

THE LIFE OF ST. PATRICK.

Divested of legendary lore the life story of St. Patrick is not a long one. Wales, Scotland and France all claim his birth with the weight of probability in favor of Wales. The date was about 373. When he was about sixteen years old he was stolen by pirates or marauders from the north and sold as a slave in Ireland. For seven years he tended swine on a mountain in County Antrim, and then he escaped to the continent, where he became deacon, priest and bishop. He came of good family, and the ecclesiastical name of Patricius was given him by Pope Celestine, who sent him back to Ireland to convert the people. The accounts differ about his age at this time.



ST. PATRICK.

Some of the dates given indicate that he was about thirty; others that he was nearer sixty. Before he returned to Ireland he had visions. Among them was one of a man named Victorius, who brought him letters. In one of these were the words, "The Voice of the Irish," and as he read them he heard a voice say, "We pray thee, holy youth, to come and henceforward walk among us." After this he spent his life in preaching, baptizing and working miracles, and accomplished the practical conversion of the people of the island. He died at the age of about 120 years and was buried at Downpatrick.

A BREAK FOR FREEDOM.

A ST. PATRICK'S DAY STORY BY ERNEST JARROLD (MICKY FINN).

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HE shades of St. Patrick's eve settled swiftly down upon the foundling asylum. The rain was falling drearily. The wind seemed to sigh and sob the words, "The Hibernians will get wet tomorrow."

The doors had been closed for the night; the 200 boys had eaten supper and at 9 o'clock had been sent to the dormitories at the big building's top. The boys had gone to bed, the keepers had made the final tour of examination, and all the foundlings slept save bright-eyed Michael Ryan, of whom one keeper had said:

"You never know what the little rascal will do next."

Michael had lived his life of twelve years in absolute freedom. For weeks at a time he had not slept in a bed, choosing the piers and doorways of the business houses rather than the abuse and contumely of his home. And now that he was shut up in a big stone building the native desire for freedom made his spirit chafe at confinement as a young tiger gnaws at his bars.

And as he lay there in the darkness it occurred to little Mike that tomorrow was St. Patrick's Day—the day when the streets were filled with marching regiments of men; when music pulsed on the air; when gayly decorated horses pranced and cheers adorned echoes in the long brick, canyonlike streets. Mike's cheeks flushed as he remembered previous St. Patrick's days, when he had participated in the festivities and gazed in ecstasy upon the flying banners. But this year he reflected angrily that grim walls shut him in on all sides; that watchful keepers were ready to shut off any attempt to escape.

But hope came to him. Perhaps, after all, he might escape. He had sat up in the gallery of a Bowery theater and had seen Monte Cristo cut his way through fourteen feet of solid rock and then thrown over a cliff a hundred feet high in a bag. And still Monte Cristo escaped. Why couldn't he do it? With beating heart he sat up in bed. A criminal confined for life never longed for liberty more sincerely than did that forlorn wail. He reflected that he was in the top story of the building, at least sixty feet from the ground. He could hear the fierce March wind driving the rain against the windows in sharp gusts.

Still this did not dampen his enthusiasm. He would brave much more than a wetting to get outside the wall and walk behind the procession. But he must have assistance. Who could he get to help him? There were plenty of boys who would like to escape, but few who had the nerve to attempt it. He mentally rejected them all but Patsy Flaherty as lacking in some characteristic necessary for the undertaking.

"Ha, he's just the lad," muttered Mike to himself. Patsy slept on the other side of the dormitory. So Mike got out of his bed, with bare feet, and dropping on his knees crept softly until he reached Patsy's bed. The boy was sleeping peacefully. One grimy hand was thrown outside the quilt. This Mike seized gently and began to squeeze it. Patsy moved uneasily and then awoke. He was frightened and would have cried out in alarm had not Mike put a hand over his mouth. Mike muttered:

"Keep quiet, Patsy; it's only me."

"What do you want, Mike?" whispered Patsy.

"Do you want to see de purcession?" asked Mike. "What purcession?" inquired Patsy.

"De St. Patrick's Day parade." "Why, is dey goin to leave us out?" inquired Patsy eagerly.

"Naw," was the reply, "dey wouldn't leave a cat out o' dis. Me an you'll go out widout askin 'em." By this time Patsy was thoroughly interested.

"Who was St. Patrick," he said. "Why," answered Mike, "ain't you never heard o' him? He's de priest wot driv all the snakes out o' Ireland. He was a giant ten feet high. He was a torrebred, sure, he was, an no mistake. Every year de bands goes out, and de Hibernians and de Land League and de St. Patrick's sasseties puts on dere Sunday clothes and goes out in the street, an de band plays 'Johnny, Get Yer Gun' an 'Boom-ta-ra' an 'St. Patrick's Day in de Mo'nin.' It's great, Patsy; it's great. Let's go."

