

FATHER PAT

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Author of "The Room with the Little Door" and
"The Vice Admiral of the Blue."

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THERE are any things to learn about life in the old Tombs prison. It is not a simple affair of gathering together and then separating the innocent from the guilty. It is a complicated and intricate matter, because there are degrees of importance there. Perhaps it is the only place in the world where the heaven-ordered words come true. For in the Tombs the guiltiest is the greatest, and the innocent of the least importance, and it often follows that the greatest becomes the least among us, and vice versa.

So much for the prisoners. There are two other classes in the Tombs—the keepers and the runners. As for the runners, they are prisoners, "petty offenders." For various reasons, they have been adjudged "guilty," sentenced to six months or less in the workhouse, but are kept in the Tombs, where they act as trustees, cleaning up the building, serving the meals, running errands for the keepers and making themselves generally useful. On each tier are six runners, one a captain over the others. The tier captain is the keeper's "man," and that brings us to the keepers and "Father Pat."

For a score of years "Father Pat" has had charge of murderers' row. He was one of the old time New York boys, one of those who ran with the volunteer fire department in his younger days. Broad of shoulder, benevolent of face and with a gallus little walk, he is altogether most confidence inspiring. We called him Father Pat on account of his watchful care over us.

We became great friends during the days that I lived with him. It was a delight to watch his wicked ways. And yet one could not help liking Father Pat. I suspect that he is very wealthy by this time. Some day he will retire—he assured that say comes not until it has to—and then you may see him sitting in the park watching the children playing, and you will surely remark upon the kind face of the old gentleman with the white hair.

And yet the operations that gentleman with the "kind face" has perpetrated on helpless humanity! When you are first introduced to Father Pat professionally he looks very sympathetic. This is perfectly proper, for any one who meets Father Pat un-

to reckon it out and consider that it happens a dozen times every day you will agree with me that the dark cell and the dark man—who is never allowed to take a bath—are a goodly part of Father Pat's stock in trade. They represent an important part of his capital.

Father Pat has other assets. It is a portion of the humanity of the prison law that the prisoner shall have exercise. It is a fine ideal.

In the Tombs the men may walk and talk freely with one another for two hours every day. But of course they do not exercise at the same time or all together. They are divided into squads, and each squad walks for one hour in the morning and for a like time during the afternoon. Two hours is not much, when one considers the other 22 that must be spent in the little kennels. Therefore many of the men would greatly appreciate another two hours



HE CAME BACK RUBBING HIS HANDS AND CAUSED JACOB TO BE TAKEN DOWN TO THE COUNCIL ROOM. THE WOMAN WAS THERE AND THE CHAPLAIN MARRIED THEM.

his mercenary ways!

Father Pat ekes out his modest salary in another manner. Do not talk with him about your case when he offers his advice, for you are telling your story to an employee of the district attorney's office. For important prisoners he becomes a press agent. He is not on the prisoners' pay roll. The newspapers reimburse him for confidential information.

After Father Pat has learned to love and trust you he will rent you a razor—but this is cheating the barber, who is a mercenary beast, a swine, and must on no account be made public. Even the warden doesn't know it.

Father Pat's knowledge of human nature is marvelous, and no wonder. Think of the innumerable characters that he has met and known intimately under circumstances in which the real self is most strongly disclosed. The persons that you have read of with amazement, horror or curiosity have been daily companions of his. Innocent and guilty, lucky and unfortunate, great and small—they come and go every day. Pat has studied them for years. He knows their disposition from the moment he sets eyes on them. Pat can see through the outer vestments. He can peer right through their clothes and penetrate the depths of their inside pockets and count the bills therein. Yes, even small change is not invisible to Father Pat.

But, as happens to all great men, Father Pat has an enemy. He was not an active, bloodthirsty enemy, but he was a very thorn in the side of Father Pat's lucrative and continued prosperity. This enemy was the chaplain. The chaplain had a nose for smelling out iniquities; he had eyes for observing sin and ears designed for detecting moral and other varieties of turpitude. Through whatever sense he became possessed of knowledge relative to weaknesses on the part of others—and it was most often on the part of Father Pat—the chaplain took the glad tidings where they would do the most good.

Father Pat resented this. He would have given anything to get something on the holy man! No crusader of old in the ecstasy of his sacred enterprise longed as Father Pat longed to get even with the chaplain. He longed with abandon, with sincerity, with hope and despair. He neglected his public duties and his private business. He got thin and pale.

