

THE BLAKES AND FLANAGANS.

BY MRS. JAS. A. SADDLER. CHAPTER II. THE TWO SCHOOLS.

Next morning when Harry Blake came down stairs, ready for school, his mother, who was busily engaged preparing breakfast, could not help expressing her vexation at sight of the patch which disfigured his handsome face.

"Well, now, isn't it too bad—it's a downright shame, so it is, to see you with that ugly patch over your eye! I wish to goodness, Harry, that you'd try and keep out of these scrapes; what on earth prompts you to go a-fighting as you do?"

"Why, religion, mother, to be sure—don't every one know that?" and Harry laughed in a way that, somehow, his mother didn't like.

"Oh! religion!" said she, "that's the old story, and it goes down very well with your father, but it doesn't at all satisfy me. Does it never come into your head that you'd show more respect for religion by keeping out of brawls, and trying to 'bear patiently with the troublesome,' which, you know, is one of the eight beatitudes—eh, Harry?"

"Nonsense, mother, what have I to do with 'beatitudes'—a pretty thing such come making their game of Papias, and talking about 'the dirty Irish,' and looking at me all the time, as much as to say—you're one of them. I'll be hanged if I stand it."

"Why, Harry," said the mother, "one would almost think you were ashamed of having Irish blood in your veins! I declare you talk very strangely at times!"

Harry only laughed, and asked if the breakfast were near ready. "There's Eliza," said he, "I guess she slept too long this morning, and now she's spending so much time at her prayers that she's sure to be late. I wish she'd cut them short for once!"

"It would be well for you," said his mother, sharply, "if you spent a little more time at your prayers—if you did, you wouldn't be so ready to quarrel with your schoolmates."

"Oh! never mind, mother, never mind. I'll get religion some of these days, and leave off my wild tricks. Are those cakes ready yet? Do make haste, or I shall be late for school! Hello! here comes Lizzy. So you have got through with your prayers at last. Ain't you a pretty girl to be praying for 'most half an hour, and it so near school-time? I guess you'll catch it this morning."

"And what if I do?" returned his sister, "you know Father Power tells us not to neglect our morning or evening prayers on any account. I learned my lessons yesterday evening, and I'm all ready for school now, only just to get my breakfast. Can we have it now, mother?"

"Yes, my dear, I'm just a-going to put it on the table. I'm well pleased to see that you're particular about saying your prayers. As for Harry, I don't know what to say to him. I'm afraid that school is making a lad of him!"

"Hush, mother, here's father coming in." And Harry began to place the chairs around the table with a great show of making himself useful.

getting more sturdy and resolute on our hands. Perhaps, after all, we're doing what's wrong in sending the children to that school—eh, Miles?"

Miles laughed at the troubled, anxious, look of his wife, so different from her usual cheerfulness reflected from her mind. "Why, Mary, what maggot has bit you this morning, that you're making such a fuss about schools. Don't you know, woman dear, that most of those same branches that you're talking about are taught in the Catholic schools, and, if they were 'devils,' as you call them, the priests wouldn't have them taught—so make your mind easy about that."

But Mary could not make her mind easy; her maternal anxiety was aroused with regard to Eliza's health, and she was about to make further remonstrance, when a customer coming in put an end to the conversation for that time, and sent Mary back to her kitchen.

Let us now follow Harry Blake to school, just to see how it fared with him on that particular morning. The teacher, Mr. Simpson, was a very smooth, sleek-faced man, with long, fair hair, carefully brushed back, so as to show off the intellectual conformation, of which Mr. Simpson was not a little vain. He had a pair of small gray eyes, that were continually glancing round from one object to another, in a queer, restless way, probably the effect of long years of "watching the boys."

No one had ever seen Mr. Simpson in a shabby-looking coat, such as teachers such as he were wont to wear in school-hours; he was always seen, like the Irishman at Donnybrook Fair, in

—new, and smooth, and glossy as Mr. Simpson himself, head teacher of the Fifth Ward School—a gentleman whose dexterity in "handling" the faith of young Papias was well known equal to our friend Pat, of Donnybrook notoriety, in handling "his sprig of Shillelagh."

