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THE BANKS OF THE BORO.

By Patrick Kennedy.

BOOK I—THE PLACE AND THE PEOPLE.

CHAPTER I—CHOUGHBAWN AND ITS SCHOOL.

It was a fine autumn morning, 1817 or 1818, as a couple of school fellows and myself were descending the steep way that leads from the village of Courtmacuddy down to the bridge of Ocb-na-Gorpal, and thence up the shady road to the cross of Colaght. How gladly would I look again on the view we had then before us unobscured and unregarded! On the river banks, beyond the bridge, rose lofty oaks, ash, and elm trees, with the sunbeams streaming through the foliage on the rich meadows and the surface of the river; above these lay the spacious garden and ivy-covered ruins of the old castle, and on the high grove-girt lawn to the right stood the modern house of Castleboro. Straight before us on the castle side of the shady road beyond the bridge, was the large park or field called Glanmun, and to the left spread thorn-fenced meadows, stretching away to the delightful old farm-house of Mr. Dick Greene, one of our strong gentlemen-farmers. On the severest winter morning the sight of that sunny road, sheltered by its skirting fir belt, would give us a feeling of comfort as we came down towards the bridge, running at a brisk pace to keep ourselves warm.

Still to the west beyond, and to the right of the castle, lay the townlands of Rathmure, Coolbawn, and Forrestalstown; and on the horizon stretched the White Mountain ridge and the eminence of Cahir Rua's Den, and on the extreme right rose the lofty rugged mass of Elackstairs.

At the upper or western end of this sunny road it meets the Colaght one, which runs south and north through Lord Carew's demesne, with trees as thick as they can grow on each side.—We take the left or southern branch, and leaving on our left hand Mr. Dick Greene's orchard and the rustic avenue leading down to his house, and on our right Mr. Watt Greene's large slated house and orchard, we cross the brook of Coolbawn and climb the little eminence to the school; we have been joined by the youngest of Mr. Greene's family at his gate, dear little Becky, and Richard, and Martha.

In former years our hours of instruction were spent in the chapel, up the shady lane on the left. The school was a thronged-attended one—the pupils varying in age from six to twenty years. Instances of immodest speech or action were very rare, the master being absent or present; and during my sojourn there for years there was no boxing to my knowledge; yet I never think of our daily use of the chapel for a school without a feeling of annoyance. So, though I often felt elated when delivering the speech of *Brutus* or that of *Anthony* from the altar-steps, and recollect many happy days spent in the gallery, or on the shaded grassy terraces of its yard, I turn with more pleasure to the secular building which fitted our profane and worldly studies much better.

We are among the first comers, and immediately begin to rehearse. By and by, Mr. O'Neil enters, gives us a cordial good morning, proceeds to hear off the lessons got out of the school, and the Misses Greene repeat their French dialogues.

Some dozen of us, from fourteen to eighteen years of age, retire to an outhouse (its floor covered with straw) to rehearse our Latin lessons studied on the previous evening. We have no monitor, but my dear old fellow student, John D., with whose family the Latin usher lodges, is supposed to be able 'to keep the beam of battle straight' amongst us. We get through some fifty or eighty lines of *Cæsar*, and *Sallust*, and *Virgil*; and when we judge the work efficiently done, we refresh our minds and bodies in this fashion. Every boy has in his pocket a square, that is a quarter of a circle of griddle cake; and any one that chooses commences the game by flinging up a piece of his cake; and then a lively scramble takes place among the straw to seize the coveted morsel. Once the piece is secured, the lucky finder, sitting on his heels, eats it with much gravity. No. 2 flings up his portion, and the scrutiny is renewed; clothes, bands, hats, and faces are treated with little ceremony, and by the time that the last pupil has projected his portion in the air, our faces are flushed, clothes and hair laced with straw, and bones sore, yet through all this severe horse-play not one angry word has been spoken.

