"Mart."

"Well, dad, what is it?"

"What made you suddenly so fond of St. Patrick's day?"

"Well, to tell the truth, dad, in the morning Aileen and I went to mass in the church where Bishop O'Connor once preached, and in the evening we sat on his tomb, I telling her that I loved her and must take her back to America with me as my wife."

"And what's all this about your aunt?"

"You remember that you asked me to answer my aunt's letters to you. Well, Aunt Nora deputed Aileen to reply to the replies. The result was that I fell in love with my aunt and Aileen fell in love with her uncle And there you are!"

St. Patrick's day is the principal anniversary celebrated in Martin O'Connor's family.

An Antidote

It Was Based on the Principle That Like Cures Like.

By WILLIAM CHANDLER

One morning my wife received a letter that seemed to paralyze her.

"Oh, my goodness gracious!" she exclaimed with a gasp

"Bottom dropped out of the universe dear?" I asked.

"Worse. Aunt Abigail will have to live with us. She's written that her friend with whom she has had a home is to give up her house the 1st of May and that throws her out. I am her only relative, and, of course, she expects me to take her in."

"She's a bit cranky, isn't she?"

"Cranky is no name for it."

"Well we'll have to make the best of it."

Aunt Abigail arrived. We had previously considered our home entirely our own. With the coming of our relative we saw at once that all this was changed She settled herself down with an appearance of permanency that made my blood run cold.

"Well," she exclaimed, looking about her, "how did you ever come to build this house down in a hollow It must have been a swamp once when you could as well have put it up on that hill, where you could see something?"

"We live here winter and summer, Aunt Abigail. Up there we would freeze in cold weather"

"Freeze! Nonsense! Some people are always afraid they'll breathe a little fresh air I'm not I sleep with my window open, and I like to have a gale blowing in right on me. You should have fronted your house to the south."

"I can't stand this We must get rid of her," I said to my wife.

"To turn her out would be awful."

"We needn't do that. We can fix it so that she will go of her own accord"

"For heaven's sake explain."

"You know the homeopathic principle—like cures like. Well, my Uncle Robert is more disagreeable, if that is possible, than your Aunt Abigail. He is a dictatorial old curmudgeon, with no respect for any one's opinion but his own He is as poor as a church mouse living in a miserable room in a cookery by himself. He amuses himself abusing his neighbors from his window and shying anything he can get his hands on at the cats. Now, it has occurred to me to bring him here as a foil for your aunt She can't possibly endure to stay in the house with such a man and when she's gone I'll find a way to get rid of Uncle Robert Perhaps they may both go to get rid of each other"

"Your plan seems rather impracticable to me, Billy, but I have a good deal of confidence in those roundabout ways of yours. Suppose we try it?"

So I wrote Uncle Robert offering a home temporarily and, if he liked it, as long as he lived. He accepted eagerly, and it was not long before he was down upon us bag and baggage

"My dear boy," he exclaimed, patting me on the back "how you do remind me of your father! He and I were inseparable as boys, and I've carried you on my shoulder often. And to think that I'm to have a home with you! I'm me anywhere A garret is good enough for a broken down old codger like me. Phew! Somebody's been smoking here. Do you smoke? How I hate tobacco! It makes me sick."

"I won't smoke any more in the house since you've come, uncle," I said.

"Oh, don't mind me. I can stand anything, got to stand it. I've made a dead failure of life and don't deserve anything else You don't mind my opening the window, do you—just to let the odor out?"

"Fanny has a bad cold, you know."

"Just the thing to cure her. Let her breathe the cool air of heaven."

Up went the window, and out of the room went Fanny. Half an hour after my uncle arrived dinner was announced. I was watching our guests when they entered the dining room. It was like a dog and a cat at first catching sight of each other. Both seemed to crouch for an encounter. Neither spoke to the other for some time after taking seats at table. Then a remark of Uncle Robert's ruffled Aunt Abigail.

"This women's voting craze"—he was beginning.

"Voting what, sir?"

"Craze, madam," raising his voice.

"I'm not deaf. I heard you well enough. I object to your calling woman's suffrage a craze."

"Are you an advocate of woman's suffrage, madam?"

"I most assuredly am."

"I believe in any one who advocates a principle standing by that principle and not attempting to straddle"—

"Sir!"

