

THE BLAKES AND FLANAGANS.

BY MRS. JAS. A. SADLER. CHAPTER XVII.

ZACHARY THOMPSON GAINS HIS POINT—REVELATIONS OF A DELICATE NATURE—ELIZA LITTLE TRIALS, AND HOW SHE SURMOUNTED THEM.

Miles Blake and his wife were still smarting with the keen self-reproach following on the death of Henry's first-born, without baptism, when, as if to make the wound still deeper, came Zachary Thomson to propose for Eliza. Now, Miles Blake saw the day, and that not many years before, when he would have received the proposal with something more than satisfaction; but, the events of the last few months had somewhat opened his eyes as to the effects of mixed marriages, and the consequence was that though he still felt honored and flattered by Zachary's offer, yet he shrank from giving his consent. His wife was still more opposed to the match—not that she had any objection to the young man himself, or to his family—far from it, indeed—but, to tell the real truth, she had got such a fright by the death of Henry's child, and was so vexed at the goings-on she saw at the time, that she would sooner see Eliza laid in her grave than have her marry a Protestant. This did not all come out at once, but, Zachary questioned and cross-questioned both husband and wife until he had elicited the whole truth.

"Well now!" said Zachary, laughing, "we've got to the bottom of your soul at last; why did you not frankly give me your reasons at once! I gave you a terrible fright, I give you my honor."

"How is that?" said Miles.

"Why, my dear sir, I was startled by your refusal, for I began to fear that you had, after all, some serious objection, either to myself, my prospects, or my family; but when it is only on a point of religion that you hesitate, there is no trouble in getting over that. I hope you know me well enough to believe me incapable of interfering with Eliza's religion. Pshaw! it is absurd to mention such a thing. Come! my dear father and mother-in-law that are to be, dismiss all these idle, childish fears, from your mind, and give your consent cordially and cheerfully. You know I love Eliza as well, you know you know yourself, Zachary, that she is as bitter against our religion as you are. And I have Eliza's assurance that if you consent she has no objection—indeed, she was good enough to say that she could never love any one else as she loves me. So you see there's no use setting your face against it."

"Jane Pearson was as sweet as sugar till she got married," observed Miles, "and, indeed, for some months after; now you know yourself, Zachary, that she is as bitter against our religion as you are. And I have Eliza's assurance that if you consent she has no objection—indeed, she was good enough to say that she could never love any one else as she loves me. So you see there's no use setting your face against it."

"Why, really," said Zachary with the same merry laugh, "one would suppose, to hear you talk, that the risk was all on one side. Don't you think my religion will be in danger as well as Eliza's? See how my father don't object to my marrying a Catholic. But I know you're not in earnest. I see the smile on your face though you would fain conceal it, if you could. I'll take it for granted that it's all settled—so good morning. Not a word now; I see you're going to apologize. But never mind. I forgive you, especially as your opposition was entered (as we say at the bar) on the score of religion. Ha! ha! religion, indeed! I just as if I'd ever give myself or others any trouble about religion. No fear of me preventing a young one from being baptized; eh, Mr. Blake! no, nor calling it Ebenezzer; my own name is scriptural enough, and Protestant enough, too; but it is not quite so bad as Ebenezzer. Even my father's name is only Samuel."

In this way he rattled on, apparently from his constitutional and habitual levity, but in reality to prevent Mr. and Mrs. Blake from edging in a word of opposition to the match. They, on their part, waited in vain for such an opportunity, and at last they really forgot that they had intended to oppose it, so overpowering was Zachary's confidence, and so successful were his tactics. By the time he stood up to go, he had talked the talked the worthy couple into a drowsy state of half-consciousness, a monosyllabic answer as it were, wherein they answered on his dictation rather than their own previous convictions. When he was gone, they sat for some minutes looking at each other in silence, at first rather gloomily, but gradually their faces relaxed, and they actually laughed out at the remembrance of the scene just gone through.

"Well! Miles," on one side, was answered by "well! Mary," on the other, and they both laughed again.

