

THE BLAKES AND FLANAGANS.

BY MRS. JAS. A. SADDLER. CHAPTER V.

THE TREE BEGINS TO BEAR FRUIT.

Next morning when Harry and Eliza were preparing for school, their mother asked Eliza if Miss Davison had said anything to her about the book.

"No, mother, not a word, but I could see that she wasn't very well pleased with me, and I did feel so bad, for I heard some of the girls making fun and carrying on about it. Every time I had to pass in front of any of the benches, they'd be going on with: 'Why, do tell! Did you ever?' or one would ask another: 'Don't you wish you were a papist?' 'I guess not!' the other would answer, for then, you know, I could not take any premiums."

"Well, it ain't any wonder that they'd laugh so," said Harry; "it was real mean of father to return the book. 'Your opinion!' said his mother, laying down the smoothing-iron she had in her hand, 'and who asked you, sir, for your opinion? How dare you speak so of what your father thought proper to do?'"

"Hold on there, mother," replied Harry, with a laugh so gay that his mother could hardly help laughing, too, notwithstanding her just anger. "I'll hold on a little; I guess I've about as good a right to give an opinion as any one else. A'n't I a native born citizen of these United States?"

"Get out of my sight, you young jackanapes," said his mother, "or I'll not be able to keep my hands off you! You a citizen, indeed; if ever I hear you say the like of that again, at least I'll tell your father, as sure as I'm a living woman!"

"Why, no, mother, you wouldn't be so cruel," said the wagish boy, vaulting out the back way, and drawing his sister after him. "Come along, Eliza, it's most time for school, I reckon."

"For shame, Harry! for shame! how could you speak so to mother?" "And why not?" said Harry, turning short round, "didn't I tell her the truth?" "Well, but suppose you did, you shouldn't speak to her like that; I'm real angry with you, Harry."

"Why, look here, Eliza! do you think I'm going to be a boy always; wasn't I be a man one of those days?" "Well, I suppose so."

"Then, how do you think I'm to act or speak like a man, if I don't begin in time?" They were just then in sight of the school house, and Harry dismissed his sister with "there, go along about your business, and, as mother said to me, I say to you, if ever I hear you say the like of that again, I'll—I'll tell your father!" and Harry imitated his mother to such perfection that any one else could not help laughing; but Eliza was in no laughing humor, and she was in no laughing mood with a heavy heart. Her dejection was very generally noticed, and as generally attributed to sorrow for the loss of her premium.

"It's good for her," said one and another. "I hope she'll never have the chance of acting so again."

Now, Eliza Blake was then not quite thirteen, and though gifted with an understanding beyond her years, still she could not see the utility of her father's returning the book. She very naturally presumed that it was too bad for her nice premium to be taken from her, and internally resolved that if over she did get one again, she would say nothing of it at home, but she would put it snugly away, where her mother or father could not find it. "It does make another or father feel bad," said she to herself, "to have them laughing so; and what harm could the book do me, especially if I didn't read it?"

have you miss seeing that for a hundred dollars. You'll say so yourself to-morrow."

"Hush," said Harry, in a low voice, "don't let my sister hear you. She might tell father or mother, and then I'd lose the chance, now and for ever—at least for a good while. I'll go if I can raise the money."

"Why, can't you ask the governor for it; say you want it for some other purpose?" Harry nodded assent. "Eliza," said he, "here's Zach Thompson, wanted so bad to see you; he says you must go home with his sisters some afternoon and take tea. And I'm to go too."

"Won't you come, Miss Blake?" said Zach familiarly, "Jane and Arabella are always talking about you, and mother would be real glad to have you come with my friend Harry here."

Eliza blushed. She was not accustomed to speak to "strange boys," as she said herself, and besides, she did not know how this invitation might be taken at home. "Thank you," said she, "I'll ask my mother if I may go."