"That is, to equivocate or knuckle down, defending the cause with all his or her strength. Per contra, I reserve the same privilege for myself. Woman's suffrage I consider the most abominable, diabolical, illogical rot that was ever sprung on a Christian people."

"And I consider it one of the holiest causes"—

"Aunt Abigail," interposed my wife, "do let me help you to this little bit of wing. You're not eating enough to feed a sparrow"

"I'm inclined to think," remarked Uncle Robert, "that there's a good deal in this new idea of the This man what's-his-name who is proving that the less we eat the more work we can do is going to create a revolution."

"Have you adopted his idea?" asked Aunt Abigail spitefully.

Considering that I had just filled Uncle Robert's plate for a second time this was unkind.

"I have not, madam, for the reason that I am not yet satisfied that his views are correct. I'm nothing if not scientific. I must see a thing proved before I adopt it."

"Would you prove woman's suffrage before adopting it?"

This was quite bright of Aunt Abigail

"I admit," replied Uncle Robert, "that to prove it before adopting it would be impossible. It isn't necessary to prove it. Any fool can see that the idea is ridiculous."

"Uncle," I interrupted for the purpose of calling a truce and preventing Aunt Abigail from firing a return shot, "let me fill your glass."

"No, sir," putting his hand over it "not at all, sir I drink just one glass of wine with my dinner And that's enough for any man"

"Quite enough," I replied and filled my own for the third time

"One is too much for any man, especially an old man," snapped the aunt "Nothing is so disgusting to me as an old toper"

The shot, while it applied partly to me, was fired at Uncle Robert.

"Not at all," he replied. "One glass is good for the system You know what St. Paul says, 'Take a little wine for the stomach's sake'"

"Yes," retorted Aunt Abigail "and I know that the devil can quote Scripture."

This was so well turned that I felt like patting the old lady on the back But it did not squelch Uncle Robert for the simple reason that he was unsquelchable The skirmishing went on, getting hotter and hotter, till at last, to prevent an open rupture, my wife arose from the table She, good woman, was dreading a fracas and I was not anxious to have a break occur so early in the game.

As soon as Fanny and I were alone together we sat down and laughed.

"Did you ever see anything work more beautifully?" I said, slapping my leg.

"Never

"Let them go their own gait My opinion is that one or the other will get out within a week."

Every day my uncle came to me and said that he couldn't live in the same house with a cat and was going to morrow. Every day Aunt Abigail went to Fanny and said she could not possibly endure that opinionated old heathen and she was casting about for another home. But it was dreadful that she should be alone in the world, with no one to love but Fanny, and Fanny must needs be encumbered by all her husband's relatives I told my uncle that if I were deprived of the comfort of caring for my father's brother in his old age it would break my heart Fanny made faint hearted attempts to quiet her aunt and agreed with her that my uncle was a trifle hard to get on with, regretting at the same time that he had the same claim on me that her aunt had on her It is true that occasionally there would be a lull in the hostilities and we would find the two battling quite amicably But this was when they happened to strike some subject which was a pet with both. As soon as they drifted into topics on which they disagreed the roar of battle recommenced.

Several weeks passed in this way and Fanny and I were getting impatient for the denouement, when one day uncle came to me and said that he would like to have a few words with me and Fanny alone. He looked very serious, and I felt quite sure he would announce his departure He was a born gentleman, and nothing would be further from his nature than to hurt one's feelings, and to appear ungrateful would break his heart I called Fanny into the library, shut the door and waited for the old man to speak

"My dear boy," he began, taking my hand, "and my dear little girl," taking Fanny's hand, "I have something to announce which will surprise you I am going to leave you."

"Oh, uncle!" we both exclaimed, trying hard to appear much disappointed even shocked

"Yes, I am going away, and your aunt is also going."

This was indeed a surprise.

"Your kindness has brought about a great change in two lonely lives. For a time it seemed to both of us that we must thwart your plans for the happiness of both of us. It did not seem that we could live under the same roof together."

He paused, and I thought he was going to shed tears. Then he added abruptly:

"We are both going to leave you to morrow"

"Both?"

"Yes, both We are to be quietly married at 9 o'clock and leave on a short wedding trip on the 10 o'clock train."

"Goodness gracious!" from Fanny.

"Great Scott!" from me.

"But we shall be gone only a few days."

