

SEDUCED BY A PRIEST.

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Inferred that during the constant responsibilities of my ministry I have made many friends, but none so kind, none so true, none to whom I feel so grateful as I do to you, and I sincerely hope that you and I will continue always to love each other as we do today, and that nothing will ever break the golden chain of love that unites us so closely together.

I made \$38.00 on the concert. I will make \$120 and distribute that amount among the choir. I gave Nickson \$40; Mrs. Maloney \$15; Misses Monbleu \$40; Healy \$10; Lowe \$10, and \$10 is remaining for Stenusa when she returns from her rural visits. With kind remembrances to all and my best love to your own dearest, sweetest wife, I remain as ever, lovingly yours, THOMAS.

When she returned she knew of her condition and went to him, but he calmed her fears. About this time Stenusa began to hesitate about carrying on the amour, but her unsuspecting parents, little knowing what they did, forced her to go to the priest as often as he sent for her. She began staying late in the night and left the house on two or three occasions as late as 11 and 12 o'clock.

Then came the death of old Pearce Cummings and when the discovery came Father Leydon, fearful lest Stenusa would say something indiscreet, frightened her into doing just as he bade by declaring all her money was forfeited by her misdeed and that she would be in the poorhouse unless she depended upon him. He brought her to this city then and thought himself secure. He found young Joseph English and obtained his promise to bear the disgrace and marry Stenusa for her money.

CHAPTER III.

Feb. 2, Father Leydon, with English, called on Stenusa. She was nervous and agitated. They talked forcibly to her and she agreed to marry English at 3 o'clock that afternoon. The two hurried down town, secured a marriage license and went back to the hospital.

Mrs. Cummings and Lizzie, hearing of the coup, arrived in time, and when Father Leydon and English arrived Stenusa refused to be married and violently denounced English. During this exciting interview English exclaimed loudly:



"I've Had Nothing to do With You!"

"I've had nothing to do with you for two years, but I'd marry you if you had sixty times as much trouble."

The priest then returned to Aurora, and this led up to a series of the most dramatic happenings that little city has ever borne.

It was cold and snowy in Aurora last Saturday night. The wind whistled fiercely and the snow blew down the streets in gusts. But a hardy old Celt, James Connolly, left the warm fire of his sister's home and started out on his mission of denunciation. He faithfully plodded through the snow that was piled upon the sidewalks until he reached the splendid residence of Father Leydon. Then he began walking up and down waiting for the priest to appear.

From within Father Leydon saw the familiar figure and hastily dispatched a messenger through the rear door for Chief of Police Deemer. The latter came up at once and tried to pacify Connolly, but the latter forced his way into the priest's residence and there vigorously denounced him. While inside little Margaret came to the door crying and sobbing for admittance, but the door was kept closed. Just as Connolly was quieted and all were standing on the porch Mrs. Cummings came up and aided in the public denunciations.

The next morning St. Mary's church was crowded. Every pew was filled. Three weeks before Father Leydon had been forced to suspend services as Mrs. Cummings refused to let him hold mass, and this morning another scene was expected. Just as the choir was singing the first anthem of the morning Mrs. Cummings appeared at the door of the sacristy.

"Do you intend to hold services?" she asked.

"I do," replied Father Leydon firmly.

At this Mrs. Cummings went to the front door and silently but swiftly passed to the altar.

The acolytes and incense-bearers slowly passed through the door and stepped within the altar railing with Father Leydon. The great organ sounded and the choristers were sweetly singing the processional music. The priest started up the steps.

A wild, shrill scream sounded above the heavy notes of the organ and above the voices of the singers. Mrs. Cummings, flushed with excitement, wildly dramatic in attitude, cried:



You Ruined My Daughter! You Cannot Step Into This Sacred Place!"

"Keep down! You shall not hold services." Stenusa all was silent. The organ was still and the choristers hushed.

"You ruined my beautiful daughter," cried Mrs. Cummings, "and no such false-hearted man can step into this sacred place."

Father Leydon called for Officer Terrence Riley who was waiting at the door and fiercely resisting, the white-haired mother was led from the church a prisoner.

Father Leydon turned to his congregation and made a statement accusing the Cummings family with conspiracy to blackmail him. He pronounced Stenusa's betrayer to be young English and alluded to his ward as a weakling."

Monday morning a brief statement, without names, was made in the Aurora press, substantially the same as was made in church, but none of the dramatic details were alluded to.

Monday Father Leydon came to Chicago, but was driven to the depot by two armed men, and while in Aurora was guarded zealously. This morning Father Leydon went to Aurora and during the day will be served with a warrant charging him with the paternity of Stenusa's babe. She was removed to Aurora last night and early this morning swore out a warrant for his arrest.

CHAPTER IV.

