

THE BLAKES AND FLANAGANS.

BY MRS. JAS. A. SADLER. CHAPTER XIX. THE DOUBLE ORDINATION - A HAPPY DEATH - AN UNREASONABLE VISIT.

It was a bright, balmy day, about the end of April, a few weeks after the dinner party at Henry Blake's. There was another joyous communion in Tim Flanagan's household, and from early morning the whole family was up and stirring. Even Susan got out of bed about 8 o'clock, and was supported down stairs to the family dining room, though, to say the truth, she looked as if the effort was almost beyond her strength. All the family were present, including Edward, Margaret, and Mr. O'Callahan, and when Susan entered, leaning on John's arm, and followed by closing eyes, every one had a word of congratulation, and a smile of kindly welcome for the poor invalid.

"Now, Susie!" cried Edward, when she was seated at her mother's right hand in an easy-chair; "now, you see, the Ides of March are come—what have you to say for yourself, that we do not convict you as a false prophetess?" "Why, just this, Edward," said Susie, with unwonted cheerfulness, "that I am very happy to plead guilty to the charge. I am truly thankful to God and to my sweet Mother Mary that I am spared to see your Ides of March—or rather April!" she added, with a touch of her former gaiety. "Does Thomas know that I shall be present, sir?" turning to her father.

"Yes, my child, I sent him word by John yesterday morning." "So much the better, father—now, mother dear, you shall see what a breakfast I can make." Her mother smiled, and said she hoped to see her make a good breakfast, so as to strengthen her for the approaching ceremony, which must necessarily be a long one. They were still sitting at table when Dan Sheridan and his wife, with their son and daughter, made their appearance.

"Why, then, what in the world are you about here?" cried Dan, ordering; "I thought you'd all be ready to start before now." "Just listen to him," said his wife from behind, "lecturing others, and upon my credit, Tim, I had to keep at him hard and fast to have himself out so early." "What wonder," said Mike, "when we had Mrs. Reilly at breakfast? Don't be too hard on my father, mother dear. I'm sure you wouldn't have him close his eyes against Mrs. Reilly's reminiscences—especially on a day like this, when we're all in such high spirits!"

"What are you at now, Mike?" inquired Mrs. Reilly, coming in by another door. "I thought I heard you saying something about me. I suppose you're cracking a joke at poor Sally's expense." Mike denied the charge with a look of such comical gravity that it made the youngsters all laughing. "No, indeed, Sally dear!" said Tim, "he was only telling us how you passed the time for this morning with your doll stories. He says he nearly split his sides laughing at you." "He needn't say any such thing," replied Mrs. Reilly, with solemn gravity, "for there was nothing laughable in what I told them. I was only just telling them about the ordination of my poor uncle, Father Flynn. God be merciful to his soul! That was a great sight all out!" and she wiped away a retrospective tear.

"Why, did you see it, then?" demanded Tim, with a sly glance at his listeners. "Oh! of course I didn't see it," said Mrs. Reilly, so intent on her own recollections that she never noticed the catch in Tim's words. "But I didn't see it, others did, and they say it was a grand affair, sure enough. But, Lord bless me, Susie dear! is that you?" said the kind-hearted creature, forgetting her proud remembrances in the joy of seeing Susan looking so well.

"Why, then, indeed, I'm glad to see you here this morning! I didn't feel altogether well myself, but I couldn't miss the chance of seeing Peter and Thomas ordained. God bless them both; I hope they'll be a credit to us all!" Tom Reilly now made his appearance from the front parlor, where he and Mike had been consulting on a matter of some moment—at least to one of us, added Tom, significantly. "I see your ears are all open for a secret, but get ready now as fast as you can, for you see it's getting near the hour," pointing to handsome French time-piece on the mantel-shelf.