This smooth-spoken gentleman had no particular love for Harry Blake, who was, as his mother expressed it, for "too sturdy and resolute" for the refined notions of Mr. Simpson, and gave that personage more trouble than all the other boys put together. But Mr. Simpson knew better than to make a display of his aversion—if aversion it could be called—indeed, it was quite contrary to his principles to have an aversion for any Catholic boy; to them he was even smoother and more oily than to any one else.

Accordingly, Mr. Simpson chose to take no notice of Harry's entrance that morning, because the bell had rung some ten minutes before. So Harry stepped softly to his seat, much relieved, though still troubled with certain misgivings as to the effect of his disgraced face, in connection with the combat of the previous evening. His next neighbor, Hugh Dillon, was a Catholic, or rather the child of Catholic parents, but the boy had been going to the Common School ever since he was five years old, and now, at fourteen, he was a Catholic in name, nothing more.

In fact, he began, of late, rather to take sides against Harry in his polemic-pugilistic campaigns, on the ground that fighting for religion was "too Irish like," and only fit for "Badges Harry Blake!" This used to rouse Harry's ire, and he would retort with "Wa'n't I born here as well as you?"

"Then what do you want, fighting for the Irish and their religion, if you ain't Irish yourself?" "Well, now, if you ain't a queer one! I ain't your father and mother Irish and Catholic as well as mine?" "Why, yes, I guess they are, but that is no rule for me. I'm an American born, and, as for religion, I have as much right to choose for myself as any one else. If I were you I wouldn't fight for the name of a country you never saw, or for any religion in particular; just wait till you choose one for yourself, as a free-born American ought to do."

So this was the precocious "native" who sat next to our friend, Harry, on the morning of the fight. Talking was, of course, forbidden, but the two boys exchanged significant glances, and Hugh put his finger on his own brow, with a comical expression of mock sympathy that brought the blood to Harry's cheek. His sense of humiliation was now lessened by the suppressed titter which ran along the benches, and the furtive looks of derision and contempt meeting him on every side. For a light spirited, sensitive boy like Harry this was bad enough, but the worst of all was yet to come.

"Master Henry Blake!" said Mr. Simpson, from his place behind his desk, "come here. I want to speak with you."

Harry instantly obeyed. "May I ask you come by that patch over your eye-brow?" He knew well enough, but thought it prudent to make a show of ignorance.

"It was Sam Herrick, sir, that gave me a blow of a stick." "Master Herrick—come here, sir!" Master Herrick went accordingly.

and his tones were so mellifluous, so full of unctious, that no angry passion could have withstood it.

"My good boys," said he, "you are both wrong—yes, both wrong—in the school-room, and in the vicinity of the school-room, religion is a forbidden theme; in fact, it is always wrong, and everywhere wrong, for boys to quarrel about religion, as religion is only for men—full grown men. At your age, religion is wholly unnecessary—it will be time enough for each of you to take your stand on that question when you have come to the age of maturity. The Great Creator of all things left man to his own free will, in order that he might choose a religion for himself, but he is not in a condition to choose until he reaches man's estate. Behold now, my dear pupils, how silly a thing it is to fight about religion, before you can know what religion really is. Samuel Herrick, go to your seat, and I trust I shall never again hear of you inveighing against any form of worship. Even the Roman Church, though corrupt and far behind the age, has still some grains of the Gospel seed. She is not wholly idolatrous, I believe, but still professes to worship the true God. Those who belong to her communion, my dear Master Herrick, are rather to be pitied than condemned. I beg, therefore, that, for the future, you will never again take upon you to fight for a thing which you do not understand." Her

which you do not understand." Herick made his bow, and retired to his seat; but Harry felt so indignant that he could not refrain from saying, "Sir, my religion is the best; I don't care what any one says, and I'll stand up for it as long as I'm able." Another titter from the boys.