Patsy's eyes dilated as he listened to this glowing recital. His red hair almost rose on his head with anticipation.

"How kin we go?" he whispered. "Wot's de matter wid de windy?" inquired Mike.

"Dat's all right, Mike," said Patsy, palpitating in the darkness, "but de windy's sixty foot high."

"Ah, don't be gittin nifty, Patsy," said Mike. "Lay low; lay low," he continued as a head rose above the coverlet in an adjoining bed. Mike dropped softly to the floor. They waited until the head sank upon the pillow again; then Mike said:

"Put on yer duds an come over to my bed."

In less than two minutes the boys had donned their clothes, all but their shoes. Then they both got into Mike's bed and pulled the clothes over their heads so that they could arrange their plans together without danger of being overheard.

"You'll be de sojer an I'll be de general. See, Patsy," said Mike in a muffled tone, with his mouth close to Patsy's ear, "we'll take de bedclothes out o' your bed an my bed an tie 'em togooder. See? Den we'll slide down de rope to de ground an skin out over de wall. Hey, how does dat hit ye?"

"Dat's great, Mike; dat's great," answered Patsy. "Only we musn't make no noise, 'cause de odder kids'll get onto us an want to go along."

Leaving Mike's bed and going back to his own, Patsy placed the bedclothes and the mattresses softly upon the floor in the darkness and began untying the bedcord. It was knotted so tightly that he often had to use his teeth. His heart beat a lively tattoo against his ribs as he gnawed away at the knots, but after an hour's hard work he held the rope in his hand and walked softly over to where Mike was still at work. Both boys uttered a sigh of relief as Mike untied the last knot, and the two ropes were carefully tied together.

"What'll we tie de rope to?" asked Patsy as they stood under the deep embrasured window in the 4-foot wall.

"We'll bring my bed over an tie it to dat," was the reply.

This was a very difficult job, as the bed was of iron, 6 feet long and 4 feet wide. But they were materially assisted in their task by a rift in the clouds which permitted a little light to steal in the window. After they had secured the rope to the iron railing of the bed Mike crawled upon the window sill and raised the sash, and while Patsy hung to his feet he leaned out and looked downward. Only a black void met his gaze. He crawled back into the room much more quickly than he had gone out, whispering:

"Patsy, tie one o' your shoes to de rope till we see is it long enough to reach de ground."

The leather plummet was swung off into space by Mike, who turned a minute later and whispered eagerly:

"I felt de shoe hit de ground, Patsy. De rope's long enough."

Then the natural fear caused by the darkness and the thought of hanging by a thin cord against a cold wall sixty feet high began to have its effect. Mike crawled back into the room again, and with white face and chattering teeth said:

"Patsy, you go down fust. You're lighter den I am. De rope might break wid me, an den you couldn't git down. See?"

Patsy did not see the selfishness of the proposal, but he was frank enough to say, "Dat's all right, Mike, but I'm afraid."

"Of course you're afraid," sneered Mike in a tense whisper. "I knowed"



THE CRUEL CORD CUT INTO HIS HANDS.

you'd be afraid. You ain't got no sand. I might 'a' knowed better den to wake you up."

The shrieking of the March wind seemed to rise to a shout of uproarious laughter, in which little Patsy could hear the stinging reproach: "You're afraid! You're afraid! You're afraid!"

It began to look as if the project would have to be abandoned, when the patter of bare feet was faintly heard on the floor, and another boy joined the group.

"What's your name, mugs doin'?" asked a thin, piping voice.

"Oh, go back to bed, Pudgeen Reilly," said Mike angrily.



"Come off de perch, Mike," said Pudgeen. "I won't give de snap away. Lemme in, will ye?"

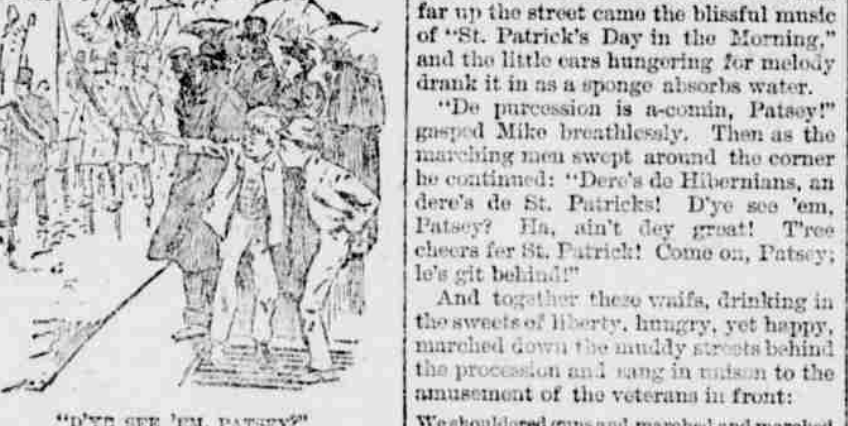
An idea occurred to Mike. Pudgeen was lighter by several pounds than either Patsy or himself. Turning to him he said:

"Pudgeen, we're goin down a rope to de ground to march wid de Hibernians in de St. Patrick's Day parade tomorrow. De bands'll play, an de flags'll be flyin, an de drums an de fifes'll make music. It's better den de Fourth o' July, Pudgeen."