A loud laugh from Zachary made her start, and blush still more deeply. "Why, what on earth has your mother to do with it? Can't you come some day from school, just to play with the girls, and me," he added, with a significant look at Harry. "Promise me that you'll come; won't you?"

"No, no," said Eliza, as she walked away, "not till I ask mother; come along home Harry, they'll wonder what keeps us."

"In one minute, Eliza. Where are we to meet?" said he, in a whisper to Zachary. "At the corner of Canal street. Mind, at half-past seven precisely! Well, good-bye, Miss Blake. Think of what I told you; you shall see what a good time we'll have."

Eliza only shook her head, and she and Harry walked on together. "Now, Harry," said Eliza, "where's that you're going this evening, you and Zach?"

"Why, where would I be going? What makes you think I'm going anywhere?" "I overheard you talking of it, so you needn't deny it. You're going to some place that you don't want father to know."

"Nonsense, Lizzy, don't be making a fool of yourself; I tell you we're not going anywhere that I know of."

"I tell you you are going somewhere, and I partly guess where it is."

"And where may it be, Miss Wiseacre?" "You're going to the theatre, Harry; that's where you're going."

stage representation, and the effect was electrical, pervading the whole frame, heart, and mind. He forgot that there was any other world than the one before him, and wished that he could live for ever where he then was. But alas! the play came to an end; the curtain fell, and the spell was broken.

"Is it all over?" asked Harry, in a tone of mingled hope and fear. "Oh, no!" replied Zachary, "we're to have the after-piece yet. Will you wait for it?"

Harry knew nothing of after-pieces, but he guessed he would wait to see it all. It was early yet, he supposed. Great was his surprise when he heard a person near him say to another "it is half-past ten." With that, there came up visions of storms at home, of paternal correction and maternal chiding, and Harry was forced to quit that scene of bliss much to his regret.

"Why, such, you a'n't a-going?" whispered Zach. "Yes, I aren't stay any longer. I didn't think it was so late."

"You aren't—eh?" and his companions laughed. "Why I guess you're come to the years of discretion—ain't you?"

"I don't know, but father would kill me if I staid any later; as it is I'm afraid to go home."

"Well, don't you think I'm—'Why do you tell!' 'You a'n't in earnest, are you?'"

Such were the exclamations with which the boys returned his good night, and as Harry left the theatre with all its brilliant lights and beautiful scenery, and its thousands of happy faces, he could not help saying to himself with a heavy sigh: "It's well for them; I wish I were such a master as they are!—what can be the reason that they have so much of their own way and I so little of mine?"

When he got home, he found to his great relief that his father had gone to bed. His mother was sitting up for him, whiling away the time darning stockings; but her pale face and heavy eyes showed that her heart was ill at ease. Harry hesitated; he had never been in the habit of excusing himself by falsehood, yet he dared not tell where he had been.

"I was at—at my uncle Tim's."

"Don't tell me a lie, sir—you were not at your uncle Tim's. Your uncle and the boys were here till 9 o'clock. I know very well where you were; you were at the theatre—Eliza told me all, so you needn't deny it."

"And does father know?" "No, indeed, he does not—if he did, it isn't in his bed he'd be, take my word for it. Eliza didn't tell even me, poor child, till after your father was gone to bed, and that she saw me getting so uneasy. And it was the sorrowful news for me to hear God help me! Some week about people going to theatres, or letting their children go. I'm sure and certain, if your father knew you were at the theatre, not to speak of the trick you played on him about the dictionary, he wouldn't leave a whole bone in your body. But it's them companions of yours that are leading you astray—I see that plain enough; and if God hasn't said it, it's 'bring you to an ill end!'"

"Well, mother," said Harry soothingly, "only keep it from father's ears for this time, and I'll never do the like again. Won't you, now?" "I'll not promise; you're well deserving of a beating."

I forgive you for this time. I was afraid you might be taking up with bad company, but I'm sure you'll see nothing bad or low at Mr. Thomson's. They're such a respectable family, and so are the Greens too, that it's very well for you to keep in with them. I hope none of them does be at you about your religion, Harry?"