"Your religion, Master Blake?" said Mr. Simpson, mildly. "I don't understand you having religion; and you say you must keep it to yourself; no religion is best or worst here, for we have nothing to do with any."

"But, sir, you spoke against my religion," persisted Harry, "and it ain't fair—you didn't say anything bad about Sam Herrick's, and mine's better than his any day."

"And do you not see the reason, my good boy?" said Simpson, in his blandest tone, "I said nothing about Sam Herrick's religion, because he does not profess to have any."

"No!" said Sam manfully, from his seat, "I ain't got any."

"There, you see," resumed the master, "you are almost the only boy in the school who makes a fuss about religion, and as you thereby act contrary to the spirit, I will, in order to regulate you, and to give you, once for all, are all on the same footing—at home with your parents, you may, of course, be whatever you like, whatever they wish you to be; but here, mark me, you have only to mind your lessons—leave religion out of doors. See, there is your neighbor, Master Dillon; his parents are, I believe, attached to the Romish superstition—I beg pardon, yet he is as orderly and well-conducted as any boy in the school. You never hear him brawling or fighting about religion. In the words of the sacred text, I tell you, my dear young friend, 'go thou and do likewise.'" Mr. Trimble (to his assistant), call up the first class for mathematics."

So Harry had to take his place in the first class for mathematics, and soon forgot his honest indignation in the all-important struggle to keep his place, and get a higher one, if possible.

Leaving Harry intent on his parallel-grams and conic sections, let us just step into St. Peter's school, to see how the young Flanagans are "getting on" under the tuition of their old-fashioned Catholic teacher, Mr. Lanigan.

Mr. Lanigan, in manner, and, unlike our acquaintance of the Ward school, his ordinary habits were rather shabby, for, so long as Mr. Lanigan could make a respectable appearance on Sunday in his pew in St. Peter's, he cared little about dress on week days, when nobody saw him but the boys.

Like most Catholic teachers of the stamp, worthy Mr. Lanigan was far more anxious for the improvement of his pupils than his own personal adornment, and, if truth must be told, he was more akin to Dominic Sampson than to the polished, well-dressed, unctious, Mr. Simpson, the beau-ideal of district-school teachers. The boys were all afraid of Mr. Lanigan, for he held them in strict subjection, and was a sort of autocrat in his way. He was as much afraid of the boys as they were of him, and in his pupils were not as thoroughly Irish as himself; it was not his fault, as he used to say, but their own and their parents. "For I maintain" he would add "that if the parents took pains to keep the traditions of our race constantly before their children, we should have little reason to complain of the demoralization of our youth, and the loss of a tight rein on them when they begin to grow up, and my name is Jeremiah Lanigan if you don't have them as Catholic as your heart could wish. That's my doctrine, sir, founded on the experience of five and twenty years' teaching. It is not for nothing that I have been all that time teaching the young idea how to shoot." Believe me there is a world of truth in the simple old lines:

"'Tis education forms the common mind, Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined; and that is precisely the axiom on which I go in my management of the boys. I endeavor, sir, to bend the twig while it is a twig, for when it grows up to be a great, strong, sturdy oak, it would take a stronger arm than mine, ay! even the omnipotent arm of God, to bring it into subjection!"

Such were the opinions of Mr. Lanigan, somewhat antiquated, I must confess, at least in this go-ahead country of ours; but they were based on good, sound Catholic doctrine, and will never go out of fashion while there are on the earth true believers, who regard "man's fallen state" as something more than a speculation.

most of the boys already assembled, and Mr. Lanigan seated at his desk, willing away the remaining quarter of an hour looking over a copy of the Dublin Freeman's journal which he had received "from home" by the last mail. Leaving his brothers to go to their respective seats, Edward Flanagan approached the old gentleman, who was far too deeply engaged to notice him. He was just in the middle, as he afterwards admitted, of a great speech of O'Connell's, and as Edward was too modest to interrupt him, there is no knowing how long he might have stood, had not the school-bell just then rang, whereupon Mr. Lanigan dropped his paper, for he was the life and soul of punctuality.