"So we have given our consent whether we would or not," said Miles; "nobody could get over Zachary—he has such a way with him. After all, maybe things may turn out better than we expect. Zachary's a real good-hearted, old-fashioned fellow, and I'm sure he'll make a good husband. As for religion, we must only try and get Father Power to put Eliza on her guard. The Thomsons are not near so black as the Peasons."

"Bill there's something telling me that we shouldn't let Eliza marry a Protestant," said Mrs. Blake with a thoughtful air; "we've had warning enough to make us wise; but, then, there was no such thing as refusing Zachary. And besides, I know very well Eliza likes him better than any one else. So I suppose we must only leave the matter in the hands of God—what will he, will he?"

Poor Mrs. Blake talked of leaving the result to God, when she was acting against her own religious convictions, and allowing her daughter to walk deliberately into the gulf. God has little to do with marriages like that. They are contracted in direct opposition to the teaching of His Church, and how can they be blessed in their fruits?

Now Zachary was not quite so candid in this memorable interview as his

credulous hearers supposed. Eliza had told him in plain terms that she could not put up with the whims of her pa and ma any longer. When anything went wrong with Henry or Jane, she said, they were sure to revenge it on her. They actually seemed to think that they might treat her just as they "had a mind to" and she was determined to put an end to it one way or the other. In short, she made out such a case in her own favor, and against her parents, that Zachary, who really loved her, felt a chivalrous desire to set her free from the bondage in which she was held by her naughty pa and ma. He had not intended to put the question so soon, but since dear Eliza was so unpleasantly situated, he had no alternative but come and carry her off, and make her mistress of herself and an elegant establishment. But, of course, it would never do to tell the old people that. So Zachary kept his own secret, and found it to his advantage. Eliza's filial disposition were not called in question, and Zachary went on his way rejoicing. To do him justice, he had a sort of liking for the old couple, and was desirous to spare them the pain of knowing what their daughter had said of them.

Mrs. Blake went, according to promise, to ask Dr. Power to give Eliza some advice suitable to the approaching change in her condition. Dr. Power heard all she had to say, then smiled and shook his head.

"If I thought my admonitions would have any good effect," said he, "I should be very willing to do what you ask, but I cannot hope for any such result. It is very strange—pardon me, my good lady—it is very strange, indeed, that both of your children should be so many Protestants. Have you found your son's marriage turning out so well that you are contracting a similar alliance for your daughter?"

Mrs. Blake quailed beneath the searching eye that was fixed upon her, and a deep blush crimsoned her face: "Well, no, your reverence, it wasn't that, but somehow we couldn't get over Zachary when he came to ask us. He makes very fair promises, sir—"

"So did the devil, my dear madam, when he tempted Eve."

Mrs. Blake knew not what to say, and Dr. Power thought the best thing he could do for her was to put an end to the interview. "The fact is, Mrs. Blake," said he, standing up, "the fact is that I can do nothing for you in this matter. If you permit your daughter to marry this Mr. Thompson, whom you describe as so captivating," he added, with a smile, "my previous injunctions would not be long remembered in the contingencies of married life. You must all take the consequences of your own rashness—shall I say presumption? These are harsh words, Mrs. Blake, but they are just what conscience and duty both dictate—Good morning!—I find there is a person waiting to see me in the next room."

Mrs. Blake could hardly restrain her tears, but she managed to keep up a show of composure, and walked out with an air of offended dignity. "It will be long before I trouble him again," said she to herself, as the servant closed the door behind him. "I'm sure it isn't my fault, and yet he talks as if the whole blame were on Miles and me; that's not fair of Father Power, and I'll not forget it to him in a hurry."

Matters were thus made worse and worse. Miles was quite indignant when he heard what had passed, and swore a good round oath that Eliza should marry Zachary Thompson, and that before a week went round, if it were only to spite Father Power. They would just let him see that they could do without him, and that he might not think to make cats' paws of them. He didn't care the snap of his finger for Father Power or any one else.

