

THE BASIL-SPRATT CASE BEFORE SUPREME COURT

(Continued from page 11.)

Sister Basil Called.

Sister Basil was called to the stand, following Mr. Tilley's address to the jury, and her examination was conducted by Mr. Tilley. She said that her lay name was Miss Johanna Curran, and that her home was in Holyoke, Mass., that she joined the Order of the Sisters of Charity in May, 1888, and had been in this city ever since. She was sixteen years of age when she joined. Witnesses told of the constitution governing the community, and referred to changes made in it by Archbishop Spratt in 1912-3, reducing the term of office of Mother Superior from six to three years, and of giving the Sisters of eight years' profession, and living at the Mother House, the right to vote. Mother General Frances Regis was first elected in July, 1913. Sister Gabriel served in this capacity before her. In April, 1916, witness put in a report to the Mother Superior as required by the constitution - as regards how the rules and constitution were being observed.

At the mention of this report Mr. McCarthy, counsel for the defence, objected to it being presented, whereupon Mr. Tilley stated that it was part of the evidence. He must put in the report as it formed a chain of evidence of circumstances. The charges to the Mother Superior were made on April 18th, 1916.

Mr. McCarthy held that the report on the charges went far beyond the charge before the court. Only matters that affected the defendants should be used. Mr. Tilley said that everything that related to the Mother Superior should be used. All communications between the Sister Basil and the Mother Superior should be made known. He wished to give the events which led up to the abduction.

Made Startling Charges.

The court allowed Mr. Tilley to read the letter of complaint sent by Sister Basil to the Mother Superior, and it was a most scathing one on the management, or rather mismanagement of the affairs at the orphanage.

In her report Sister Basil charged that the children were ill-treated, or to use her own words, "treated like little animals." Their treatment at times was brutal, and on more than one occasion lay persons had threatened to call in the police. Novices, she said, were incapable of keeping the children clean, and conditions were in a most deplorable state. Things had been done which were in violation of the laws of the land and the guilty parties were liable to prosecution. Children had been subjected to hardships. Children under school age had been left alone, and in some cases had been allowed to become degenerates. The Sisters and the institution had been scandalized.

Thousands of dollars were being squandered which was the property of the poor, while the institution had at its head a person - who had not the intelligence of a three-year-old child. Some of the members of the Order had no regard for the truth.

In her charges Sister Basil also had some pointed remarks to make about the heating system at the orphanage. She said that the steam heating plant had been thrown out and an inferior system installed at a cost of several thousands of dollars, and while all this was going on God's poor were suffering. The report also mentioned a Mr. McPherson as having put in the new steam plant. Mr. McPherson, it was alleged, was a nephew of the Mother Superior.

THEY GAVE HER VINOL AFTER SICKNESS

It Completely Restored Her Strength

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These are plain facts," wrote Sister Basil, after her lengthy list of charges on the management of the institution, "and if you can show me where I am wrong I will make an apology."

Sister Basil declared that the Sisters of the institution lived in terror of the Mother Superior. "Did you get any reply from Mother Regis on your charges?" asked Mr. Tilley. "I did not get any reply," was the answer.

Interviewed Archbishop. "A week later the archbishop came to make a pastoral visit," added the witness. "According to the community law, he was called upon to make a visit every year. It was four years since his last visit. I saw the archbishop, and he would not listen to me. I thanked him. The next day the archbishop continued his visit, and I went into details as to how the children were being used. I told him how the infants were being handled. They were put to sleep on hardwood floors, and one day each week put to bed with just a crust of bread to eat; how they were left alone in dark passages, with no Sisters to speak to them, and sometimes with drunk men, dirt was left on their faces, and they were put to sleep on cold rubber without sheets."

"When I asked the archbishop if he had received a report he said, 'Yes, I know all about it.' I asked him to go to the basement. He did so. He agreed that novices and Sisters were to blame. Witness said she told the archbishop that Mother Regis was the responsible party. She also criticized the change made in the heating system, and charged that the archbishop knew that it was not right to have the system changed. When she told the archbishop this, she said, 'I do not think I do know.' Witness had the authority from the foreman on the job and two other men, and her statements could be verified by others as well. She told the archbishop that if he did not know that he should know that it was his duty to know. At this he got angry. Mother Regis was given internal authority at the home, which he would not give to others.