A few minutes more and the whole party were walking up the grand aisle of St. Patrick's cathedral, where the ordination was to take place. They all placed themselves in a conspicuous position, as near the sanctuary as they could, and great was their joy when they saw Thomas and Peter both glance towards them before the ceremony began. Two other young men received Holy Orders at the same time. Tears were coursing each other down the cheeks of the mothers and sisters of the young ecclesiastics, and even the sterner nature of Tim and Daniel was softened for the moment to woman's tenderness, as they all united in fervent prayer for those dear ones who were entering on so holy a station. It was the summit of earthly joy to the fathers and mothers, and the inward feeling of their hearts was like that of the devout Simeon, permitted to assist at the presentation: "Now, O Lord, I permit Thy servant to depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

of the church and the altar and Him Who abides there as on a throne. I felt sad for a moment, as I thought of all the happy hours I spent there in sweet communion with my God; but it is past now. I shall soon see Him in the full assembly of the saints—with his gracious assistance." Next morning our two young priests said their first Mass for their respective parents, the two families being again present, with the exception of Susan, who, fatigued after the exertion of the previous day, was unable to leave her bed. In the course of the afternoon she had the happiness of seeing Thomas, who cheered her with a promise that he would say Mass for her next morning.

"And I, too," said Peter, who was also present. "Thank God we have it in our power to do that much for you, dear Susan." "And that is just what I have been wishing and praying for ever since I saw where my illness was to end. It is so encouraging to think that my own brother, the Holy Sacrifice on my behalf when I am called to the other world. Ah! yes, God is indeed good to me!"

Tim then entered the room, and his son said: "How happy we were yesterday morning to see you all present. But I was sorry to find that none of my Aunt Blake's family were there. How did that happen?" "Oh! that was nothing strange if you are mistaken, my dear father," returned his father. "They have no great taste for such things." "But, perhaps, you did not send them word, father?" "Yes, but I did, Thomas; I apprised the old people myself, and sent John to tell Henry. The same Henry is going on at a rate on the broad road. He has no more religion in him than that bubble."

"I hope you are mistaken, my dear father," said the young priest, with real concern. "I must go and see Henry some of these days, and have a talk with him. Things may not be quite so bad as your friendly fears lead you to believe." "Well! you'll see. I wish I had a better story to tell, for he knows, I once loved Harry Blake as if he were my own child; but he won't let me love him now, do as I will. But what do you think of Susan, Mr. Sheridan? Bless my soul!" he added, in a soliloquizing tone; "isn't it strange to think that little Peter Sheridan and our Tom are both of them priests—sure enough, it seems like a dream!"

Mr. Sheridan laughed, as he replied: "Very true, Mr. Flanagan. It seems barely possible that two such little urethras have become reverent persons. God grant us grace," he added, with sudden recollection, "to edify the faithful by our holy lives! If we are ministers of God to-day, my dear sir, we owe it, under God, to the Christian foundation laid in our early years by our good parents and the teachers they provided for us. But you asked me, sir, what I thought of Susan. I find her doing well." He and Thomas exchanged looks which did not escape the priest.

"I understand you, Mr. Sheridan!" said she, with a cheerful smile. "You think I shall soon be ready for my journey. So I think myself. Now, Thomas, I want you, before you go home, to call upon dear Sister Magdalen, and my own sweet Sister Mary Teresa. Oh! how that name makes my heart throb! It was she who prepared me for my First Communion and for confirmation. They promised to be here, if possible, when I am setting out on my long journey. Tell them to come to see me to-morrow evening, if they can at all, for I do want to see them again, and I might be disappointed after all. They will be very glad to see you both, for they always loved Ellice and me and Annie Sheridan—dear Annie Sheridan! I hear she is to be married soon to Mr. O'Callahan's nephew, Lawrence Daly. May God bless her and him, and may they be blessed, for they are both good and pious!"