"Is it them, father? Why, you wouldn't hear a word about religion with them in twenty years. Neither Zach Thomson, nor Silas Green nor Joe Smith—you know Joe Smith, sir—don't you?—his father keeps the large hat store, corner of Howard street and Broadway?"

"Yes, yes, Harry, I know him; a very nice man he is."

"And Joe's just as nice, sir. As I was saying, you'd never hear one of them all running down Papists like Sam Herrick, or Mark Edwards, or any of that set. They don't mind if a fellow is a Catholic, so long as he pleases them every other way."

"Still and all," said his mother, "I'd rather, for my part, see you taking up with Catholic boys. Let these lads be ever so good, they're hardly fit company for you. Why can't you go with your cousins, or Mrs. Reilly's boy, or the young Sheridans?"

"Hut, hut, Nelly, don't be making a fool of yourself!" said her husband sharply. "Isn't it always better for a boy to make acquaintances with them that's above—not below him! I wonder at a woman of your sense to talk so. The Sheridans and young Reilly indeed! It's no great things to keep in with them any day; I like the best of all people as they are, but it is not so with these other boys; there's some credit in getting in with them, and besides, when they all grow up to manhood, they can give Harry a lift that will serve him well in business."

"Yes," said Mrs. Blake, piqued in her turn at the slighting way in which he spoke of her friends; "they can give him a lift sure enough—it's more likely that they'll hit him to the gallows than to the thing else. Lord save us, but you're getting high in the world yourself, when you turn up your nose at the Reillys and Sheridans; and the Flanagans, too, I'll warrant, only for shame's sake; it's well it becomes you, Miles Blake."

"Keep your temper, Mary," said Miles laughing, "I'm sure I meant no harm; people needn't be putting on a cap that doesn't fit them. Go off to school, children."

When they were gone, Mrs. Blake again attacked her husband. "Well, Miles, if I was in your place, it isn't with Zach Thomson or the like of him I'd let Harry take up!"

"I suppose not, Mary—Tom Reilly or Mike Sheridan would do well enough for your taste!"

"And aren't they as well to be seen as any of their neighbors? I'm sure they're as good fathers and mother's children as ever a Thomas or Green in the city—ay! and far better for that matter, for we know they have good Christians for their forebearers and that's what none of your respectable people can say. Respectable people indeed! just as if it wasn't the best of all respectability to love and serve God, so you needn't deny it!"

"And does father know?" "No, indeed, he does not—if he did, it isn't in his bed he'd be, take my word for it. Eliza didn't tell even me, poor child, till after your father was gone to bed, and that she saw me getting so uneasy. And it was the sorrowful news for me to hear God help me! Some week about people going to theatres, or letting their children go. I'm sure and certain, if your father knew you were at the theatre, not to speak of the trick you played on him about the dictionary, he wouldn't leave a whole bone in your body. But it's them companions of yours that are leading you astray—I see that plain enough; and if God hasn't said it, it's 'bring you to an ill end!'"

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and I had to promise that we'd go before we could get away from them."

"And what business had you to promise without asking my leave?" said her mother, "You shan't go, that's all about it."

"Well, mother, it's too bad, now, and we never asked you to let us spend an evening anywhere except at uncle Tim's. If you'd just let us go this once, we wouldn't ask to go any more, we wouldn't ask to go any more, we wouldn't ask to go any more, we wouldn't ask to go any more."

Mrs. Blake could not resist the pleading look with which Eliza accompanied these words, so she consented, though all against her will. "But mind you must be home here by 8 o'clock at latest—if you're one minute later your father will go for you, and then you'll see what you'll get."

"Oh, never fear, mother, but we'll be home in good time; never let us out again, if we don't."