"And then?" exclaimed Fanny and I breathlessly

"And then," resumed the old man putting a hand on each of our heads, "we return to spend the rest of our lives with our dear niece and nephew."

Heaven helps those who help themselves. At any rate, heaven came to our relief I inherited $20,000 from a maternal uncle. Of this I put $5,000 in a house for the old couple and invested the rest in an annuity for them. Strangely enough, they are quite contented together

From Farm to City

How a Country Boy Became a Lion In Society.

By ESTHER VANDEVEER

Sam Atkins was a farmer boy.

Sam had met Jennie Williams at a barn dance, and then and there had commenced the union of hearts that grows stronger quickly when planted in youthful breasts. Jennie was a good girl, a pretty girl and in every respect worthy of Sam.

One day Sam was running his car on the road and just about to turn into the farm gate when he heard another car coming behind him. Looking backward, he saw that it contained a woman who was grasping the wheel, she being the only person in the car. She was approaching a turn in the road just beyond the Atkins farm, and her eyes were fixed in terror on it. On the outer curve was a slope, which if was evident she dreaded, for as she passed Sam she was crying: "Over the bank! Over the bank! Over the bank!"

Sam was off the road, so that he escaped the car, which was evidently beyond the lady's control. As soon as she had passed him he gave chase, passed her, shut off power in his machine, jumped out and as the other car went by him jumped on to the footboard. Once there, he stopped the car just as it was about to plunge over the slope

Then he saw that the woman driving it was a lady in an immaculate costume, the car being a handsome one and containing the richest upholstery and wraps She fainted the moment the danger had passed and remained unconscious for half a minute During this brief interval Sam cast a glance at his own modest car, which had been wrecked against a tree, then at the sumptuous appointments of the one he had saved

"Why didn't you shut her off?" said Sam

"I was paralyzed with fear."

"Do you think you can get on now?"

"I wouldn't try it again for the world. I've been taking lessons. This is the first time I have been out alone."

Sam took the wheel and drove the lady to her home, a magnificent country place suited to the requirements of a multimillionaire She invited him into the house and said to him:

"But for you I would now be lying crushed under my car. Your car has been wrecked I will see that a new one is sent you of such make as you may choose This is simply to replace your loss For saving my life ask any boon, and if in my power it shall be granted"

Sam protested that he had done nothing that any one else would not have done under the circumstances and the lady owed him nothing She persisted, and he said that he had always had a fancy to mingle for a brief season among persons of wealth If the lady would give him an opportunity to attend a ball she would have repaid any debt she might owe him

She looked him over from head to foot, evidently taking in his natural fitness for taking a place among the elite, then went to an escritoire and wrote a check for $1,000 payable to bearer, and handed it to him.

"The first thing you will need," she said, "is clothes—I mean clothes for daily wear and for evening dress Draw the money on this check and dress yourself as a city man Then go to a dancing master and have him teach you what he can of etiquette and anything else you may need to fit yourself to appear in society As soon as he reports to me that you are sufficiently equipped for the purpose I will give a ball at which I will introduce you to society"

Sam held the check in his hand doubtful whether to accept or return it. The lady saw what was on his mind and told him that it would be unkind and ungenerous in him to refuse her the privilege of rewarding him for preserving her very existence. So Sam yielded. She then wrote the name and address of the proprietor of a fashionable dancing school and, after giving him such a luncheon as he had never sat down to before, sent him off to prepare himself for an appearance in a ballroom.

Sam went right away to his sweetheart and told her of his adventure and its result. Jennie looked grave and told him that he would never be satisfied again with country life, that he would aspire to marry some girl whom he would meet in high life and all would be over between him and his country love.

Sam protested with his lips, but not by his looks. So wrapt in the future was he that he scarcely heard what Jennie was saying. They parted, Sam to go to the city to buy new clothes and find the dancing master, Jennie to her room to weep.

Now, Jennie was an excellent seamstress and was doing some sewing for a Mrs. Trehorne, a wealthy woman who spent her summers at her country residence, half a dozen miles from Jennie's home. Mrs. Trehorne would send her auto for Jennie in the morning and send her back in the evening, the girl spending the day at such inferior work as was required. The day after the parting between the lovers Jennie went to her daily work and appeared so disconsolate that her employer asked her what was troubling her. Jennie told her story and received sympathy A day or two later while Jennie was plying her needle Mrs. Trehorne said to her:

"Jennie, how would you like to go to the ball that your sweetheart is to attend?"