When Father Pat and the chaplain met they saluted each other with the kiss of peace, as it were; so all appearances they were in friendly communion, but if they only had the chance they—

The chaplain spoke kindly to Father Pat, but the way he spoke about Father Pat was scandalous. In confidence the chaplain told me that Father Pat was a viper, trampling and belching in the Lord's vineyard. Father Pat affirmed to me, in secrecy also, that the chaplain was a snake in the grass, a man who would not trust across the street in Tom Foley's saloon. No, not with a muzzle on!

Then Jacob appeared on the scene. Jacob was a Pennsylvania Dutchman who did not believe in savings banks. When Jacob was searched in the warden's office they found an amount of money upon him which instantly caused him to be treated with the greatest respect. The warden offered to take care of that roll of bills for Jacob if there was room for it in his safe. Jacob declined the kind and disinterested offer.

Father Pat was instantly put wise by a wild eyed messenger to the fact that Jacob was "loose with money," and Father Pat prepared to take Jacob to his bosom.

From the first, however, Jacob had a Father Pat defiance. Jacob came right up under Father Pat's vine and fig tree and refused to part with even the smallest coin. A man in prison with money and not spend it! What are we coming to? asked Father Pat of me, and I was at a loss to answer him.

No language could express Father Pat's outraged feelings. "That man Jacob," in the veteran keeper's eyes was a kidnaper and murderous assassin of little children was steeped in as black an abyss of crime as Jacob, for he had money and Father Pat could not get it. Think of it! He had money and would not give it up!

Jacob did not mind at all the citizen of Africa with whom he lodged. Jacob had friends—rich men always do. One of them sent him a present—it was a present of cheese. The cheese was—need I write it?—limburger.

The dark man sent for Father Pat and begged for mercy. And we, during exercise hour, fairly scooted past Jacob's cell.

As for cleaning that cell, why, if Jacob didn't do it—and he didn't—the descendant of Ham had to.

Do not suppose that Jacob was tempted by the "double walk"—not he. Jacob did not walk at all. He preferred to sit on his cot in his stocking feet.

Soon the colored gentleman took a plea and went to Sing Sing, and then Jacob had the cell all to himself, and without revenue to Father Pat. But this did not come about without a

but it was a case of "cherchez la femme." A letter arrived for Jacob. Father Pat steamed, opened and read it. Then he hurried over to the district attorney's office. A charge was trumped up against a young woman as the result. I am too gallant to mention her name, but there she was in the woman's prison, and she would either testify against Jacob and send him to the penitentiary or she would go there herself. Father Pat proposed to do Jacob up good and brown.

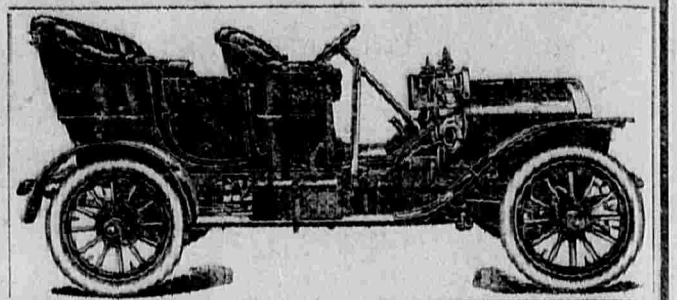
Father Pat had all the best of it now. It was sweet and unreasonably so longer. He went around with a smile on his face and spoke kindly to every one. He was even polite to the visitors. Jacob and the chaplain had long conferences together. Jacob began to look old and worn. He looked as though something dreadful were going to happen—and the very worst that could

happen—but the chaplain smiled and looked happy. He went over and preached to the young woman. He came back rubbing his hands and caused Jacob to be taken down to the "council room." The woman was there and the chaplain married them.

When Father Pat realized that a wife need not testify against her husband he faded. What strange bedfellows are made by crime, politics and suffering—which, after all, are but different names for the same thing. Before I left these dear old Father Pat and the good chaplain were friends again. Crime and politics didn't do it. It was suffering which united them. There is a bond of sympathy between them now when will never be broken. It is true that the chaplain had performed a ceremony for Jacob of which Father Pat did not approve. But for that ceremony the chaplain was never paid.