So Harry and Eliza went off in high spirits about five o'clock, "dressed in their Sunday clothes." They were kindly welcomed by the elders of the Thomson family, and had, as they said themselves, a "real good time" of it.

Games of various kinds, and all the "plays" known to any of the party, were tried in turns, and all went off pleasantly, though Eliza did feel somewhat awkward at times when Zach Thomson made too free. It was both new and strange to her to see boys and girls romping together, and she could not help thinking from time to time, "my cousins or their playmates never have such plays as these. I do not like all this kissing," but her bashfulness was so ridiculed, even by her brother, that she thought she must "try and get over it." By the time tea was announced, Eliza had got over a good deal of her "awkwardness," and really began to enjoy the wild romping going on. Harry was just in his element, for he was at all times lively and fond of fun.

At tea, Mr. and Mrs. Thomson were exceedingly kind to the young Blakes. Mrs. Thomson paid Eliza a handsome compliment on her success at school. "Miss Davison tells me," said she, "that she has no such girl in her school as you are. I only wish she could say as much for Jane and Arabella."

Eliza blushed and stammered out something about Miss Davison's being very kind, indeed.

"And what do you say to my young friend Harry, my dear?" said Mrs. Thomson. "If all Zach says of him be true he is a first-rate fellow. I guess we shall see him in the Senate some day. Let me help you to some cold tongue."

Harry was hungry after his afternoon's play, and began at once to do justice to the tongue; but Eliza, with trembling haste whispered in his ear, "Harry, Harry, do you forget that this is Friday?" "Hush, hush," he replied, his face all in a glow, "don't let any one hear you. They don't know anything here about keeping Friday. You needn't take any if you don't like, but don't tell them the reason, or they'll laugh at us."

Eliza did as she was bid, but she told Harry on their way home, that if ever she saw him eat meat again on Friday, she'd tell Father Power.

"Bah! can't I tell myself when I go to confession? but say nothing about it now—promise me that you will not?" "I'll promise no such thing," replied Eliza. "You deserve to get severely punished."

satisfied tone. "Yes, indeed."

"I will get better right away then—maybe?" "Right away."

Lola was silent, meditating. "Your papa will be here in a few minutes now," said Annetta. "I am glad the little dog has barked so loudly before he comes. Maybe it will go to sleep and keep quiet for the rest of the evening."

"Papa has to do an errand for me first," said Lola. "He is going to the store to buy me something."

"What may it be?" "A pair of shoes—pretty, little white shoes!" said Lola, proudly. "You will never wear them," thought Annetta, as she went out to prepare her master's meal. "You will never wear them—never, never, poor little soul!"

Lola was again alone. The children had vanished with the sun. In the heavens gleamed the stars—many, many stars. Lola raised a tiny, thin finger and began counting them one after the other. But the effort tired her. She closed her eyes and leaned back in her chair.

She had been delicate always—but then there was her mother, who had been so sweet and so good, and so kind, and so loving—

One day her mother had fallen asleep, and though Lola kissed her and wept over her and begged and prayed and sobbed, she would not awaken.

She had gone to heaven while she lay sleeping. Lola wondered if her mother could really want to go to heaven without her dear little girl. Why had she not told her, and taken her to sleep also, so that the same angel would bring them both away together? It was not God's will her father told her, and to console her, he said they would leave Italy, and she would go to her grandfather. She would find, also, many aunts and uncles who would idolize her—all this she had said, and Lola was glad to know that she had so many who were left to love her.

They had bidden adieu to Italy—but Lola waited vainly in this strange, cold land.

"When shall I see them all," she asked one day. "My grandfather and the loving aunts and uncles who will be so kind to me?"

"Do not speak of them again," said her father. "They are dead."