This was all very satisfactory to the young folk. The Thomsons and the Peasons applauded Miles's independent spirit, (the old heaven breaking out again) and Mrs. Henry was so pleased that she came to assist her mother-in-law in preparing for the wedding. Miles, thus encouraged in his contumacy, kept his word to the very letter. Just four days after Mrs. Blake's unlucky visit to Dr. Power, Eliza Blake and Zachary Thomson were united in marriage. The ceremony was performed first (in compliment to the bride) by the assistant pastor of St. Peter's—Dr. Power being, of course, out of the question—and afterwards by the Reverend Hooker Tomkins, the favorite preacher of the Thomson family. "A burning and a shining light" was Tomkins in the conventicle known by the name of John Wesley, and him did the Thomsons honor with an exceeding great honor. In his hands were vested the spiritual dominion of the family, and it gladdened his inner man to get within the circle of his influence—a professed follower of the Romish superstition. Pervert, indeed, was the blessing wherewith Hooker Tomkins blessed the union of Zachary and Eliza.

When the double ceremony was performed next day and Mr. and Mrs. Zachary Thomson had received the congratulations of their friends, they started from the door of the Wesleyan meeting-house on a tour through the Midland States. They were accompanied only by Arabella Thomson, her sister having given her hand and for some months before to a wine-merchant in Pine street. The Reverend Hooker Tomkins wished them from the steps a pleasant and prosperous journey, to which Zachary responded with a hearty "Thank you, thank you, Mr. Tomkins—much obliged for your good wishes," and the carriage drove off. Mrs. Blake drew down her heavy lace veil to conceal her tears, as her husband banded her to the carriage where Mrs. Peason awaited her.

The Flanagans and Mr. O'Callaghan were honored with an invitation to the wedding party, held on the return of the happy pair, but none of them went except Edward and Margaret. Their going was agreed upon at a family meeting held on the previous evening. None of the elders of the family would go, and yet they all wished to keep

matters as smooth as possible, so it was decided that Edward and Margaret should go to represent the whole. Eliza and Susan would willingly have gone, but their father and mother wisely thought that it would be anything but safe to expose two young girls just approaching womanhood, to the chance of making acquaintances which they could not sanction.

"Never mind, girls," said their father gaily; "you'll have opportunities enough of showing off without venturing into dangerous company. I don't want my little Eliza or Susie to be getting acquainted with persons that we don't know. Eh, Mr. O'Callaghan, what do you say?"

"Upon my honor, I think you're quite in the right. Still, it's rather hard to have the girls miss a wedding. Isn't it girls?"

"Well, it's true we would like to go," said Eliza, cheerfully, "but when father and mother are opposed to it, of course there is nothing more to be said. We can spend our day as happily, and more happily at home. Can't we, Susie dear?"

"Sour grapes, my dear sisters!" said Edward, laughing; "tell the truth now, do you not envy Margaret and me?"

"Fie, Edward?" interposed his gentle wife, "why will you tease the girls? No, indeed, I am quite sure they have not the slightest wish to go after what their father said. Am I not right, girls?"

"Quite right, indeed, Margaret," said both together; "and I thank you very much," added Susie, "for defending our reputation as dutiful daughters. What a pretty fellow Edward is, to raise a doubt on the subject. But we shall find an opportunity to pay him back. So look sharp, Master Edward!"

"Do your best, my saucy little sister!" said Edward, tapping her playfully on the cheek; "when I fall, be sure you run to take me up!"

A few weeks after, when Zachary and Eliza returned, uncle Tim and his wife went to pay them a visit at their handsome dwelling in Fourth street. In the course of conversation, Mrs. Flanagan asked Eliza how she had enjoyed her trip, whereupon Zachary laughed and said:

"Pretty well, on the whole, though Eliza had her trials for the first few days. You Catholics can't get through the world so smoothly as other folks."

"Why, what had religion to do with Eliza's trials?" demanded Tim, with a look of surprise, though he partly guessed what was coming.

"For mercy's sake, Zachary," interposed Eliza, "don't go on with such childish folly; uncle Tim is so fond of cracking jokes that if you tell him I shall never hear the end of it."

Tim saw plainly, by the deep crimson of her cheek, that there was something more than a joke in question. But he had his own reasons for wishing to know what it was.

