

## LITTLE THINGS

Old Captain O'Connell had the reputation of being one of the best story tellers on the waterfront in Dublin. In some of his tales one did not have to look far to find evidence of probable falsehoods. People knew that the Captain did not mean to do this, and that he actually believed what he said at the time of the telling.

There were a few special stories, however, that Pat O'Connell used to tell which bore a bit of the religious sentiment that filled the heart of this kindly old seaman. Pat always told these stories just as they happened, with nothing added or subtracted. The Captain was a truly religious man. Mrs. O'Day once said that never, in the forty years that she had known him, had he missed morning Mass at the Church of the Little Flower. The Captain always said that, although he had no money and lived in a little thatched house, he had obtained all he wanted in this life. One day, when Father Kelly asked him what he meant by this remark, Pat said, "Well, Father, when I die I know that I will be saved and that is plenty for me."

One of Pat's favourite stories was, as he used to say himself, "the one about my friend, the saint." It seems that there was a man in Dublin named Jim Flanagan. Jim was just an ordinary workman who built sailing vessels. Every day when he was going to and coming from work he would go into the church for about one minute and then he would come out again and continue on his way. Father Kelly's curiosity got the better of him one day, and he decided to see what Jim did when he went into the Church for such a short time. He was standing on the corner when he saw Jim going up the church steps. Father Kelly went in the other door. Jim came in, dipped his fingers in the Holy Water, blessed himself, and then turned around and went out. The next day Father Kelly met Jim and asked him what he said when he went into the church every day. "Well," Jim said, "Its not much, but I feel a lot better when I do it. I go in and say, 'Jesus, this is Jim'. It's just to let Him know that I don't forget Him, and that I don't want Him to forget me." Father Kelly saw Jim go through this procedure for thirty five years. Then one day Jim did not come. About seven o'clock in the



evening Mrs. Flanagan came and told Father Kelly that Jim was pretty sick. When Father Kelly arrived Jim was dying. The priest stood by the bedside and gave the last rites of the Church to his dying friend. Just when Jim closed his eyes for the last time Father Kelly thought he heard a sound. Till the day he died the kindly priest swore that he heard a voice at that time saying softly, "Jim, this is Jesus." Captain O'Connell always used to end this story by saying, "that's the way I want to die."

CLARK McAULAY, '47

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### THE VICTORIA CROSS

The Victoria Cross was instituted in January, 1856, by Queen Victoria. At that time, there were few decorations for bravery under fire available to soldiers and sailors. It was possible before the institution of this award for officers to be awarded a companionship in one or other of the several British Orders, but other ranks who had distinguished themselves in battle could be rewarded only by promotion. The Cross was then created to remedy this unfortunate situation, and also to recognize the many acts of bravery performed during the Crimean War.

It is commonly thought that the Crosses were made from guns taken by the British during the Crimean War. This was done until about the beginning of World War I. But by that time the supply of metal from this source had been exhausted. Chinese guns were then utilized, and metal from these is probably still used by the same manufacturers in England.

It was for bravery witnessed in the Crimea in 1854 that the first awards were made. The first award was made to an Officer of the Royal Navy for bravery at sea, in June, 1854. During an attack on some land batteries, a live shell landed on the deck of his ship; he instantly seized it and, while the fuse was still burning, hurled it into the sea. The Cross was awarded to him in February, 1857.