His tone was harsh, his gestures repellent. "Shall I pray for them—as I do for mamma?" asked the child, timidly. "Do not mention their names—not even in your prayers," said the father, bitterly. But Lola could not do this. And one day Annetta found her in tears over the grandfather and uncles and aunts who had also gone to heaven without her. She told her to cease troubling herself—none of them was dead—they were alive and in much better health than Lola herself. And then, as the little girl plied her with questions, she continued: "Your papa has had a quarrel with his family. And he is right. For when he was young he was a little inclined to adventure. He decided to see the world—and he got to Rome, where he met and married your mother. What have his brothers and sisters done? They have made your grandfather believe that this son is a prodigal—that he has married a very wealthy Roman lady, and so they induced the old man to advance much of his fortune to them, and to share what is left around, so that when he dies your father has nothing. And when he came, there was a great quarrel, and your father has angered them all and left the paternal home—and now it is that he must find employment—since he is not rich, Lola, but poor."

THE LITTLE WHITE SHOES.

Benziger's Magazine.

They seemed so very happy—that crowd of children playing about the square. So very happy and so strong. And their cheeks were so red, and they could shout so loudly—whereas Lola could not make herself heard across the room.

She stood pressing her pale face to the glass, looking out at them wistfully. Would it be long before she, too, could join in their games, and run about as they did? Before this funny little dog in her chest stopped barking and before she could leave off the thick black shawl in which old Annetta tied her—and which was not a bit of use to her, since she was always so cold?

The children without watched, occasionally, the child within. At last one, more thoughtful than the rest, came over to the balcony railing, and kissed her hand to her before she ran away. A flush of pleasure lit up Lola's features—and every once in a while she tried to make out the chubby face of her friend among all those other chubby faces.

Annetta came in with a cup of warm drink and the meat-pills which were a part of Lola's diet. She took them without demur, although she disliked them very much, and Annetta stood by, with grave eyes fastened on the tiny, pale face.

"You have been watching the children, dear?" she asked. "Yes, aren't there many, many children in this world?" said Lola, in the quaint way that was her very own. "Has any other child out there got a little dog like mine—that barks and barks—?"

She began to cough then—and Annetta held her while the paroxysm racked her small frame. "When you are better, dear, you too will go out on the square and frolic with them," she said. "But my feet are so funny," said Lola. They are getting smaller, I do think. I shall not be able to stand upon them."

The child had listened eagerly. This night the stars seemed to her as she sat looking at the stars, trying to count them with that one thin little finger.

"Grandpa and father will never go to heaven to see mamma if they do hate each other," she said regretfully. "But I shall make peace," she went on. "Papa has forbidden me to speak of them. But I shall go to see them. As soon as I am a little better, I shall go to my old grandfather. . . . He will love me. I am sure he will love me. And I shall say my mamma lies in Italy under a big white stone, and they have brought me here to meet my loving aunts and uncles and my grandfather, and there is no one. Please, will my grandfather love me?"

"They will all love me. . . . And I shall go every day. . . . Until one day I shall not go. And then they will think me ill, and they will come to see Lola. . . . I shall be so glad. They will come in here, right here, and I shall sit and talk to them and Annetta shall make them hot, spiced wine. . . . And I will tell them stories of my Italy and my mamma, until it grows dark and the stars, the big stars, come out, one by one, and my papa comes in from the office. . . ."

Lola sat up suddenly and opened her eyes. They had been shut tightly all the time she was building this little day-dream. "Papa will see them all—all—all!" she said, in a thrilling voice, and because they love me, they will be glad, one after the other—grandfather and uncles and aunts."

And then she brought her small hands together with fervor. "Look, now, Blessed Mother, look now," she said. "You must make me better—until I do make peace. Not to run around much with the other children, but to make peace."

The bell rang. Her father entered. With a face full of concern he asked Annetta of the little girl's condition. The next moment he brought her to his heart—a thin, fragile little form. "How is papa's heart's treasure?" he said, with a tender smile. "Oh, I am well," she answered, nestling to him, and putting her arms about his neck. "How did the little dog behave today?" "Only once, papa—and not so badly. Ask Annetta. And I have taken the