Tim had walked to the window to conceal his emotion, and Peter whispered his friend that he feared Susan was talking too much. "She looks quite faint," said he; "I think we had better call your mother and leave her in her hands." The two friends were not long gone when Dr. Power came in. He had not Susan for some days, and was hardly prepared to see her so much changed. He thought it advisable to administer the last sacraments without delay, promising to bring the Holy Viaticum next morning. "And now good-bye, Susan," said he. "I do not bid you keep up your heart, for I think you have no need of encouragement. You have fought the good fight, my child, and are rather to be envied than pitied, for being called so soon to receive your reward. It is these," he added, turning to her now weeping parents; "it is these whom I pity most. And yet, my dear friends, yours is, after all, an enviable lot. Think of the death of Hugh Dillon and others of your young acquaintances, and you will see that God is good to you. Your dear Susan is indeed going to leave you, but you may reasonably hope that she is going to the better land; there to await your coming. Rejoice in the Lord, my friends, for that He gave you grace to bring up your children for places in the everlasting mansions! And you, Ellen, your sister's early and I trust, will be happy death encourage you to persevere in the way of holiness, that you may be re-united again in the world of spirits!" So saying, he left the room, leaving behind him an indescribable feeling of tranquil resignation.

Next morning Susan received the Blessed Sacrament, for the last time, and about 9 o'clock in the afternoon she passed from this world to the next. Her last moments were of the most exquisite happiness; her mother held one hand, and Sister Mary Teresa the other, while Sister Magdalen held the crucifix before her glazing eyes, so that her last glance fell upon it. All the family knelt around in fervent prayer, and the prayers for the dying were read by Thomas. Susan had taken leave of every one, and received the last blessing of her father and mother at her own request. It was a beautiful

sight to see the tranquil and happy death of that fair young girl surrounded by loving hearts and tearful eyes, and fervent supplicants petitioning God on her behalf. She was passed away from earth in the freshness and beauty of her youth, and there was no horror, nothing painful in the transition. The sufferings of long months, borne with pious resignation to the Divine Will, had gradually detached the soul from the world, and exhausted the strength of the body, so that Susan's death was almost imperceptible. Some one made made a sign with her hand for all to be still. The next moment she laid the crucifix on the table; she and Sister Mary Teresa exchanged glances, and the latter, stooping down, kissed the marble like brow of the sleeper, and proceeded at once to close her mouth and eyes. This was the signal for the long pent-up floods of grief to burst forth, and from every corner of the room there arose a low, wailing cry. But the two nuns and the young priest, raising their voices above the rest, said: "Why should we weep for such a death? Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord!"

Then Thomas led his father and mother from the room, and, waiting in the parlor, they found Henry Blake. He was paler than usual, and a tear was in his eye as he took his uncle's hand, and kissed his cheek, and pressed them to his own. "I'm sorry for you both—indeed, I am!" he said; "she was a sweet girl!" "None too sweet for heaven, Henry!" observed Thomas. "True, cousin, most true," said Henry, with visible emotion. "What a happy death was hers!"

"Yes, unutterably happy—but did you see—I mean were you present?" "I was. I heard this afternoon, just about an hour ago, that poor Susan was not expected to live over the night, so I came here at once, and made my way to the room where you were all assembled round her bed. After all, there is something in religion; those nuns looked like angels on either side of the bed. Indeed, the whole scene was un-speakably solemn and beautiful."

"God bless you, Harry! God bless you!" said his uncle, addressing him, for the first time in many years, by the familiar name of his boyhood. "If Susie's death is of any benefit to your soul, in the way of exciting wholesome reflection, I for one would be well content. That is what we have all to go through one day or another, and if we forget it, so much the worse for us!" Mrs. Flanagan said nothing. Her only feeling for the moment was one of desolation; her child was dead, and, like Rachel, she would not be comforted. She hardly noticed Henry, but silently took her son's offered arm, and moved with a heavy heart and a heavy step to her chamber, where she might weep in solitude and silence, and offer up her prayers for the beloved dead.