There was amongst us a young giant, whom nature had evidently cut out, mind and body, for a farmer; but who was doomed for priesthood by the family decree. We called him 'Hoofs,' from his enjoying a liberal provision of these appendages, and we occasionally suffered both from his hoofs and his horns. After his parents had

lost many years striving to counteract the intentions of Providence, he shaped out his own proper course by marrying a neighbor's daughter, and turned out a good farmer, instead of becoming an ill-conditioned clergyman. It was interesting to see the priestly vocation marked from an early age in one or two others; I never think of one dear fellow-pupil, without bringing before my mind a lively image of innocence, mildness, and piety.

On this particular day we 'moderated the rancour, of our exercises, as the 'quality' from Castleboro, and some of the gentlemen and ladies of the neighborhood were expected to an examination.

The school economy, as to the fees, was of a varied character. The poor people on the estate sent their children to receive gratuitous instruction, and those who were able paid or did not pay, at their own option. Some advanced students, intended for the Church, were learning Latin and Greek, and supported an usher (himself laboring to obtain Holy Orders). He lodged at Morgan D.'s, and gave evening lessons to the young people of that hospitable old farm house. Very little use was made of birch or cane in our academy. Sharing as I do the general feeling of the unfitness of collecting together young people of both sexes to receive a common course of instruction, I look back on my school experience, and can declare with entire truth that very few instances of impropriety in word or action could be reckoned amongst us.

Our dignified, though affable teacher ('Master' in our vernacular) being near-sighted, many things might have passed unnoticed. Still we were in considerable awe, some portion of which probably arose from the respect shown him by the Family of the Castle, the Greenes, the Robinsons, and the Fitzhenrys.

At last 'the quality' were seen coming down the road from Mr. Watt Greene's gate: we all got into order; the door opened, and in walked the gentlemen and ladies. The master received them in his best style; and if being thoroughly at one's ease, unembarrassed by shyness, and gifted with a flow of words, be marks of a good address Mr. O'Neil had this accomplishment in perfection.

Our gentle visitors soon set us at ease by their courtesy; and examinations in spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, and grammar proceeded.—Sometimes the judges would choose to differ on the subject of the relative merits of Laughlin Quigly and Sylvester Quino, or other rivals, and after a grave weighing and handling of the case, it would be decided that both were best, and consequently entitled to premiums; and so the poor little ragged students and their parents were in fairy land for the rest of that day, and many succeeding ones. Due praise and an interesting volume fell to the successful farmer's child, and a good suit of clothes, or at least a pair of shoes, brought warmth and gladness to the cottier's child, and rejoiced the hearts of his parents.

Our visitors took leave after a satisfactory examination, and we all scattered to dine, or enjoy our favorite pastimes.

We who had come from a distance, settled ourselves on the grass, in the shady paddock under Jenny Carroll's cottage, and enjoyed our bread and milk, drinking the latter out of a black bottle. When our slight repast was over, we crossed the bridge, and tried each other's powers, leaping the brook, or seeing how far we could go in a 'hop, step, and jump,' and we spent a happy hour on the grassy banks, without fear of blame from Mr. Greene. In the season we shot 'marvels' on the road, or played 'hunt the fox,' and occasionally repaired to the five-alley of Clonroche, and enjoyed some exciting games in its arena.

When summoned to the afternoon study, there is great inattention for a while, and great wiping of foreheads. The morning scene and mid-day play have unbinged our powers of abstraction. Gradually we become more attentive; the sun has been blazing for some time through the western windows of the room, and at last we got the welcome order for an early dismissal.

On coming down towards the bridge, Dan Mulrony, who had been outdone in the examination by little Laughlin Quigly, though he exceeded him by the head and shoulders, would not let his conqueror enjoy his little triumph, but kept harping on the victory being due to chance, or sleight, or favor; moreover hinting 'that there was no merit at all in the matter, seeing that Laughlin was luxuriating each day on good cups, while himself was merely kept alive on *English rids*;' and finally adding, 'that if Laughlin was near his own height, and if he thought it worth his while, what a leathering he would give him.' This was the last straw on the back of our illipitian camel. He jumped into the middle of the road, buttoned his coat, and invited his bulky antagonist to a trial at the fists, in these unstudied phrases: 'You are a big

duce, Dan; ay, and a coward, too, Dan; come on if you dare, Dan; I'll stand my ground, Dan; I'm not a bit afraid of you, Dan; I'll knock an eye out of you, Dan.' Dan, not desiring the loss of that useful organ, did not accept the invitation, and we were relieved from his grumbings for the remainder of the walk.