"To your places, boys, and prepare your lessons. Well, Ned, my fine fellow, what's the matter with you?" "My father wants you, sir, to come down a while this evening to our house, he has something to tell you, and he says, if you please, sir, to bring the Irish paper with you; he heard you got one yesterday."

"Yes, Ned, I did; tell your father I'll go if I can at all. How are all at home this morning?" "All well, sir, thank you."

"Well, go to your seat now—I'll call up the grammar class in a few minutes. Then raising his voice, and laying down his spectacles on the desk: "Boys, if you all get through your lessons to my satisfaction this forenoon, I have a great secret to tell you, and one that I know you'll be glad to hear."

The boys all brightened up; some of the younger clasped their hands and laughed, while a few of the seniors ventured to say, in a coaxing tone: "Ah, Mr. Lanigan, what you tell us now?" "Do, if you please, sir, and we'll work twice as hard after, if it's any good news."

"No, no; go on with your lessons—you'll have it before you. Mind, it all depends on how you acquit yourselves of your duties."

Matters went on, it would seem, as well as ever Mr. Lanigan was wont to do, for no sooner had the last of the forenoon lessons been recited, than the old gentleman stood up, and placing his right hand on the desk, said: "Boys, do you know what day to-morrow will be?"

Several voices answered, "No, sir!" but the greater number called out: "Patrick's Day." "Saint Patrick's day!" said Mr. Lanigan gravely.

"Yes, sir, St. Patrick's day, sir!" "Well, as you have all been good boys during the afternoon, I propose giving you a holiday to-morrow, in honor of our illustrious patron. That is, on condition that you will go to Mass, there will be high Mass in St. Peter's, at 10 o'clock, and then you can all go to see the procession afterwards."

"Oh! thank you, Mr. Lanigan—I thank you most kindly, sir!—Yes, sir, to be sure we'll all go to Mass, sir!" were the glad responses from every part of the room, and as the boys, large and small, threw up their caps, and shouted in the exuberance of their hearts, Mr. Lanigan laughed too, and felt as if he, also, could throw up his hat, in the fulness of his sympathy.

"There, now," said he, "that is all very well here, now that the school is out but remember to keep quiet when you go on the street. Act like good Christian boys, remembering that you are all the sons of St. Patrick; don't disgrace him by any bad, rude conduct."

"Oh! I never fear, sir, never fear!" was the quick response, and away went the boys to their several homes, to communicate the glad tidings. Very few of the youngsters forgot the old man's injunction to go home quietly, and if any of the lesser ones did seem disposed to forget it, some older one would call him to order with, "Hold on, there, Patrick," or "Michael" (or whatever the name might be) "didn't we all promise Mr. Lanigan to go home quietly, and not giving us the holiday, to-morrow. How do you know but it's looking after us he is?"

And so he was looking after them, exulting in the happiness he had himself created, and thinking, as N. P. Willis has since written:

"I love to look on a scene like this, Of wild and careless play; And to persuade myself that I am not old, And my locks are not yet grey. For it sits the hood in an old man's veins, And in his pupils' eyes. To catch the thrill of a happy voice, And the light of a mirthful eye. And is it possible," said he to himself, with a heavy sigh, "that half a century is gone by since I was like them? What a strange thing is this life of ours, and how imperceptible the transition from youth to age! Well! it is a melancholy thing to feel ourselves growing old, yet, thanks to our divine faith, we are still on the same level. Here am I, an old man of sixty, red, sir, when your boys are young, and looking forward to the celebration of St. Patrick's Day with as much eagerness as I did forty years ago. Blessings on his name, but it has the magical power on our Irish hearts!"

wind up her ball of yarn, ravelled by a mischievous kitten, who was gambolling about the room.