"Dat's so," exclaimed Pudgeen. "I want to go. Lemme in wid ye, will ye, Mike?"

"Course we will, Pudgeen," said Patsy. "Git on yer clo'es and bring yer shoes in yer hand."

Scarcely a minute elapsed before Pudgeen was back at the window with his



shoes in his hand. But the conspirators were too shrewd to permit Pudgeen to look out of the window before he began the descent. They lifted him up with his feet outward, and with eager, suppressed voices exclaimed:

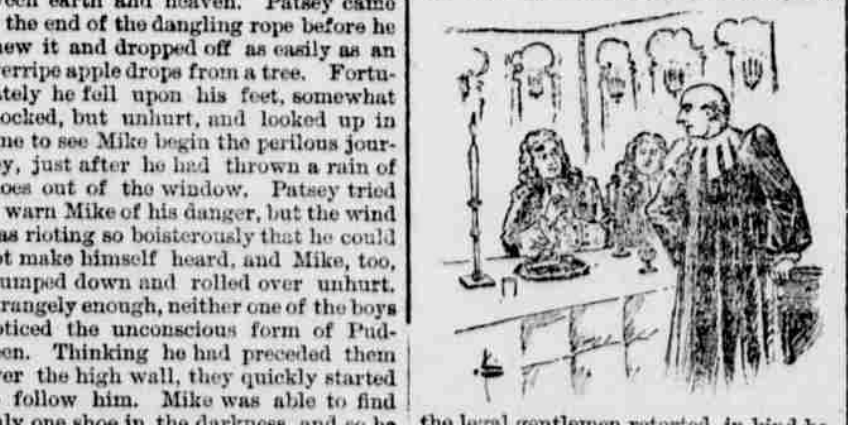
"Now, Pudgeen, hang on tight an slide down to de ground. We'll fire yer shoes after ye."

Pudgeen slid over the sill into the darkness. The cruel cord cut into his hands as he went slowly downward. The strong gusts of wind caught and swayed him backward and forward until he span around. Mike was leaning out of the window calling to him gently, "Hang tight! Hang tight!" until he disappeared in the darkness. Nearly a minute had elapsed when the cord suddenly loosened. Pudgeen had slid safely to within twenty feet of the ground, when the rope broke. He fell, and, striking his head against the building, rolled unconscious on the ground. His frightened cry was caught up by the wind as it fell, so that it was inaudible to the boys above. When the rope slackened Mike exclaimed joyfully:

"Now, didn't I tell ye 'twas all right? Pudgeen's de stuff! Now it's your turn, Patsy."

Patsy would have retreated even now, but the fear of being called a coward nerved his heart, and a minute later he, too, was swaying like a pendulum between earth and heaven. Patsy came to the end of the dangling rope before he knew it and dropped off as easily as an overripe apple drops from a tree. Fortunately he fell upon his feet, somewhat shocked, but unhurt, and looked up in time to see Mike begin the perilous journey, just after he had thrown a rain of shoes out of the window. Patsy tried to warn Mike of his danger, but the wind was rioting so boisterously that he could not make himself heard, and Mike, too, plumped down and rolled over unhurt. Strangely enough, neither one of the boys noticed the unconscious form of Pudgeen. Thinking he had preceded them over the high wall, they quickly started to follow him. Mike was able to find only one shoe in the darkness, and so he escaped with one foot covered only with a stocking. But what are shoes or food or drink when liberty beckons?

Far off in the distant sky were the twinkling lights of the glorious city limly shining through the rain. With eager, stumbling feet they ran farther and farther away from the hated stone building until out of breath. Then they turned and looked back. Lights were



shining in the windows of the big black building. Their flight had been discovered by the watchman when he made his midnight tour. The boys knew that the mounted police would soon be in hot pursuit, and so they started on again. With bruised feet and panting breasts, onward they staggered, and ever nearer came the golden lights.

"Dat's Harlem," gasped Mike. "Keep in de dark, Patsy! Keep in de dark! As soon as we gets to de lights I'll show ye how to giv' de coppers de slip!"

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