Mr. and Mrs. Blake soon after came in, and Henry took his departure, saying that he would come back with Jane in the course of the evening. All that day and the next Henry was a sadder and a wiser man, but, as formerly on the occasion of Hugh Dillon's dread death, the impression gradually wore away, and after a while he used to laugh at his own "softness," as he called it, and he would not thank any one who reminded him of his having likened the nuns to angels. Henry had no idea of passing for a devotee, and so the salutary impression made on his mind by Susan's death, was speedily followed by a strong reaction that made him less of a devotee than he ever was, and that was very little at the very best.

About a fortnight after Susan's death, Mrs. Blake went to an early Mass one Sunday morning, and went to see her daughter during the time of High Mass. The truth was, she wanted to find out whether Eliza still went to Mass at all, having had reason to fear that she neglected even that solemn obligation. She was agreeably surprised, then, when the servant told her Mrs. Thomson was gone to church.

"Very good, Mary, very good; and what church is she gone to?" "Oh! then, indeed, ma'am, she's gone with the master to his church—whatever church that is. She didn't feel very well this morning, and so he persuaded her to go with him, because his church was a great deal nearer than her own. To tell you the truth, ma'am," added the warm-hearted Irish girl, the mistress didn't say much against him. You'd just know by her that she only wanted to be coaxed. I'm afraid it's a bad business, ma'am. I was out at 6 o'clock mass this morning, thanks be to God, and when I came in it's what she scolded me for going out so early. "You'll not be able to keep your eyes open all day," says she to me, "and here we are to have all the Thomson family to dinner. You should have slept an hour longer, when you were up so late last night." "Why, ma'am," says I to her, "if I didn't get up and go to 6 o'clock Mass, I couldn't get out at all." "Even so," says she, "what great harm would it be to miss Mass for one day?" "It would be that much harm, ma'am," say I, for myself was nettled at her; "it would do that much harm, that I wouldn't do it for all you're mistress of. No, ma'am! I know I am foolish and a little ignorant in some things, but I'll get Father Power, or some other father, to give you—a leather medal!"

Eliza laughed, and slapped him on the shoulder with her fan, and said, "I think you deserve a leather medal for your rare success in the art of mimicking. What would ma say if she heard you—or pa, either?" "Why, I suppose the old Milesian blood would take fire, and, perhaps, explode. I'll take good care they don't either of them hear me. I know the Irish too well for that. They are like certain animals I could mention—stroke them, and they will do anything, but once cross them, and the game is up." "You seem to forget that I have some of the same Milesian blood in my

what I didn't expect from you." "Well, ma'am, I'm sorry to offend you, but I only told you God's truth, so you needn't take it ill. Humph! she added, by way of soliloquy, as she descended the kitchen stairs; "Humph! I suspect it's partly your own fault, and that's what makes you feel so bad about it. Nobody ever turns out like that, unless they were brought up without any religion. Ignorant as I am in other things, I'll be bound to know my religion better than mislead some of our fine ladies'! Humph! indeed!—to do it I'll pitch such latin!—what use is it if it doesn't show us the way to heaven?" and Mary took up the poker and gave her firm such a stirring up that it "wondered what ailed it," as she said herself. Perhaps there was some vague connection in her mind between it and the "fine latin" which she had been apostrophizing so affectionately.

Mrs. Thomson was quite surprised, and it would seem very agreeably so, on finding her mother in possession of the parlor. "Why, dear me, ma," throwing herself gracefully on the sofa, with her bonnet dangling by its ties from her hand; "dear me! who would ever think of you being here so early. Zachary, do ring the bell. I wonder what he's doing about it. I want her to take my things up stairs. How tiresome these Irish servants are!" The bell was rung, Mary appeared, and "the things" were sent up stairs. "Just came to see how you were this morning," said the mother, trying to keep down her anger, "but I see I might have saved myself the trouble; if you were at church, I perceive—it was it you were?"