The boys got into a corner, rather behind Mr. Lanigan's chair. "If he was after giving Susan one of his 'dressings,' whispered Edward to his brothers, "I guess she wouldn't take to him so!"

"I guess not," said Thomas, "but then he never gives 'a dressing' to any one that don't deserve it. None of us has ever had one yet."

"And I hope we'll be so," responded Ned; "hush! hush! he'll hear you. Listen to what father and he are saying."

"Well, I'm heart sorry for Miles," observed Tim, "but, after all, Mr. Lanigan, it's his own fault, sir. If he's sending his children head foremost into the pit with his eyes open, he has nobody to blame but himself. Even his wife—she's my born sister, sir—is as much against the thing as I am, only she doesn't like, you see, to interfere between him and the young ones. For my part, I think the man's bewitched."

"Bewitched!" said Mr. Lanigan, laughing, "yes, he is bewitched by the spirit of worldly wisdom. He thinks, in common with many others, that the temporal interest of his children is best promoted by sending them to Protestant or mixed schools. The poor man is welcome to his own opinion. Time will show him its fallacy, better than any human reasoning."

"God grant that the knowledge may not come too late!" said Mrs. Flanagan, with a heavy sigh. "Poor Harry, poor Eliza! may the holy Mother of God protect them!"

"Can Father Power do nothing with Miles?" inquired Mr. Lanigan. "Surely he wouldn't stand against his advice?"

"Well, I don't know as to that, sir," said Tim hesitatingly. "I have heard Father Power reasoning cases with him, and he'd always manage to get out of some loop-hole or another. Of course, his reverence never laid his commands on him, for he doesn't like to go so far if he can help it, but he said enough to make him ashamed of himself, if he had any shame in him. Nelly, you didn't ask Mr. Lanigan if he'd take a glass of punch. You'll be the better of something to warm you, sir, the night is cold and raw."

"Well, I don't care if I do avail myself of your kind offer. I'll take a little gin and water, if you please, Mrs. Flanagan, just to 'drown my shamrock' for to-morrow. You'll walk, of course, Mr. Flanagan?"

"Oh, then, to be sure I will! It would be a bad day if I didn't. You know I belong to the old Hibernian. Here's your health, Mr. Lanigan—may you live to see many returns of the great anniversary!"

"Many thanks to you, Mr. Flanagan! I wish you the same! and allow me to add another good wish: may you never have a son a worse Catholic or a worse Irishman than yourself!—Don't you take anything yourself, Mrs. Flanagan?"

"No, sir, thank you, I never take anything stronger than tea or coffee. Children, I think it's time for you to go to bed. Mr. Lanigan 'good night'!" The children obeyed, and after some further conversation on indifferent topics, Mr. Lanigan returned to his home, his head full of the approaching festival.

"TO BE CONTINUED."

the time the baby was found; maybe the one who found her could be better to her than her poor, sick mother, who could not work to support her. And when—

"I remember the very day," broke in the second speaker. "Old Bailey had been on a terrible bender; had been sober for a week and was sleeping it off here. Nobody thought much of Old Bailey then days. We didn't call him King Fisher then, I'm here to tell you. He wasn't aristocratic enough to own a houseboat, although I guess he had seen better days, for when he was sober he could tell about places he had been and wind off stories a yard long that he'd read out of 'books.'"

"And when, as I was telling' ye," said the third voice again, "when he found her just took that day for her birthday. The gal's happy."

"And," said the second voice, "it's been ten years, and King Fisher hasn't touched a drop of liquor since that little brat toddled over to where he was asleep and asleep—kept pullin' his hair and patten' his face, sayin' in her baby way, 'Det up, det up!' until the old man did get up and come to himself just to find he was owner o' a baby with no place to keep it. But he kept it, he did. He's stubborn as a mule, and when I told him to put it in an orphan asylum he looked at me like thunder and told me to mind my own business. So I let him dead-end me ever since, though I ain't got nuthin' agin him."

