

THE BLAKES AND FLANAGANS.

BY MRS JAS. A. SADDLER. CHAPTER XIV. GREAT THINGS AT TIM FLANAGAN'S—MR. HENRY T. BLAKE BECOMES A PROMINENT INDIVIDUAL.

I only wish it were in my power to tell my young readers how Edward Flanagan wooed and won the fair Margaret O'Callaghan.

Edward Flanagan was everything that she could desire, for some time, her father was her only confidant, and it was not till she had ascertained his favorable opinion of Edward, that she consented to receive him as a suitor.

Edward Flanagan was very young, but he had a fine, manly face, and his eyes were full of fire.

Margaret was Irish by birth, as she often boasted, and looked back to her native land with intense affection.

They were ten years old when she left the Emerald City and the picturesque banks on the Lee were still fresh and green in her memory.

Mr. O'Callaghan thought every day a week till he saw the knot tied. Perhap he might not have been so anxious to see Margaret married had it entailed a separation, but such was not the case.

As the time appointed for the wedding drew near, all was bustle and joyous excitement in Tim Flanagan's house.

Margaret could buy no article, either of dress or furniture, unless Mrs. Flanagan was with her.

When the Blakes arrived, they found in Mr. O'Callaghan's parlor Dan Sheridan and his wife, with Mrs. Reilly, Tim Flanagan, and Nelly, and their worthy hosts, his wig brushed up after the most approved fashion.

"Let me first hear what it is," said Miles; "you wouldn't have me buy a pig in a poke would you?—what is your bet about?"

"Why, I was offering to bet Dan Sheridan here a dozen of port that I'd make a match between O'Callaghan and Sally Reilly before the year is out."

"And if you did carry her off home," said the incorrigible Tim, "she wouldn't be long away. She couldn't keep from us, let her do her best. Eh, Maggie? isn't that true?"

Margaret would smile and say: "You say so, sir?" or something of the kind, and then Mrs. Flanagan would throw her eyes over Margaret, and tell Tim to be off and mind his business—if he had any.

"At length the important day arrived, and a lovely day it was; a rich, soft, autumn day, with the bright sunshine streaming down on the gladdened earth, and the air full of life and full of balm."

Both Edward and Margaret had been to confession on the previous day, and both received the Holy Communion on the morning of their marriage. So, too, did Mr. and Mrs. Flanagan, and Mr. O'Callaghan, at the special request of the young couple.

"I declare now," said the lady last addressed, "if you don't let me alone, the whole set of you, I'll leave the place altogether. It's all very well when there's no one but ourselves present, but I declare to my goodness I'll clear out if you say a word of the kind to me before strangers."

to me before strangers. There never was a widow in my family that married a second time, to my knowledge, except my Aunt Peggy, and every one knows how badly it turned out with her."

"Or your own—eh, Sally?"

"Now, don't be bothering me, Tim—don't put me in a passion this morning, but it wouldn't be lucky to get out of temper on such an occasion as this."

"Well, well! get into the carriage there, and we'll talk it out when we get home."

"I'm sure we're all in need of our breakfast—I know I, for one, am."

Edward, gaily; "I feel as I could make a first-rate breakfast out of even half as joyous."

"That's enough, John! they're not for coming, and that's all we want to know. Let them keep their empty 'compliments' and 'regrets' for those who value them. Thank God! we can enjoy ourselves without them, and, for my part, I'm not sorry they're staying away, for, to tell the truth, they'd only throw a damp on the concern."

After breakfast the young people, including Mike Sheridan, set out on a trip to Staten Island, where they spent the day.

The supper was dispatched as soon as possible in order to gratify the young people who were all impatient for the dancing to commence.

No one was exempted from the common law, which was cheerfully acknowledged as obligatory on all, save and except Mrs. Reilly, whose scruples were universally respected.

"I tell you what, Edward," said he, "your wife is an Irishwoman every inch of her. I'd ask no more than to see how she danced that jig. If she had been brought up in Cork's own town, she couldn't have done it better."