Zachary laughed, and took the word out of Eliza's mouth. "Oh! yes, Mrs. Blake!" he said at Mr. Tomkin's mass with me. Dr. Power's Mass was too far off, so I prevailed on dear Eliza to come with me. We had a capital time of it, I assure you, that old Tomkin is such a queer customer. He has got such droll notions of his own. You must come some day and hear him."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Blake, drily, "I'd rather not, Eliza, who did you get to go to Mass to-day?" "Why, really mother, I didn't feel able to go—it is such a long walk," said Eliza, with listless indifference. "Then, why didn't you stay at home?" was the next question. "Oh! ma, that would never do! one feels that it is only proper to go to Church on the Sabbath-day to worship God. And then Zachary wished me to go with him—he says he can pray far better when I am by his side. Didn't you say so, Zachary?"

"Well! as to that, my love," replied Zachary, with his light-hearted laugh, "I never do pray much at any time—that's a fact, but I certainly feel better in church or out of church when you are with me." Eliza rewarded this speech by a look of exquisite tenderness. Zachary felt encouraged to proceed. "Now, my good and most-respected mother-in-law, you must not be too hard on Eliza. You see she is not very strong just now, and you ought to remember that you were often in poor health yourself."

"I was never in such poor health that I'd willingly miss Mass when I was able to go out at all." "Yes, but times are changed, my dear madam—that was in Ireland, you know, and all that sort of thing was quite the fashion there. It is altogether different here!" He then left the room to look for a certain newspaper he wanted, and Mrs. Blake began to reason with her daughter. At first she could make little or no impression; but, after a while, Eliza was brought to confess that she knew it was wrong to stay from Mass—

"Or to go to any heretical place of worship," interrupted her mother. "Yes, ma'am, as to that, I cannot see what great harm it does one to go now and then to a Protestant Church with one's husband. However, I shall try to go to Mass for the time to come—when-ever I feel able."

With this promise her mother was fain to appear satisfied, and the matter rested for that time. Mrs. Blake found out that it was time she was at home, and told Eliza she would expect Zachary and her in the afternoon. "You must spend the evening with us," said she, "for we are so lonely sometimes that we hardly know what to do with ourselves." "In that case, you must bring pa here, ma," said Eliza. "For Henry and Jane promised to take tea with us, so you see we can't go." "Are the Pearsons coming?" "Yes, ma, I rather think so." "Well, you'll have enough without us, Eliza, so we'll go to Tim's. We're always welcome there, no matter what company they have. Thank God, we have one door open." "Why, ma, how you do talk—I'm sure you're always welcome here, too." "Oh! to be sure we are. We know that very well," said Mrs. Blake, with a smile of doubtful meaning brightening her still handsome face. "Goodbye, Eliza, dear; don't forget your promise."

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said: "If you are not too tired, you might give an old friend a pull on this rope." I recognized the voice, and in less than a moment it took to mention it I was in the boat giving and receiving in return a warm hand clasp, not from a fisherman in the usual sense of the word, but from Father Hoyle, who is known and respected from one end of the peninsula to the other.

Why, Father, what in the world brought you over here? I mistook you for a fisherman." "Young man," he said, "the Prince of Apostles was a fisherman. So also am I; I fish for souls, and it is just for that purpose I am here. My old friend, Father Gardner is sick; he is getting most too old for active duty anyway. He wrote me that if I had a foot under me to come and help him over the holidays. A young man lately from Rome, whom the Bishop is breaking in, will take care of my people while I am away. A passing boat left a message here this morning that a priest was wanted at the old Mansell plantation across the bay. The Mansells were decent people. I said Mass in their house many a time twenty-five years ago. I hear it is sadly altered since. Father Gardner is sick, so I arrived just in time.

All the men of the village are off with the fishing boat over in the lanch; camps otherwise some of them would accompany me. Not that I have any fear, as I am a pretty fair sailor. It is some one to be in the boat with me that I would like. Maybe you would come along?" He looked at me quizzically. I looked out over the threatening waters. He saw my hesitation. "Never mind, my son; I was only joking. Sure I have made many longer trips than this by myself."

"That decided me," I said, "I am with you." "Well, it is not quite to Cuba, so you can compose your face and not look so frightened." I gave a tug at the halyards and said: "Hoist away; I am willing to follow Father Hoyle to Patagonia."