"Well," said Zachary, gaily, "in the first place it so happened that for the first two or three Fridays the hotel people, as we went along, were so forgetful of poor Eliza, or any one else, being forbidden to eat meat on that day, that they hadn't a bit of fish on the table. This put dear Eliza quite out of patience, and I assure you she would have punished herself for the unintentional neglect of others, by going without either fish or flesh, until I got her half persuaded and threatened into eating meat."

"Indeed! and how did you manage to persuade her?"

"Why, I told her that if the Pope himself were there, he'd have to eat meat when there was no fish. Wasn't that true, Uncle Tim?"

"I rather think not," said Tim, drily; "I'm not the Pope, and yet I wouldn't eat meat for any such reason, so long as I could eat bread and butter and eggs—there are many things on a hotel table, that a Catholic can make a meal of for one day, without breaking the commandments of the Church."

Tomkins's blessing on your back." "Why don't you think, Uncle Tim," said Zachary, with a smile, "that our Mr. Tomkins's blessing is just as good as your Father Power's?"

"May God forgive you for making such a comparison!" said Tim. "I wouldn't mention the two men in one breath. There's just as much difference between themselves as there is between the religious they profess, and that is—you may guess what!" and so saying, Tim took up his hat and stick. "Good bye, Eliza! good bye, Mr. Thompson! I'm glad to see you both looking so well after your unlucky journey. Next time you go travelling, Eliza, I'd advise you to hang conscience up in the wardrobe before you start, then you can act like a good obedient wife and a nice little Protestant lady. Come along, Nelly! you know we have to call at O'Callaghan's on our way home."

When they were gone, Zachary laughed heartily, and ridiculed what he called Eliza's over-sensitiveness. "There's something about your Uncle Tim," said he, "that makes one like to agree with him. Now, coming from any one else, I would have certainly resented that last observation of his; but, for my life, I can't be angry with him. There's something so frank and good natured about him, and he seems so earnest and sincere in his Catholicity—I was just going to say Romanism, till I thought of your recent vexation—that one can't take ill what he says. Every one sees that he never means to give offence."

"Well, I don't care," said Eliza, pouting, "he had no business to speak so. I declare I shall begin to be ashamed of my religion, if I hear people make such a fuss about it. He had better take care how he talks to me about the commandments of the Church."

"Well done, Eliza!" said her husband, still more gaily than before; "I begin to have good hopes of you, my darling girl. I was afraid you had not quite spirit enough for the wife of a free American; but I see you have more than I gave you credit for! Are you going to spend the evening at my father's?" Eliza answered in the affirmative, and then Zachary hurried away to his office, telling his wife to be sure and cultivate the lofty spirit of independence that had just so agreeably surprised him by its first manifestation.

When Tim and Nelly called at Mr. O'Callaghan's they found only Margaret, Edward, she said, was at the store.

"So much the better, Maggie," observed Tim. "I am glad to find that marriage has not lessened his attention to business."

It would be too bad if it did, sir," replied Margaret, as she placed two chairs near the fire. "May I ask where you have been, that you are here so early in the afternoon, for I am sure you did not come out on purpose to see me at this hour of the day?"

"You're right enough, Maggie, my dear! we were up paying a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Zachary Thomson."

"Well! and how did you find Eliza?"

"I pretty well—in body, at least," added Tim, with emphasis; "she's not over-burdened with religion, I'm afraid, any more than Zachary. They're well met in that respect."

"Why, what makes you think so, sir? I hope you're mistaken!" said Margaret earnestly, and she fixed her eyes on his face, as if in search of the true answer which his words might evade.

Tim looked at his wife, as much as to say, "Shall I tell?" Mrs. Flanagan nodded and said, "As you please, Tim; it won't be long a secret, you may be sure; at least I fear it won't."

When Tim had told all, Margaret sighed. "It is just as I feared," said she. "It appears the Thomsons all ready to evangelize religion, as they say themselves. I really had better hope of Eliza, and am painfully disappointed in her. She is so amiable that it is hard to see her going astray. It is very strange that both brother and sister are so indifferent in religious matters."