The scandal is on the tongue of everyone in Aurora. Even the children discuss it and the sympathizers with Father Leydon are few and far between. Many talk freely and openly and from a dozen reliable sources comes the assertions that the residents in the vicinity of the pastoral residence knew of the priest's liaison long ago, when Stenusa was seen leaving his house late at night.

Young English has repeatedly said he was to get money from Father Leydon, as well as to be given all of Stenusa's money, for marrying her. At times he denies this, but his conflicting stories leave little room for doubt. He has no money and no position and, having nothing to lose, has much to gain.

In the fashionable hospital at 3014 Calumet avenue, the fair daughter of Aurora talked last night to a reporter for The Dispatch. She had no hesitancy whatever in telling of her amour, but bore herself with modesty throughout. She did not hardly speak of the priest, but when telling of his kindness and his love she buried her pretty face in her cold white hands and wept piteously. She said she loved him and would love him still had he not thrown her over so ruthlessly.

Her sister Elizabeth, a bright, witty girl, told of the priest's futile efforts to see Stenusa after he heard there was on hope for his further protection and how he had repeatedly given evidence of his guilt, not only before her but before others.

CHAPTER V.

This morning Father Leydon came to the office of The Dispatch and made an effort to have the story suppressed. He was interviewed and tried to make an elaborate denial of all complicity in the affair.

When the letter was read to him he colored and then admitted writing it and numerous others of the same character, saying that they were simple, brotherly letters that he never thought would cause him any trouble.

"I know I was very indiscreet in writing," said he, "but I had such faith in Stenusa that I never feared."

He said Mrs. Cummings was stupid, vindictive and unreliable, and that Stenusa was being influenced by her family, but he did not deny that he had the most implicit confidence of the family until Stenusa told of his offense. Neither did he offer any explanation as

to what motive a simple family would have in wrecking a priest and blighting a religion they had lived in throughout their lives.

He denied having offered English any money but said he knew the young man was considered wild by people in Aurora. He cleverly denied all leading questions, but begged for the suppression of the story, or if that was impossible, the holding out of the letter he had written.

This was refused and he said he had called upon Archbishop Feehan, laid the whole matter before him and had been told to vindicate himself if he could.

Such is the story. Its effects will be widespread. Today Father Leydon will be arrested. A home has been blighted. A fair life is shattered. The trust of a dead man is thrown to the winds. Two young women are borne down by a sister's shame. A mother's heart is broken. A congregation is divested of its confidence in a well-loved pastor. A supposed holy man is shorn of his cloak of righteousness. A taint is cast upon escutcheon that can but ill afford to give up its surface to anything but that which is fairest.

CHAPTER VI.

AURORA, Ill., Feb. 22.—Father Leydon was arrested this morning on a warrant sworn out by Stenusa Cummings before Justice of the Peace Frederick Brown charging him with the paternity of Miss Cummings' child. The hearing was continued until tomorrow, this being a holiday. Father Leydon is under surveillance at his home and, it is said, has made an effort to settle the case out of court.

Tomorrow's hearing will be brief, as the accused will be placed under bonds to await the recovery of his ward, when she will be able to prosecute. Captain A. C. Little represents Miss Cummings and avers he will push the case to the end.

The publication of this pitiable affair has aroused a great deal of excitement, as it had long been common gossip, but had never before attained any conspicuous publicity. The sorrow at the downfall of Father Leydon is widespread, as he was at one time the most popular priest in town. The male portion of Father Leydon's parishioners are united in their denunciations of him, but many of his feminine parishioners defend him aggressively.

Public sentiment is with the girl, and when she passed down the street yesterday morning to swear out the warrant everyone she met expressed their sympathy for her and on all sides the priest was denounced.

A rumor was circulated about the little city last night and this morning morning to the effect that Father Leydon had flown to more congenial climes and was afraid to face the public again, but this morning he returned to Aurora and was promptly served with the warrant.

Since the publication of the Cummings' story numerous rumors are abroad hinting darkly at other sensational affairs of the priest, and it is rather openly said that many women of his parish have forsaken St. Mary's church and joined other congregations.

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How He Would Work.

EDITOR AMERICAN: At your request for a few lines on Roman Catholicism, I submit the following: It pays to convert Catholics, and it can be done. My mother's children are nine in number. Most of them are in the forefront of all present reforms in the Protestant religion. She was born, reared and educated as a Catholic and gave it up wholly for protestantism. It pays. It can be done. How was it done in her case? First, by necessity which drove her to seek work from home. Second, a desire to read and speak English. Third, by an aged woman too feeble to work who took time to teach the German girl. And further, by the New Testament, which was the text book chosen. Try this plan.

A. M. HAGGARD, Cor. Sec. Ia. Christian Assn.

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