Both Edward and his wife acknowledged the compliment, and both returned it with interest.

Early in the evening the good old gentleman had asked Miss Blake to dance (at her uncle Tom's suggestion), but the young lady shrank from "exhibiting with an old fellow like that," and her polite refusal was a thing he could not understand.

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"Exactly so. Have you yet made up your mind whether to go or stay—go or not to go that is the question?"

"I go," said Zachary, in a tone of much solemnity whereupon the two worthies sallied forth, laughing heartily at the pseudo-heroic parts they were about to take in the evening's drama.

"Now, mind," said Henry, "I will first make a speech and do my best to win the ear of the court, then I will gracefully introduce you as an American friend, who is well-disposed towards Ireland. I will then leave you in possession of the stage, and the audience, thus prepared, will bear your own—you can shape them as the potter shapes his clay."

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sure you'll find him the best of husbands. My blessing and the blessing of God be with you, now and for ever!" Her words were solemnly repeated by Tim and O'Callaghan, and then Nelly hurried away, followed to the door by Edward, who would have the last word and the last look at parting.

As for Tom Reilly, that evening was an epoch in his existence. In his capacity of groomsman he had to play a conspicuous part, under the eyes of his beloved mother. And he certainly made a creditable appearance in a handsome new suit of fine black cloth, relieved by a white vest, white kid gloves and the whitest of white linen.

"Seriously speaking," said O'Callaghan, "the feeling of our people runs strongly against second marriages. And, to tell the truth, the women are still more opposed to it than the men."

There is no denying the fact, that, in ached to a second marriage, especially on the part of a widow. To their honor be it spoken, there are, perhaps, more virtuous, devoted widows amongst the Irish than any other people in the world. As for our friend, Mrs. Reilly, I would deem it almost a sacrilege to approach her as a suitor—the shades of two persons whom we respectfully loved and honored would hover upon us, and forbid the unnatural alliance. If there were any one thing for which I especially honor our valued friend, it is her devotion to the memory of her husband. Here is the widowhood of the heart—and so it mine, too!" he added, his eyes filling with tears.

The conversation was becoming painfully serious, and Tim Flanagan was just coming out with one of his dry jokes (though in his heart he quite concurred with what O'Callaghan said), when the clatter of wheels, and the loud ringing of the door bell, announced the return of the young people. In an instant all was bustle and excitement; laughing, talking, and "keeping up the fun," seemed to be regarded as a sort of duty growing out of the occasion.

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further occupy the valuable time of the meeting, but in conclusion begged to introduce his friend, Mr. Zachary Thomson, a distinguished member of his own profession, and an ardent lover of Ireland, although born of American parents. He could answer for him that his heart was in the right place.

Mr. Thomson was received with enthusiastic cheering, which having at length subsided, he proceeded to thank the meeting for their truly Irish welcome, thus freely given to a stranger. He then went on with a brilliant speech, expressive of all manner of good will towards Ireland, and a corresponding indignation against her oppressor—a tyrant, although he could not, like his friend, boast of having Irish blood in his veins, yet he could say, and must be allowed to say, that his sympathy for that lovely but unfortunate land, was as deep as though he were born on Irish ground. (Loud and prolonged applause.)

What man, with even half a soul, could turn over the eventful page of Ireland's history, without feeling for her unnumbered sufferings? He, for one, her cheerful girl on his sword at any moment that he might be called on, and go up to battle for oppressed Ireland. (Tremendous cheers.) Mr. Thomson concluded by saying that he hoped they would all live to see the day when the down-trodden peoples of the Old World would simultaneously shake even the yoke of their tyrannical governments, and stand forth in renovated beauty, the successful imitators of the Young American. Mr. Thomson then made his bow, and retired in graceful confusion.

It is needless to say that the two friends were loudly cheered as they left the Hall. When they had got to a safe distance, they both laughed immoderately at what they called "a capital farce."

"Don't you think I did my part to perfection?" inquired Blake.