CHAPTER II—ENTER TWO OF THE PERSONAGES.

Two of our former pupils had come on this day to witness the examination. They were long-tryed friends and comrades, though differing in many points of taste and character. They had been together in Mr. Dermud K.'s school, at the chapel of Rathmure, and at Mr. Martin Doyle's, of Shanowel, near Tottenham Green, some miles to the south, and had spent their last two seasons of school life at Cloughbawn. They were now variously occupied, Bryan Roche working on his father's farm, not very far from the bridge of Castleboro, and Edward O'Brien teaching a school below Ennisecorthy. Edward's home family consisted of father, mother, and sister, the latter aged twenty-three, and little Pat, a boy of ten. Their farm adjoined Bryan's, and it was the general opinion that the old gentleman had a sheaf of bank notes laid aside somewhere or other. However, there was no evidence of this fact in his mode of living, nor in his treatment of his family. Edward having gone through his school career, and not feeling disposed to farm labor, and having no penchant for his duties as a shop-clerk, had assumed the charge of the children of a few Protestant families, to whom he was recommended by Mr. O'Neil. I happened to have been the companion of these young men at Shanowel school and for the two seasons spent afterwards at Cloughbawn.

The two friends were very dissimilar in appearance. O'Brien was middle-sized and dark of hue, while Roche was fair, tall, and proportionately stout. O'Brien was fond of everything connected with polite letters except the drudgery; but in happy hours, and when need urged, he was not to be dismayed by any amount of mental labor. As to bodily exertion, except in the article of juvenile sports, I am obliged to own that he was most decidedly lazy. Roche, on the other hand, was wedded to farming occupations. He had made a mere respectable progress in school business, and was now likely to lose, for want of exercise, the fruit of some years' study. Edward was returning to his duties from a trip to Graigue, of which we shall hear more by and by, and availing himself of a short vacation to visit his old teacher and playmates. He had been a sort of general favorite some two or three years past, being always ready to give the master a helping hand in instructing the classes, and likewise a ring-leader among the scholars from his activity and skill in all sorts of school pastimes.

From the school till we passed Watt Greene's gate there was no opportunity for confidential talk, as Martha, and Richard, and Rebecca had secured our attention, and were detailing their little grievances and important secrets. Rebecca's grand communication was addressed to myself in these words (she was the youngest of the family): 'Now you must not tell Martha, for your life, what I am going to say to you. I was going up the lane there on the right, yesterday, and I was looking among the bushes, and what did I see but a little ram's (wren's) nest, and so I stole over, and put my finger in the upper hole, and a nice little ram with a cocked tail jumped out of the other, and there I saw five or six of the daintiest creatures you ever saw in your life in the nest; and I went away for fear I'd make the mother forsake them; and now if you tell Martha she'll tell somebody else, and she will frighten the old bird, and she will forsake the nest, and the little things will die of hunger.'

I do not recollect the fate of the little pets, but all this time Martha and Richard had some other weighty secrets to divulge to Edward and Bryan; and when we came to the gate we were secured by Mr. Samuel and Miss Eliza, and treated to some sweet apples. I wonder if the figures '1790,' cut out in red brick, are still extant on the lofty gable-end wall, and if the apples in the old orchard are as sweet as in the long-vanished days. Kind and affable Mr. and Mrs. Greene, I still cherish your memory, and hereby send my loving regards to as many of your good-natured children as live to read these lines.

Bidding our gentle little friends good bye, we got on to the entrance of the sweet-briar that turned down to Mr. Dick Greene's. At that spot there was a deep ditch between the road and Mr. Greene's orchard; and on the high bank that served for fence were his sons—two fine young men; and for the next four or five exciting minutes there was a lively scene of scrambling among the scholars, young and old, for the nice fruit that was flung out to them by their laughing and generous entertainers; the few girls in our company being exempt from the struggle,

as their friends in the corduroys were only too happy to share the spoil with them. When the strife was over, poor James D., who was a great 'hoast' in his war, and mighty free with his tongue, said something that did not please his cousin Anty (Anastasia), a stout handsome little lamb of thirteen. She made no remark, but took him by the collar, and gave him the neatest fall I ever saw inflicted on a boaster.