Write Another Letter. Witness said that on May 8th, 1916, she wrote a letter to the Archbishop, and this letter was read by her counsel. In it she stated that it was with displeasure that she brought to his notice great violations of the constitution. She begged leave to lay before him a matter he should know. It had to do with the report from Sisters and lay people of a strange relationship between him and the Mother Superior. Reference was made to his having gone to her room during the night to give her a massage for an imaginary illness. Witness pointed out that the Archbishop had stated that he had no authority in the home, yet he meddled with trifling things. It was charged that an injustice had been done to Sisters in the orphanage in the voting for a Mother Superior. Witness stated that as she got no reply from her letter to the Archbishop, and as there were no changes in the conditions, she then commenced to prepare her report for Rome. She secured a typewriter, as nothing would be accepted at Rome but typewriting. It was known around the institution that she had the letter in preparation. It was mailed on Sept. 13th, 1916, and on the night of Sept. 14th the attempt was made to take her away.

Made Raid on Her Room. Mr. Tilley then questioned Sister Basil about the attempt made to get her out of the orphanage, and she went into all the details. "Between 9.30 and 10 o'clock at night a man came into her room," she said. "I didn't know whose it was at the time. I heard a rap at the door. I was just about to go to bed, and as soon as I heard the rap I got behind the door. I thought it was one of the Sisters coming, but almost before I had time to think a man ran into the room and grabbed hold of me. He shook his finger at me and said, 'Shoo, shoo.' I started to scream. Sister Mary Magdalene came into the room and said, 'We are going to take you to a sanatorium in Montreal. She was the local supervisor of the orphanage. "I kept on screaming and the next thing I knew I was lying on my back on the bed. The man, whom I found later on to be a policeman, laid me on the bed. Sister Mary Vincent and Sister Mary Alice came into the room shortly afterwards. Sister Mary Vincent is a member of the Council, and Sister Mary Alice of the Mother House. I said, 'O my God, Mary Vincent and Mary Alice, are you in this too? There never was anything mean in this community but what you were in it.' I could not move my limbs. The policeman put his knee on my right side, and held me on the bed. Then they started to dress me. I begged to see Father Mea, Sister Magdalene said, 'You can't see him dressed like this.' I said, 'He can just as well as this man in here.' One sister tried to put on my stockings. Another sister said to the policeman, 'Why did you not bring another man?'

Would Report to Rome. Witness remarked that the Archbishop appeared to be very much annoyed over her statements. She informed him that unless remedies were brought about she would report matters to Rome. At this the Archbishop said, "I don't care."

Witness thought that this last conversation she had with the Archbishop occurred in April, 1916. A week later the Archbishop came back and asked to see her. At this she asked her not to write to Rome, saying: "Maybe I will give you something or do something for you." Witness said: "I want nothing from you, Your Grace. All I want is what the rules give me, what to do, a bite to eat, clothes to wear, and decent treatment. This is all I ask. I was not seeking office, and am not seeking it

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now. I left after this. The dates for this conversation I will be able to give later."

Witness then started to tell how she was dressed, when Mr. Tilley exhibited an old black skirt, a much worn dark waist, and an old black veil, to the members of the jury. The skirt was fitted out with a piece of string, which was to be tightened when donned by any person, just as one would tie a string on a paper bag. Witness said these garments were put on her. The veil was thrown over her head. Witness, referring again to the time the police officer entered her room, stated that she did not tell him to come in when he knocked. He came of his own free will. On one occasion, when she appealed to be allowed to see Father Mea, Sister Mary Magdalene said: "I give you my word of honor that I will let you see Father Mea before you leave this place."

Was Not Crazy. Witness told of a conversation she had with the man who entered the room. She asked him for his name, and he said he was a policeman. "My God," said the witness, "who sent you out here?" The man said, "The Archbishop and the Chief of Police." "And are you going to take me to an asylum?" asked the witness. "And the police officer replied, 'Yes.'"

Witness then asked the police constable if he thought she was crazy, and he replied "No. I do not think

you are." The he told her his name was Naylor. Witness then asked him if he had any sisters. He said he had daughters, whereupon the witness asked him if he would like one of his daughters handled the way she had been handled, and he said, "No."

