

Family Reading.

PATSY AND THE SQUIRE.

Patsy O'Blane was a poor ragged boy, living on a wild Irish moor. He folded the sheep, stacked the peat, and dug the potatoes, without hat or shoes, for he owned neither. He also cooked the food, and swept the clay floor, while his father herded the cattle of the squire, who owned all the lands and cottages around them. Theirs was a poor dwelling, with its one only window, and with the thatch falling from the roof; but it was *home*, and therefore dear to them.

Dan O'Blane owned one book, the Bible, which he and little Patsy dearly loved, for it had raised them from the dust to be 'kings and priests unto God.'

One evening, as Patsy sat at the door, with his pet lamb at his side, and his Bible on his knee, awaiting the return of his father, he heard the loud voice of the blunt but good-natured squire.

'Pat, my boy,' he shouted, 'leave that great book for priests and bishops to read, and go hunting with O'Rooke's boys.'

'Please, yer honour,' said Patsy, 'I'm forbid o' my father to go wid them same at all, for they takes the name o' God in vain.'

'But you can go hunting with them without swearing,' said the gentleman.

'Ah, sir, I know it's not easy to go into the fire without being burned,' replied the boy.

'Well my good fellow what do you find in that great book? With all my learning, I don't understand half of it,' said the squire.

'And now, yer honour, doesn't yer own word show how thrue this book is?' asked Pat; for it says, "He hath hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes?" There's ye, sir, as rich as the king, and as wise as a bishop, ye aren't *sure* that it's God's word at all; and here's us, as poor as my lamb Betty, and not much wiser, we belaves every word o' it, and takes it into our heart, and makes it our mate and our drink. So, after all, begging yer pardon, we is richer nor ye. Only last night, when ye and yer company was feasting and singing at the Hall, father said he was amazed at the grace of God that made him and ye to differ. This poor cabin was a little heaven, sir, yesterday, when some o' the poor people left the foolish mass to hear father read how Jesus came to preach the Gospel to the poor, and to open heaven to them.'

'Don't you think Dan would change places with me, boy, soul and body?' asked the squire, smiling.

'What, sir, sell heaven, where mother and the baby is, and give up Christ? Och, no, sir; ye haven't gold enough to buy the new heart out o' Dan O'Blane,' answered the boy, folding the Bible to his breast.

'How can these things be!' exclaimed the squire.

'Ye mind me, yer honour, o' the ruler o' the Jews, who crept to Jesus like a thafe by night. He too asked, "How can these things be?" when Jesus told him, "Ye must be born again,"' said Patsy.

'How can you prove, boy, that a man is *born again*, as you call the change you talk about?' asked the squire.

'Jesus didn't try to prove it to the ruler, sir, nor will I to ye. If ye see a man walking on the highway, ye don't bid him stop and prove to ye that he was ever born, for ye knows he was, or he would'nt be there alive,' replied Patsy. 'So when ye see one like father, once dead insin, now alive and walking in the road to heaven, you may know he's born again widout him proving it to ye, sir.'

The scoffer's smile faded from the lip of the gentleman, as he stood before this poor child, who evidently pitied him. 'Pat,' he said, 'there was a time when I wanted this same faith myself. I had nothing to ask for *here*, but I knew I could not carry my treasures to eternity; so I wanted something beyond. I asked God for this new heart, and He didn't hear my prayer, as your father said He would.'

'Och, sir, but ye asked amiss—all from selfishness! Ye war rich now, and wanted to be so for ever. But ye warn't rich at heart, because ye had sinned