"You wouldn't find it strange, Margaret," said Tim, with unusual gravity, "if you had known the family as long as I do. Their indifference—their want of faith, in fact—is all the effect of early training and early associations. From their youth up, both Henry and Eliza have been keeping company with Protestants, taught by Protestants, and looking up to Protestants as far superior to Catholics—how could they be anything else but what they are, as regards religion?"

"Oh! I had almost forgotten to ask," said Margaret, "are you invited to dine at Henry Blake's to-morrow?"

"I don't think I shall go," said Tim. "We heard nothing of it," said Tim. "We are not polished enough for such company as Henry Blake usually entertains. It's well he condescends to invite you and Edward. I suppose he'll have Tomkins there to say grace."

testant husbands for my daughters. Arthur Brown is a very good young man, and getting on very well in business; but let him go to his own sort for a wife, when he wants one."

"But how do you know that Eliza will be of the same opinion as you are?" persisted Margaret, with the same arch smile.

"How do I know, Maggie? why, because our children have all been brought up in the firm conviction that he who loves the danger will perish in it. I have no great fears that any of them will ever marry a Protestant."

"Nor I either," added Mrs. Flanagan quietly. "But we're forgetting ourselves altogether, Tim, dear, as we always do when we come here. Be sure you come down this evening, Margaret, you and Edward, for you know poor Susie is not well these times, and it will cheer her up some to see you all around her." Margaret promised, and the worthy couple hurried away arm in arm.

TO BE CONTINUED.

HIS MATERNAL GRANDFATHER. HOW JIMMY LAID THE GHOST OF A TROUBLESOME RELATIVE. By John D. Harvey.

Jimmy Manning, his big frame stretched comfortably in an easy chair, had been waiting expectantly for the last two hours for the remark he knew was as inevitable as the tea and thin slices of bread which Mary would bring in precisely at 5. Meanwhile, he chatted away easily with his Aunt Margaret and his Aunt Agatha, turning from one, then to the other, to answer cheerfully their prim questions concerning his health, his trip and the people he had met, or smiling blandly on them both, when they assured him what a comfort it was to have him home once more. And, as they talked, Jimmy was wondering just where the inevitable remark would come in, and offering a silent prayer that he might have sufficient control of his facial muscles, one of that critical moment to conceal the grin he knew the remark would be sure to arouse.

"Your certainly seem greatly benefited, physically, by your trip, James," remarked Aunt Margaret.

"Have you noticed, Margaret," inquired Aunt Agatha, "how much he grows to look like his grandfather?"

Jimmy straightened himself in his chair, and, by a powerful effort, clothed himself with the gravity of a judge. "His maternal grandfather, yes," corrected Aunt Margaret.

This was too much. Jimmy rose and strode over to the window. Had any one been passing the house at that moment he would have seen a young man standing by the window fiercely biting his under lip. When Jimmy's composure was somewhat restored, he turned again to his aunts.

"I suppose," Aunt Margaret was saying, "that you will start seriously on your career now?"

"It is my intention to start a law practice as soon as innocent and unsophisticated clients can be unearthed," Jimmy answered lightly.

The two smiled indulgently at this bit of levity.

"It might be well," Aunt Margaret continued, "to bear in mind your maternal grandfather's career. He was one of that critical moment to conceal the grin he knew the remark would be sure to arouse."

"I am sure," said Aunt Agatha "your dear mother, our sister, whom you probably cannot remember, would desire us to hold your grandfather's example before you. He was a man of tact and courage of a rare order."

"So I remember you have always told me," said Jimmy by way of a gentle hint that his grandfather be returned to his niche in the family history. "Rare courage, indeed," said Aunt Margaret, ignoring the hint. "Did I ever tell you, James, of his encounter with the burglar?"

shoes, and tiptoed cautiously down stairs. He gained the dining room, door, and entering noiselessly, saw a faint light by the sideboard. As his eyes became accustomed to the dim light he could make out the outlines of a man bending over an open drawer. Jimmy advanced a few noiseless steps, measured the distance carefully with his eye and sprang. In an instant the two were struggling madly. Jimmy's eye caught the gleam of metal and the next instant he seized the other's wrist in a grip of iron, gave it a sudden twist and the revolver went clattering across the floor. Back and forth they swayed, upsetting chairs, hanging into the table and making a hideous din. Then there was a heavy fall. Jimmy landed the man on his back, crawled astride his chest, pinning both the man's hands in his own, and at the same panting.