"I thought you wouldn't let me go alone. To tell you the truth, I was very nervous, but the case was not really urgent I would hardly venture to make the trip by myself. It is now 10 o'clock. I hope to reach Mansell's place by sundown. As for this breeze, it is nothing to be afraid of; it will only rush us through that much quicker. I saw the time that I liked nothing better than a day in a boat, and the stiffer the breeze the better; but of late years— Here he paused and looked wistfully out over the bay; looking back, perhaps, to the time when, full of the ardor of youth and zeal for religion, he volunteered for the then wild Florida mission; and, truth to tell, parts of it are little better to-day. He roused himself with a "Well, well! it is childish I am getting. I fear the Bishop will soon be retiring me; though God knows when we are retired in this country it is generally in a wooden box we go."

Poor Sargath! And there are many such among the blistering sands and malarious swamps of the South, and parching plains of the West, toiling along uncomplainingly in the cause of Christ for the souls of men. After hoisting the sail, and examining closely to see that everything was in good condition and working properly, he left me in the boat while he went back to see Father Gardner. When he returned I inferred from his actions and studious avoidance of conversation that he had fetched the Blessed Sacrament.

As he was about to shove off, he paused and said: "Have you still courage enough for the trip, my son? It may be 6 o'clock to-morrow morning by the time we get back here again." I hesitated as I compared my comfortable room at the hotel, and the lazy loiterings about the sleepy little town which I had contemplated, with a day and night spent in an open boat on the treacherous Gulf. Father Hoyle looked at me questioning. I noted his gray hair and spare figure. Surely, I thought, if one so old and seemingly frail can make such a journey I can also. Then, could I refuse the offer of escort to the Sacred Presence that I knew was concealed in the pax, the string of whose case I saw peeping above Father Hoyle's collar? I answered, "I am with you, Father." He smiled in a pleased way; then with a vigorous push, leaping aboard at the same time. In another moment our boat was speeding across the white-capped waters of the bay on its errand of mercy.

The trip had more of excitement than comfort in it. Many times I trembled for our safety, and once, when the deck was almost perpendicular and the low rail under water, I suggested, in a voice whose anxiety I could not conceal, the advisability of shortening sail. Father Hoyle shook his head and replied: "There's some one dying across the bay; we can get there none too soon. I pray God we may arrive in time." It was exactly 4 o'clock when Father Hoyle dropped sail at the mouth of Rattlesnake Bayou, which, from its narrow and tortuous windings, well deserved its name. An hour's pulling and rowing brought us to the Mansell place. An old colored man who all his life had been a faithful son of the Church was dying. Father Hoyle immediately prepared him for the end. After ministering the sacraments he repeated the prayers for the dying. The faithful old black passed away a few minutes later, clasping the crucifix in one hand, and the other held tenderly between the palms of Father Hoyle. When we again reached the mouth of the bayou it was so dark that we could see but a few rods ahead. The roar of the waters rushing up the bay and the wind through the pines, to me, at least, was frightful. That, with the darkness, completely unnerved me. I turned to Father Hoyle and said: "Father, you surely will not attempt to cross the bay to-night?" He looked at the sky, which was overcast, then at me, and replied: "I must go. To-morrow will be Christmas, and people will come for miles along the coast to hear Mass and receive the sacraments. I also promised Father

TO BE CONTINUED.

ONE MIDNIGHT MASS.

I had been sitting for some time in the shelter of a dismantled fishing smack that was lying on the shore, its days of usefulness past, watching an old man who was trimming his boat and making ready for departure. I wondered how one so old could venture alone on the bay in such weather, for quite a gale was blowing. Out beyond the protected harbor the billows rolled and tossed in a most threatening manner. Something in the garb and movements of the old gentleman made me think that I had seen him before, and that he was not an ordinary fisherman, though he went about his work in quite a sailor-like fashion. When his sail was ready for hoisting he gave a tug at the halyards and then, without turning, called me by name and