"Well, why did you do it?" was the next question, and the answer to this was, "I cannot help it. It was sent." Witness then said, "Can't you see I am not crazy?" The reply was, "I can't help it. I was sent here." Sister Basil then told about her calling again and again to see Father Mea. She appealed to Sister Mary Alice, but the latter said that she had no influence. Witness said, "Ask them anyway." She was then told that Father Mea knew all about the plans for her removal. Sister Magdalene said she had handed Father Mea a letter about it. Witness said she wanted to go to her trunk, which was in her room, to secure some handkerchiefs, but that this permission was refused. Later she was taken off the bed and put on a chair by the policeman. Shortly afterwards another man entered her room. At this time witness was about exhausted. Sister Mary Alice said something about putting a wrap on her, but Sister Mary Magdalene said, "It will be warm on the train." The trip downstairs to the waiting taxi was then described by the witness. On the way downstairs she said that Constable Naylor put his thumb under her chin. Previous to this she had put a piece of cloth over her mouth when she screamed. He did it a second time, and it almost took her breath away. When witness protested the constable said, "Well, you won't keep quiet." He did not put the cloth over her mouth as long as she kept quiet.

"I screamed for Father Mea as they took me downstairs," added the witness. "Sister Mary Magdalene said, 'You are going to the House of Providence.' Father Mea can see you in the auto, and the car was going to start. I saw Father Mea standing in the doorway. I cried out to him that they were going to take me away to an asylum. Sister Magdalene told him that they were but obeying the Superior-General, and that she was being taken to Montreal to an asylum."

Called for Authority. At this Father Mea said, "Where is your legal authority?" The constable said, "I have it in my pocket." The policeman hesitated for a moment, but finally got out of the car and went inside the orphanage and had a conversation with Father Mea. After some time the two came out to the auto, and Father Mea said, "You must not do this." Constable Naylor then said, "I was sent here by the Archbishop and the chief of police." The Sisters then ordered the chauffeur to go on, but he didn't. Father Mea then said they could wait till the morning, but Constable Naylor said, "The Archbishop knows all about it, as he sent me here."

Father Mea said he would follow the party to Montreal if necessary. Witness said it was fourteen months since she had gone to a doctor. On the morning of Sept. 13, 1916, between 9 and 10 o'clock, Dr. Daniel Phelan had put his head inside her door and asked about her health, and she replied, "Very well, thank you."

Dr. Phelan also asked witness if she thought Father Mea had gone down town, and she told him that she thought he had gone into town. This was all the conversation she had with Dr. Phelan. Previous to this meeting she had not seen Dr. Phelan in thirteen years. Sister Basil was still on the stand when court adjourned at 7 p.m. till Wednesday morning at 9.30 o'clock.

Lord Northcliffe, accompanied by important members of the British mission to the United States has arrived in London, where he will remain for the period of the inter-Al- lied Conference.

It takes a woman with sound judgment to generate silence.

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He Lives in Constant Fear Who Has Neurasthenia. SUCH ideas often dominate the mind of the sufferer from nervous exhaustion or neurasthenia. He may be strong and active physically, but he finds himself unable to concentrate the mind, fearful to depend on himself, and shrinking at the thought of any responsibility. Some fear to be in a crowd, while others dread to be left alone. Some dislike meeting people, while others live in constant, morbid dread of the future, fearing insanity or accident or disease. Fear brings worry and an irritation of the nerves, so that sleep is interrupted and digestion fails. In this way is formed the vicious circle of neurasthenia, and the nervous system becomes weaker and weaker, until it collapses, and the result is some form of paralysis. The Food Cure. Mr. Laurence E. Dorsey, 23 Stanley Street, London, Ont. writes: "About three years ago I got my foot smashed in an elevator in Detroit, which completely wrecked my nerves. I doctored with the doctors there, but they did not seem to be able to help me. My nerves were in such a state that I could not go down town alone, or go any place where there was a crowd. Sometimes my mother would have to sit and weep over me at night, and sometimes I could not get any sleep at all. But one day last winter I commenced using Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, and before I had completely used the first box I could see a difference in my condition. I continued using these pills for some time. The result was splendid. I feel so much better, can sleep well at night, can go out on the street and attend gatherings like the rest of people. I am so pleased to be able to tell you what Dr. Chase's Nerve Food has done for me, and to recommend it to other people."