Frightened voices came from the top of the stairs. "Oh, it's all right," called Jimmy. "Just a caller—an uninvited guest, as it were. I'm entertaining him. Come down, if you will, please. Don't be alarmed. Switch on the light in the dining room. Ah, thank you."

Aunt Margaret and Aunt Agatha entered, somewhat frightened, but rather majestically, after all, Jimmy thought, considering their bath robes.

"James!" gasped Aunt Margaret, as she caught sight of his flushed face and torn collar.

"Only a trifle," he explained. "We'll label the evidence. This gentleman on whom I have the honor to be seated, will call Exhibit A; the open drawer there, Exhibit B, and the bag on the floor Exhibit C. When I came in a few moments ago, Exhibit A—lie still, you cad!—was extracting the spoons from Exhibit B and transferring them to Exhibit C. Exhibit A and I had an argument. You see how it came out."

"You'd better go over to the Stanleys, Aunt Agatha, and get them to telephone for the Pardon me, in the flash of success I say, that in the apprehending line I think I've gone my maternal grandfather one better."

LEAD KINDLY LIGHT. The contributions of Professor Goodwin Smith to the New York Sun are highly interesting in more than one way. The professor presents the example of a well-meaning man who is at sea because he has never had the opportunity of reading books that would help him in his doubts. Mr. Smith is, indeed, an eminent man; he was only thirty when he held an important secretaryship to the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the condition of the University of Oxford. After that, for many years he was Regius professor of modern history at Oxford, and was regarded by many leading men of England, Matthew Arnold for example, as gifted with the highest literary and governmental attainments. During late years Mr. Smith has lived at Toronto, giving himself up to his predilection for literature and the fine arts.

Mr. Smith is, perhaps, even more interested in religion than he is in literature. As a result of his long study of morals he stands pretty much as the ordinary voter does in regard to politics; that is, he sees no reason for accepting a belief in the moral government of the universe and the immortality of the soul; nor, on the other hand, does he see any reason for rejecting these truths.

From the following argument Mr. Smith declares that he is inclined to believe in a spirit of faith.

Conscience tells us that according as we do well or ill in this life it will be well or ill for us hereafter. It is the evidence of conscience less trustworthy than that of our bodily senses? If the evidence of our bodily senses and the science built upon them alone is trustworthy, on what does their prerogative rest?

Herein Mr. Smith has really a solid argument against the materialists. For those men who will believe only what they see with their bodily eyes, or what they hear with their bodily ears, or touch with their bodily hands it is imperative that they should answer why it is that they put so much trust in their material organs and refuse to credit the testimony of their spiritual faculties; there is no more reason for being sure when we see with our eyes, that we really do see than there is for believing that we with our intellect when we perceive the evidence of some well-known truth. The only difference is that by the testimony of our material faculties we are not brought face to face with anything like morality responsibility is eliminated from the scope of science and men are privileged to give birth to their own ideas upon religious matters.

On the other hand it would appear that Mr. Smith had never considered the scientific proofs of the immortality of the soul. The spiritual nature of thought, and consequently of the will as far as matter is concerned, are never touched upon in the learned discussions which Mr. Smith writes for the Sun. And yet it is precisely by such arguments, perhaps even more than by those drawn from the question of mortality, that the immortality of the soul is demonstrated.

With all his doubts, however, Mr. Smith frankly admits that he is more inclined to a belief in the immortality of the soul. In this respect he is like most other great agnostics who have lived of recent years. Even Herbert Spencer, who boasted in his youth that he had cleared away all the mysteries of the universe, was compelled to admit in his dying breath that these same mysteries were inexplicable. How far Mr. Smith's studies will lead him is difficult to say; let us hope, at all events, that the truth will appear in all its light to this venerable old man who, while capable of writing volumes on science, is, withal, grouping about in the dark in search of that which is most essential.—Providence Visitor.

Gold can buy nearly everything in this world, except that which a man wants most—happiness.