Jennie looked up at her questioner with a radiance that was a more speaking reply than words. Then her employer said that she had been thinking of the matter and resolved to do for her what was to be done for Sam. She told Jennie to drop her work, go home and prepare for a removal to another locality.

Mrs. Trehorne sent Jennie to her daughter in the city with a letter unfolding her plan and asking her to prepare the girl for an appearance in society Miss Sophie Trehorne, a girl of twenty, at once fell in with her mother's plan to give Jennie the advantage that was afforded her lover. Miss Trehorne made inquiries among her friends and learned that the lady whose life Sam had saved was a Mrs. Iddleton, a leader in society and an acquaintance of the Trehornes.

It was a month after Jennie and Sam entered upon preparation for an entry into fashionable life that the dancing master reported to Mrs. Iddleton that Sam Atkins was as well prepared to attend a ball in high life as he could be, except by a long period of coaching, and even then he would smack of the country. The result was that Mrs. Iddleton issued invitations for a ball at her city residence. Sam was to be the guest of honor as an acknowledgment of Mrs. Iddleton's gratitude for having saved her life when her automobile was running away with her The Trehorne family were invited, including their guest Jennie Williams

The Iddleton ball was one of the very largest of the season. It was not given at the town residence of the Iddletons, but at Swinton's, a fashionable restaurant with entertaining rooms on the higher floors. Miss Trehorne left Jennie in care of her brother and sought the hostess, who was receiving with the guest of honor beside her. An introduction between Sam and Miss Trehorne resulted, and the girl remained with him till the dancing began, and he was obliged to ask her to be his partner

Mrs. Iddleton had arranged to open her ball with an old square dance, the lancers. Miss Trehorne led Sam from one end of the ballroom toward a set forming in the center, and her brother conducted Jennie in the same direction. The music started up as soon as this set was formed, and Sam, being out of his natural element, was so flustered that he saw no individual present but a medley of men and women moving about. The first he saw of Jennie was in the figure where one couple confronts another and all bow. Sam was about to bend his body before a lady when—

Was he dreaming? Had he gone daft? Had he died and been born into another world?

There before him, robed in a cloud of silk and lace, smiling at him, was Jennie Williams.

He was brought to himself by his partner tugging at him to turn his back on Jennie and bow to the opposite couple

Sam did not recover from his surprise during the dance He blundered at every turn but, fortunately for him, others blundered as well, for the lancers had not been danced before in years, and nearly all the dancers were unfamiliar with it It was not till the last figure in the dance, the grand chain, that Sam recovered his senses Then, while passing round, grasping the hand of one lady after another, he came to Jennie The hand pressure, the loving look, she gave him not only sobered him, but warmed his heart to her as never before. He had seen her dressed in the plain costume of a country girl, now she appeared with all the advantage of an artistic costume.

When the dance was ended Miss Trehorne took her brother's arm and walked away, leaving Sam and Jennie standing together. Jennie, who had acquired the manners of a lady even to a greater degree than Sam had acquired those of a gentleman, rested her fingers lightly on Sam's arm, and together they went to seats lined against the wall. There Jennie told her story.

Sam was later called away to be introduced as the lion of the evening; but, despite the flattering words that were said to him, he was bored. There was a hollowness in everything about him that repelled him Nothing seemed sincere.

Sam remained there a week, and it was the most miserable week of his life. It seemed that all his time was taken up trying to avoid breaking in upon good manners. He was introduced at clubs, but he did not see that the men he met there had anything to do but drink cocktails and smoke. He was taken to functions, but it seemed to him that the people there were mankins for showing the fashions. At the end of the week he told Mrs. Iddleton that she had repaid any debt she might owe him and he was pining for a breath of country air. She offered to send him home in her auto, but he preferred to "get a hitch" on a market wagon.

Jennie had returned to her home the day after the ball. The day Sam returned she was taking a walk down the road when Sam, who had donned his country clothes, came along in the wagon. Seeing her, he jumped out and folded her in his arms.

"Jennie," he said, "the only advantage city people have over us is in their clothes. In all other respects we have the advantage of them. I'm going to save up and buy you a swell costume and dress you up in it once a month. At all other times I'd rather have you as you are."