"An' kept her well, too," continued the third voice again. "I'd like to know what he'll bring her. She's powerful on books an' readin' an' pictures ever since he sent her to school in the city, an' she has mighty purty ways for havin' no mother. An' as to the housekeepin', them two rooms look like parlors. Old Bailey has learned her now, and she can fry fish and make coffee good as anybody."

"Hey! Here, you fellows! What's the matter with that line out there? Pulls like a sea monster, by jing!"

And all eyes were turned toward the dancing line, and the King Fisher and his adopted daughter were forgotten. Shortly before the noon hour a young girl appeared at the door of the houseboat and looked eagerly and thoughtfully toward the busy city. Not seeing the object of her search, she went in, and in a few minutes re-appeared wearing a muslin hat half shielding her olive-brown face from the sun's glare. Dark eyes glanced again along the pier, then turning, she went to the aft of the boat and proceeded to feed and water some chickens that were kept in an enclosure.

"Poco, you're greedy; let Biddy have a little," to the great yellow rooster as he helped himself somewhat too liberally to the rations to suit his young mistress. "Daddy will put you in a pen by yourself if you don't be careful. Be good and I'll tell you a secret. Now, listen. I baked a cake—my own birthday cake—and daddy doesn't know it. Won't he be surprised when he comes from market? And there are twelve red candy drops on it, for I am twelve years old, and I'll soon be a woman. Daddy says I am getting big too fast, but he has gone to get me a present and we are going to have a celebration."

She didn't finish her tale to the chickens, for a stout man with a smooth sun tanned, wind-browned face and blue eyes was coming down the steps from the pier, carrying a wonderful parcel. "Daddy! daddy!" cried the girl running to him, throwing her arms around his neck and giving him two resounding smacks.

"Easy, easy, my cherub, or you'll snap the boat rope, upset the Ark and give us a ducking. I'll untie this in a minute; better lay it on your bed. I reckon, where it will be safe. I'll have a look at it and then I'll tell you its story."

Very carefully were the outside wrappings removed, showing a long green cloth bag.

"Oh, daddy! a mandolin!" cried Dot excitedly, and dancing around for joy.

"No, guess again, my cherub, my child." Dot clenched her hands as the cover came off the snapping of a fastening disclosed to view a fine old violin. Tenderly as he had handled Dot in her baby days, did the old man lift it from the case and bend lovingly over it as he drew the bow across the strings and the old air of "Sweet Alice Ben Bolt" floated through the little boat-house and over the water. Dot sat transfixed, unable to speak, delirious in the future that in that moment she had mapped out before her. She pictured herself a great musician who could tell again in concert halls, through speaking strings, the song of the waves she knew so well. Daddy could teach her. But how did daddy know? Again she became conscious of her surroundings, and there was daddy, who seemed to have forgotten her, playing on and on, with a mist in his eyes.

"Stop! stop daddy! I cannot bear it. You make me cry." He laid down the violin and took a sobbing child in his arms. They were quiet for a while and then the rebounding nature in youth spoke out. "Oh, thank you! I thank you! And I shall be a great player and make money for us both; and you can teach me—but, daddy, how did you know?" "How did I know?" said the King Fisher, reflectively. "Well, I played that was before things went wrong, cherub; things I don't even now care to tell you, though you might know. So I threw up the sponge, as they say, and drifted up here; went to the bad generally until I felt your tiny arms around my neck one day, as I have told you. But you anchored me, Dot, and I've tried to be good to you. It ain't much I've done. I want you to live better, to be educated, and live as you deserve to live. Music will aid you and you love it. So I decided to buy back the old violin I had pawned once with the promise that the man would not sell it without giving me notice. She's a fine one, and I have saved little by little until I could bring her to my cherub as the best gift I had to offer. If the season is good and I an lucky you can take lessons this winter from a professor in the

city, and the can do. But woff. Let's we will play these arms a for finer fol slip into so when that passed a mon—'when the know your man's life, m

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