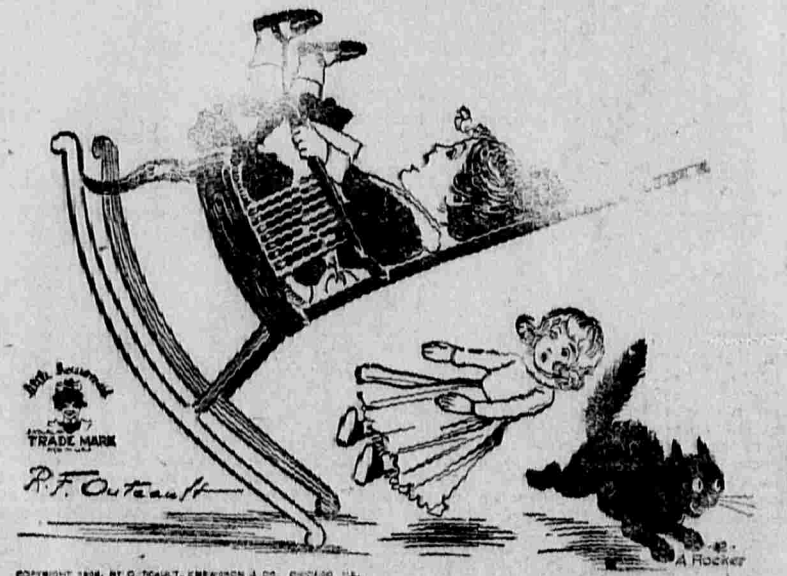
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* I AM SORRY, BUT THIS IS THE BEST I CAN DO FOR YOU NOW

der these circumstances is entitled to sympathy. You feel very grateful as you follow him along the unfamiliar tier. Then Father Pat opens the door of a dark cell, in which there is a dark man, and whispers, in a tone of voice in which the tears of compassion seem to be struggling for an outlet:

"I am sorry, but this is the best I can do for you now."

Of course you do not know it, but there are a dozen cells, vacant and cold, where you might have had at least tolerable loneliness and untainted air.

It is unbearable in that little cell with the Ethiopian. It is "close" in both senses of the word. Each moment adds to the misery, and just about the time it becomes impossible Father Pat's emissary, a runner, the captain of the tier pays a social call. The visit is nicely timed.

Father Pat's private "secretary" wags up to the dark cell where you are, the Ethiopian are in close but unfriendly communication. The "secretary" is full of information, and after hearing that a change would be gratefully appreciated he exudes good advice and various apparently original suggestions. He thinks that by changing some other fellow it might be possible to provide a cell for you, a nice, light, airy cell, all by yourself. But it would cost a tidy sum.

"About \$5."

Is it for Father Pat? No, no, no; and again no. It is for Mr. Nobody of No-where, accused of a crime which wasn't. It is he who is to vacate his cell in your behalf. The captain will whitewash it anew, and you can give him a dollar if you want it. But for Father Pat—nothing! Nothing!

Of course it is damn. When you come

of stroll and gossip. And some of them get "the double walk."

How?

That good man Father Pat. After a day or two his great heart will fairly yearn over the poor man who only has the short time of pacing and conversation with his regular squad. He will sympathize greatly, and explain that if it were only in his power he would let you walk with the second squad also. But there is another keeper, Father Pat's partner, to be considered. He is a narrow-minded ruffian, with no milk of human kindness in his bosom. He is a villainous fellow who would not do a thing for anyone without some consideration. Of course it might be fixed if \$2 should be sent to him, in Father Pat's care—not for Father Pat, mind that!

And thereafter, as long as the \$2 is paid each month, there can be four hours' walk every day.

There is a rule in the Tombs prison which stipulates that every inmate must scrub his own cell daily. It is Father Pat's duty to send the full quota of implements for this stunt, and to see that it is accomplished. But again the overwhelming consideration for humanity overcomes the precise and disconcerting law. Father Pat considering it a hardship that such menial work should be required of all those who come beneath his notice—and without his reach. He therefore proposes to you, after explaining his regret, that the task must be performed, that there is a way out of it, and that thereafter some one else may scrub the cell and see that it is in order. One of the runners is just fitted for the work. One dollar every week; but not for Father Pat—I protest it is not—but for the inspector. Oh, that man! What a contrast to Father Pat, who is all charity and good will.

Father Pat is a ministering angel. Are you ill? Father Pat povers over

you. From the druggist he will bring morphine or cocaine, as your case requires. He will even go and borrow—from himself—a hypodermic needle. You are dependent? A little whisky from the druggist also. How Father Pat denounces that druggist fellow for

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