"To the very life," cried Zachary—"and I—do not I deserve a compliment, too?"

"Oh! decidedly—that touch about the sword was most effective; it told well, I assure you. A few more such speeches as we have made to-night, and we are sure of the Irish vote, whenever it suits us to apply for it."

"That is all very well," said Zachary; "but I am sadly afraid that Jane and Eliza will have given us up for lost. You know they were to be dressed for the Opera at 9 o'clock, and here it is now a quarter past 9. Repeal is all very well in its place, but I have no notion of letting it interfere with any more rational amusement. Hang Repeal, say I, if it keeps the girls so long waiting."

"Nonsense, Zachary, they can wait a quarter of an hour, while we are detained by important business." The last words were spoken with such an ironical emphasis that Zachary could not help laughing. Good humor thus restored, our two "friends of Ireland" puffed away at their cigars with renewed vigor, and quickened their steps accordingly. On reaching home, they found Mrs. Henry and Miss Blake, and the Misses Thomson waiting in full dress, with more or less discontent, and some, on the face of each, "Ireland or Repeal," were derisively brought forward by the gentlemen in excuse, and laughingly accepted by the ladies.

This picture may seem somewhat overdrawn, but, unhappily, it is "over true." Of those who headed the Repeal movement in America, it is morally certain that some were actuated by just such motives as our friends Blake and Thomson. The thousands of Irishmen who "made up the rank and file" were, of course, sincere in their enthusiastic efforts to better the condition of their own beloved Ireland; but it is certain that many of the leaders were just such as they are here represented, spouting patriotism from their mouths, while their hearts were full of petty selfish projects. Even now, it were well if our warm-hearted, trusting people would carefully sift the tars from the wheat, and withhold their confidence from public men, or would be tribunals, till they have ascertained "what manner of men they be." Let them keep a sharp eye on the spoilers wherever they may appear, or what garb soever they may choose to assume.

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE LITTLE LADS OF THE WINDOW JOURET.

Fair in summer is the river St. Lawrence as it flows blue and placid between the picturesque Canadian shores. Fair, too, in winter when it lies white and still as the frozen land. But when the breath of approaching spring loosens the ice-chains and they snap asunder, and the imprisoned waters with rush and roar leap forth like a ravenous monster in search of prey, and the angry tide lifts the great masses of ice, that one moment are crunched edgewise into glittering heaps and the next swept out into broad fies, with always the black, swirling water between—then the St. Lawrence is a most terrible sight.

Every year at this season the river takes its tribute of human life. Sometimes a foolhardy tinsmith trusting a last load to the treacherous surface; sometimes a party of reckless skaters, who go down with laughter on their lips; and sometimes, alas! a little child, snatched from innocent play to death.

But whoever the victim, none escapes for the river is wide and the current swift and strong.

One early spring, the pupils of a convent school, situated upon a high bank of the St. Lawrence, were gathered to watch for the breaking of the ice.

From where they stood they could look across the undulated snow fields to the great city rising beyond in wintry splendor, and their sharp young eyes could trace from the harbor each turn of the frozen river until it lay before them in an ice sheet, broad as a lake.

The surface, so recently animated with festive sleighs and merry skaters, was deserted—for on its signs warned that death now lurked where Pleasure had so lately reigned.

The afternoon was closing, and a lowering sky of hazy saffron hue threw

over the land a lurid glare of yellow. Suddenly a report like a distant cannon's boom was heard, and across the white face of the river appeared a black and jagged seam.

"The ice is breaking!" cried the pupils, crowding to the edge of the steep and projecting bluff.

As the watchers stood speechless before the magnificent scene of devastation, their interest was quickened from wonder to horror, as down the white grinding heart of the river some object was seen swiftly advancing.

"A boat!" "A tree," "A dog," were the first careless conjectures.

"Children!" shrieked the shuddering nuns and pupils, as the great ice blocks dashed down the river's slope, buried themselves round its dangerous bend, and swept into the broad current lake, where under the influence of a deeper and less angry tide, they spread themselves out into wide-circling, majestically moving drafts.