CHAPTER III.—CASTLEBORO IN OUR YOUTH.

Some of the body turned at the cross of Colaght down the shady road to the bridge, which has been already described; others took the straight road which leads through the demesne, west of the lake and castle, and on to the mill and bridge of Castleboro; and Edward and Bryan took the path that crosses obliquely the great field of Glanmun, in the direction of the garden, and out-offices, and ruins of the old castle.

My own route was towards the 'horse ford,' but on this occasion I took the same path with my two friends, in order to refresh our reminiscences of Shanowel. When we were left to ourselves, I fancied that there was a shade of darkness on Edward's face. It was also noted by Bryan, who began to rally him on the subject. 'Ah, Ned, you and I have for ever bade adieu to the happy life of schoolboys. As for myself, however, I feel happy enough. I would sometimes wish the sun lower in the evening, that I might unyoke and have a bit of chat with your mother and Theresa. As for your father, he is so wrapped up in plans for swelling the stockings that's hid away somewhere, that his company is not very amusing. Indeed, I sometimes feel that Theresa is cold enough towards me, and I'm sure she need not. She can't but know the love I have for herself and everything she touches; eye, even the ground which she treads on. She might show a little more *grac* to me. Maybe she likes somebody else, but I can't think that either. No one ever saw her for three minutes in any young man's company. I am sure of you and Mrs. O'Brien's good wishes, but don't know what to make of the old gentleman.'

'But what has happened? You seem as if you were just after exploring Cahir Ruadh's den, and had seen some doleful vision there. Have pupils and parents for once agreed in their views on education, and combined to elect a new professor, or have you suffered a barring out?—Come, come, reveal your woes like a man!'

'Ah, Bryan, you may joke at your ease. I have incurred responsibilities which I might have avoided; and were it to be done again, I suppose my conduct would be just the same; but the future prospects are very serious looking.'

'Oh, dear! what a bappy careless life was ours at Shanowel, under the innocent wand of poor Martin Doyle! What a cozy school house, and what a collection of brave boys and hand some little girls, and what easy duty had Martin to do! He took the world very easy at all events. No whipping, no scolding, his hat ever more on his head, and his cane from January to December under his arm, never in his hand.—With what benignity and resignation did he hear the lessons, and how clear and interesting was the lecture on Bookkeeping. Well did he simplify its principles to the learners; and when the exercise was over, how complacently he would add—

Now my brave Throjaos, go study your *lager*,
And work might and main, as you would for a
wager.

'Wasn't it pleasant on a fine summer day to quit the hot school, and lie abroad on the green bank that lay beneath the unfenced stony lane and the little stream, and work or idle as we pleased! Some good progress we made without doubt; but the catching of *flukes* in the stream under Tottenham Green, and the delights of 'Fox and Hounds' often interfered with 'Jackson' and 'Simson.' You can't but recollect how condescendingly would our worthy 'master' abridge the evening's exercises when any of his pupils' relations would give him a gentle pressing to take a walk over to the alehouse at the corner of the Old Deer Park. Well, I see you wonder what all this has to do with my late achievements. I must own that it has no connection with them whatever. I had not courage to begin, but now I feel a little warmed; I'll take the bull by the horns. Ah! Harry, you thief, read your story-books, tire yourself leaping and burling, say your prayers, and avoid the society of girls, big or little. What I preach to you I have not practised myself. St. George for England! Now for the plunge!

