

TO THE BITTER END.

A TALE OF TWO LIVES.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A VOICE FROM THE CLIFFS.

High up on the summit of a long line of iron-bound cliffs from the battered remains of what was once a great castle. Many hundred feet below a gray stormy sea, which even in the calmest of summer weather seems never at rest, dashes in with an unceasing melancholy roar upon the few yards of shingly beach and the worn cliff side. The country around and behind is a barren moorland, treeless and uncultivated and houseless. Only a keen eye could detect, right down in the shelter of the cliffs, a few red-tiled cottages huddled close together as though for protection from the wild, sweeping winds, and in front of them a few brown-sailed fishing boats, and here and there a net. Sometimes the fishermen covered over a common fire and told wild, eerie stories—for they were North Country folk and superstitious. Sometimes they stood on the grinding shingles bathed in a shower of salt spray and looked longingly but hopelessly out through the clouds of mist and storm to the sea to which they dared not trust themselves; and sometimes they all joined in laboring to repair the misfortunes of one of their little community, and mended a net, or a sail, or hammered fresh planks into the bottom of a leaking boat. It was a plain, rough, hard life, with many sorrows and few joys; yet they lived it without grumbling, and on the whole with quite as much satisfaction as many of their more fortunately situated fellows.

It is in the autumn when their lot seems hardest and the battle of life most severe; and it is mid-autumn now. A wild, gusty wind comes roaring over the unquiet German Ocean, furling the gray sea with mountainous waves, and dashing them in upon that little strip of storm-bound coast with all the fury of an army of angry demons cast loose upon the restless waters. As the hours of night drew on, the thick pall of darkness which had been weighing upon earth and sea was pierced by the sudden appearance of the full moon from behind a thick bank of fast-moving black clouds. At the door of the cottage which supplied the place of an inn to the little hamlet, stood Jim Doore, landlord of the same, tempted outside for a moment by the sudden appearance of the moon. Holding his pipe behind his back lest the wind should blow it into ashes and rob him of his last few minutes' stolid enjoyment before retiring for the night, he took a few cautious steps shoreward and looked around him. First he cast a long anxious glance over the wildly tossing sea, and drew a long deep breath of relief when he saw no trace of any craft fighting a vain battle with the elements—for Jim Doore was a humane man. Then he glanced up at the castle and noted the two glimmering lights which shone from different parts of it. At one of these he looked with indifference; on the other, high up in the uninhabited portion of the keep, he looked long with frowning brow and displeased mien.

"'Tis uncanny," he muttered between his teeth, gravely shaking his head. "I don't loike it! It bodes noa good, noa good." He looked away and turned toward his cottage. Through the window he could see the cheerful blaze of a large fire and several men on a rude bench seated around it smoking. Closer still to the window was his wife, her hard, weather-stained yet comely face peering out into the darkness, with a shade of anxiety in it, looking for her absent lord. Suddenly she made out his burly figure, and called to him:

"Coom thee in out o' th' wet, lad! Coom on!"

The invitation was not to be despised, especially accompanied as it was with a smile which was meant to be and was to him inviting. Jim Doore looked in at the cheerful fireside and into his wife's face, and drew a sigh of something which was very much like content.

He loinged forward, and in another minute would have been safe inside his door. But with his hand upon the latch he paused and stood quite still in a listening attitude. Was it his fancy, or had he not heard a faint shout from above, among the cliffs? Suddenly a fierce gust of wind came tearing seaward and down the cliff side. This time there was no doubt about it. It carried with it the faint but unmistakable "Halloa!" of a human being.

Jim Doore was a devout Catholic, and the first thing he did was to cross himself. That operation performed to his satisfaction, he rapidly ran over in his mind the names of his few neighbors. There were twelve in all and five were in his rude parlor. The other seven he had seen during the evening, and knew them to be safe in their homes. The shout, faint though it was through the distance, was no woman's or child's. No one but a man, and a man with sound lungs, could have made his voice heard above the din of the storm.

Excitement was a rare visitor to Jim Doore, and when it came it came slowly. But it was on the way now. Again came that faint "Halloa!" Setting his feet a little apart, and throwing his head a little back, he raised his hands to his mouth and sent forth an answering shout which scared a whole colony of sea-gulls and made the air heat and vibrate around him.

The cottage door was thrown open and its temporary occupants came trooping forth, Mrs. Doore in the van.

"What be'ast a-doin' mon?" cried she. "Tha'st amost brook the window wi, tha' shouting."

He pointed up to the cliff side, which towered above them.

lessly. It was Mrs. Doore whose common sense first mastered her surprise.

"A mon it be surely, and if he be got off the paeth, he'll be nigh breaking his neck if ye lads don't stir yerself. Whoi doan't ye be up and foind 'im? Nôw then, Jim."

There was a stir among the men, and they prepared to move forward. Just as they were starting a sudden storm of wind and rain extinguished the lantern which Mrs. Doore had brought out, and there was a pause. When it was brought out to relit the wind had increased to a hurricane. The storm which came raging in from the sea seemed to have gained fresh and redoubled vigor from the momentary lull. Far off came the sound of the breakers lashing themselves against the worn, jagged rocks, and nearer still the sea swept in upon the hard beach with a threatening, murderous roar, and, having spent its force, retreated, grinding the pebbles and shingles together till the air seemed rent with the screams of the "maddened beach."

