

EDWARD BLAKE AND IRELAND.

BY JOHN A. EWAN.

That Edward Blake should return to Ireland to re-erect the structure against whose destruction his fathers ineffectually protested cannot but be regarded as a historical coincidence of an uncommonly interesting kind.

Ninety years ago his forebears, as the Scotch would say, thundered against those who would destroy the Parliament on College Green, and they never ceased to prophecy disaster and strife as the result of the union. Time has verified the prophecy. During the ninety years of this century Ireland has never been really at peace. She has been the aching tooth in the jaws of the British lion. A score of anodynes have been tried, but still the patient is ever and anon wrung by a fresh outbreak of the irritated nerve. The recrudescence of Ireland's ills has broken the hearts of the statesmen who have from time to time essayed the task of supplying a cure. This disheartening recurrence of the malady has made Home Rulers of many whose instincts and preferences are all the other way. The Irish troubles will not down. She has screamed her woes from the hill-tops of the world, so that all men have been bound to hear. Among others whose ears have been thus assailed and impelled to take heed must be numbered Mr. Blake. As early as 1880 he professed publicly his sympathy with her cause and two years later in parliament when Hon. John Costigan introduced his home rule resolutions he found his most eloquent, but perhaps unwelcome, supporter, in the leader of the Opposition, Hon. Edward Blake. Again in 1886 the great tribune brought the matter before the house on a series of resolutions sub-

mitted by himself. Again at the following session he was one of the speakers on a motion introduced by Mr. Curran, member for Montreal Centre. In all of his speeches he showed that he had bestowed a deal of original thought on the subject, and was prepared at all times and under all circumstances to lift up his voice for Home Rule for Ireland. If therefore the conviction of the holiness of a cause is sufficient to constitute a soldier in the Nationalist ranks Mr. Blake is indisputably entitled to march under the standard. Moreover he is an Irishman: but this statement suggests that we should begin at the beginning.

In the year 1832 Wm. Hume Blake, son of an Irish gentleman, his brother, mother and sister, together with a number of connections and friends chartered the good ship, *Ann of Halifax*, to take them across the ocean to that British Colony, Canada, of which much was not then known. They were six weeks on the Atlantic, but at length made their way to Toronto. Here the party separated. William Hume Blake, graduate of Dublin University, decided to take up a farm in the County of Middlesex. We can readily fancy the experiences of this Master of Arts and his young wife on the rough forest farm in the Middlesex of 1832. Here, however, amid the umbrageous maples and beeches their first child was born. The name Dominick Edward had run through the family as a Christian name from times remote. It was borne by the brother who accompanied them to Canada, who was now rector of the township of Adelaide, in which the homestead was situated. It was determined to bestow on their first-born