'I have, as you know, been for nearly two years with Mr. Jenkins' family at —, below Ennisecorthy. I attend to private tuitions morning and evening, and have a select class in the day; and one of my morning occupations for some time has been to attend Rev. Mr. S.'s little people. We got on pretty well. I suppose they would prefer me a Protestant, but I have no complaint to make. The minister and his

lady are an amiable pair, and treat their children in a mild and rational manner. Mr. S. was studying the Bible the other morning, while his youngest child was poking in the cinders. Taking his eyes off the book for a moment, he added, 'What are you doing, *Crick*?' 'I am making poteen, father,' said he in a very husky tone; 'Will you have a glass?' 'No,' was the serious reply; 'I will not encourage the manufacture of illicit whiskey.'

'Thomas, the next above him, is all for studying the habits of animals, but he is rather backward at reading. We came the other day to the rhymed alphabet, where the last letter figures thus:

Z was a zebra, and found in Africa.

'Oh, Mr. O'Brien!' said he, 'did Billy Everett (a bookeller in a neighboring town) go to Africa to bring home this zebra?'

'John, the oldest, has not so much quicksilver in his veins as Thomas; but he, too, is odd in his own way. The other day his mamma gave him, for some little fault, a tap on the cheek that would have crushed the wing of a butterfly, and then walked very majestically out of the room. He was so astonished by this unusual proceeding, that he looked after her in the greatest amazement for about ten seconds; but then, seeming to recover his presence of mind, he remarked, 'I suppose she thinks she is clever after that.' I am sure you would have pitied poor Miss Dorothy if you had seen her distress one evening about a fortnight since. I had given her too long an exercise, or she was not in the vein of study; so after many uneasy symptoms she cried out, 'Oh! how I wish that I'd die to-night, and be buried to-morrow, and be rotting in my grave all the days of my life!'

'And this brings nice little Master Ben before me, with his tight plaid dress and bare arms. He was very busy one day, and contrary to his custom, was very quiet in the corner. At last he came over to me with a face of triumph, exhibiting a pair of corks, joined by an open work circular wall of needles, on pretence of its being a fly-cage; and joyfully cried out, 'Could you do such a thing as that, sir?'

Bryan.—Tell us what sort of people are these old Palatine families to live with.

Edward.—Faith, they are very like the better sort of our own people, a little staidier in their manner, and not so easily put in a passion, that's all. The head of one of the houses is a regular jolly Paddy as ever you saw, in spite of his very Scotch name. The young folk do not get as many thumps as ours; but they are kept too long at church on Sundays.

H. W.—Oh, dear! this is all very edifying, but what about the little secret you were going to tell us?

Bryan.—Ned reminds me of a man that took half a mile of a run to jump over a trench. The story will be good when it comes.

We got to the further side of Glanmun at this time, with the wooded banks of the Boro below at our right, and a straight avenue before us, passing the extensive garden before mentioned. I trembled for the chance of the promised communication for that evening at least when I saw coming out of the gate Charley Redmond, one of the young assistants, a most restless and good-humored individual, his chief pleasure consisting in bodily feats, and in detailing extravagant facts. It must be said to his praise that of two stories,—the one fact, the other no-tion, and both equally interesting,—he always preferred relating the true one. He was a favorite with most of the people about the castle, and was looked on with regard by the gentlemen; as among a society whose conscientiousness in small things had been only imperfectly developed, he really felt it a case for confession if he did not discharge his duty to his employers, or if he saw them injured by theft or neglect, when he could prevent it.

He now began to tell us in great glee the disappointment of a quarrelsome boy, who, being lately appointed to watch the fruit at night, had wheeled a barrow full of the best he could find out through the door in the lower wall, and hid them very safely, as he thought, in a clump of young saplings, with grass all round them. The evening of the next day he came to look after his treasure, but the pigs had been there before him. There wasn't as much as the skin of one of them left for the young rogue.

By the time the story was ended we had got through the yard, with the old castle on one side, and were out on the slope above the stream that runs from the lake down to the Boro.

The old lawn, with its big trees, stretched away on our left side, the lake flashed under the rays of the sinking sun, and on the farther bank and higher on the new lawn loomed the great, square, modern building. The fir grove encircling the north side of this lawn swept down along the river bank towards our right; the evening rays just glancing on the tops of the dark firs, tinging the outlines and roof of the castle, and darting through the lofty trees that ringed