Children they were. God! Two helpless little boys barely nine and seven years of age.

They wore peasant jackets and clumsy caps of sealskin pulled over their ears, while about the head and shoulders of the younger child was wrapped a gay shawl of red and purple.

The larger boy stood motionless, still holding the cord attached to a little scarlet sled—the plaything that told their pitiful story—but the smaller one was crying bitterly, and frantically wringing its tiny hands.

"The lads of the widow Jouret!" exclaimed the hoarse voice of the convent chaplain, who at the first call of alarm had rushed hatless from the vestry.

The lads of the widow Jouret! The treasures of the poor woman who worked in the hamlet yonder. Unfortunately children! Unhappy mother! Below against steep banks swayed a treacherous ice sea; beyond lay a broad channel between stretches of deserted land; then came the pitiless ocean.

And those who watched were helpless.

Close to the edge of the high bluff, with the praying nuns and sobbing pupils kneeling about him, his uncovered head and black robed figure rising like a monument of stone against the whiteness of land—stood the priest.

One hand he held uplifted in silent benediction; with the other he raised from his bosom the crucifix of silver and turned its gleaming image toward the children going down to their death on the river.

Out from their pale faces died the fear and the horror. They folded their hands as the mothers teach children to pray, and lifting eyes full of faith and them upon the comforting sign of salvation.

Thus the little lads passed on, out of the lake and into the channel that led to the ocean.

Below the convent, back some distance from the river, was the hamlet where the widow Jouret lived—a group of laborers' cottages, buried to the chimney pots in snow, and with small windows staring from the whiteness as the eyes of corpses stark frozen from their shrines.

The widow's home was humble but snug and warm was the low, white-washed kitchen, growing with freight and filled with the savory steam that rose from a big pot simmering on the stove.

A clothes line, hanging overhead with daintily laundered linens and laces, showed the poor woman's means of livelihood.

Over the ironing board she was bending, a tall, raw-boned, middle-aged Canadian peasant, with a sallow skin and small black eyes, set deep under heavy brows.

She wore a dark woolen skirt, whose scant length exposed not only the ungainly feet shod in a man's gaiters, but a portion of brown knitted stocking as well, and for bodice, a loose sack belted with a leather strap.

She sang as she worked, a tuneless chant of guttural patois, but soothing as a lullaby, for the mother was thinking of her boys—"the little lads," as she fondly called them—all the good God had left her out of ten strong sons and daughters.

Three years before, when the father was brought home a mangled corpse from the factory where he worked, the poor woman would have died but for the "little lads."

For them she checked her sorrow. For them she lived and worked and prayed.

And they had become the light of her eyes.

"Such great boys they were growing to be! Why, Jean was already nine and the little Jules was past seven!"

Jean was stout and strong, with cheeks as round and ruddy as the apples of his native land; but Jules was a tiny mite whose pale face and thin body caused the mother much anxiety.

"Tiers!" she exclaimed, as the clock struck 4. "The little lads will soon come."

She shoved the ironing-board against the wall and went to the wood-pile in the corner, moving her bent figure with a slow, shuffling limp, as though the hump between her shoulders hurt or hindered her; and gathering an armful of pine-knots and fir-cones stuffed them into the red jaws of the stove, whence they merrily snappy and cracked, and sent forth the spicy odors of a Canadian forest in summer.

The heat caused the contents of the iron pot to gurgle fiercely, and while stirring and seasoning the potage a sound like the report of a gun fell upon the mother's ear.

"The ice on the river is breaking," she exclaimed fearfully, and with trembling haste she shuffled to the doorway.

Anxiously she scanned the landscape. Behind lay the silent village; before stretched a billow plain of untrodden snow, and further beyond gleamed motionless between the crystalline trees of the convent garden a bend of the frozen river.

And above all hung the lowering sky of saffron hue. On the still air fell a noisy jingling of bells and clattering of tins that her-