"It's a terrible noight, lads!" shouted Jim Doore to his little band. "We mun keep together."

They moved off, keeping close under the shelter of the giant cliff which overhung their little cluster of homesteads, though even at that distance every now and then the salt spray from the foaming sea came dashing into their faces. At the foot of the winding path, from which the shout had come, they paused and joined hands before commencing the ascent.

"We mun howd on toight to one another lads!" cried Jim Doore. "If one o' them their gusts cooms on we shall loike to be blowed roight over into the sea. Noo then."

They commenced their climb, every now and then crouching down to avoid the fury of the storm. Presently Jim tried a "Halloa!" and it was answered immediately, with a distinctness which showed them that their quest was nearly over.

"Steady, lads," cried Jim, waving his lantern; "he be away theer to the roight!" They turned down a narrow sheep-track which seemed literally to overhang the sea below, and made their way slowly along it with great care. In a few minutes Jim paused and held up his hand. The dark figure of a man confronted them, standing in the middle of the path.

"I've missed the path somewhere, haven't I?" he inquired. "I thought I was wrong somehow, but it was so infernally dark that I was afraid to try and find my way back again, and I didn't like going on either, so I shouted. Glad ye heard me. Are ye from the castle or from the village?"

"We be coom from down below," answered Jim, pointing through the thick darkness to where their few cottages lay grouped together. "It be lucky that you didn't try to get much forrader on this 'ere path, or you'd a walked right over th' edge o' cliff. Wouldn't he, Bill?" he added, turning round to the foremost of his companions.

"Surely."

"That's just what I was afraid of," remarked the stranger. "Can any of you down there put me up for the night, or show me the way to Clanavon Castle?"

There was a distinct sensation among the little group of men. A visitor on his way to the castle! Such a thing was never heard of. Forgetting his manners in his curiosity, Jim raised his lantern, and for the first time had a glimpse of the stranger.

He saw a tall, finely-built young man, whose handsome face, notwithstanding the rain and storm and the danger which he had certainly been in, was in no way discomposed; and apparently he saw something else too, for after a brief inspection he lowered the lantern and touched his cap with a gesture of respect.

"Yer 'onor 'a ta'en wrong turn fer t' castle," he said. "A' should a' kept roight on, and never a' coom down this path. 'Tis a stiff clamb back agen, now, an' none ower safe."

"What am I to do, then?" the young man asked, shrugging his shoulders. "Can any of you put me up for the night?"

"If ya doan't mind roughing it, yer 'onor, down in moi bit o' a cottage, the missus —" began Jim Doore.

"Mind roughing it? Not I, my man. A good fire and a blanket are all I want. I'm wet through to the skin. Lead the way."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE STRANGER.

The little procession re-formed and commenced the descent, Jim Doore and the stranger leading the way, the others close behind. Once Bill Simpson, Jim's partner, managed to edge himself into the front line for a minute, and drew the latter a little on one side.

"Dost a' know who 'un be, Jim?" he whispered.

"I a' gotten some idea," Jim replied in a mysterious manner. "Keep a civil tongue in the head, mon, and bid the others."

They had reached the little strip of beach, and were slowly making their way under the shelter of the cliff to the cottages. High up in front of them shone the two glimmering lights from the castle. The stranger looked at them curiously.

"What lights are those?" he asked, pointing upward.

Jim Doore's eyes followed his gesture, and he crossed himself again.

"From Clanavon Castle, yer 'onor," he answered.

"They seem a long way apart," remarked the other, looking up at them with interest.

"Ah!"

Again the clouds had parted, and a brilliant flood of moonlight streamed down upon the wild little scene, glistening across the waste of tossing waters, and throwing strange shadows upon the towering cliffs. But the most striking object of all was the castle; and the stranger stood with his eyes fixed upon it, scarcely caring to cast a single glance at the remainder of the panorama. High up above them the gloomy pile, with its frowning ramparts, its ruined towers, and its massive keep, stood out boldly, the magnificence of its situation heightened by the weirdness of the light, the hour, and the storm. Midway down the flagstaff the remains of the flag, tattered and torn almost into strips by the gale, were still streaming

in the wind, floating against a background of light oily-looking clouds which hovered over the castle, and against which every tear and almost the very pattern was distinguishable. It was a fine sight, although a gloomy one.

Jim Doore looked steadfastly at the two lights, and then, turning round, pointed them out silently to his companions. There was a little murmur of superstitious awe, and each man crossed himself.

The stranger looked on in surprise.

"Why do you do that?" he asked curiously.

"Reason enoo, yer 'onor," Jim answered slowly, and dropping his voice to an impressive pitch. "Dost a' see yonder loight, the fur un oot theer in the tower?"

"Yes! What of it?"

Jim shook his head.

"'Tis no flesh and blood that hoides theer, or that kindled that loight."

The stranger smiled the easy, sceptical smile of the sturdy materialist, to whom such statements seem only the weak superstitions of an ignorant, uneducated peasantry. He said nothing, but that smile was enough. The whole of the little body of men were up in arms. Their castle ghost was a familiar idea to all of them. There was not one of them who did not firmly believe in its existence. For a stranger to come among them and affect incredulity appeared to them very much in the light of a discourtesy, which each one was prompt to resent. The young man checked them, however, by holding up his hand.

"Look here!" he protested. "You shall tell me about your ghost when we get inside. I'm wet through to the skin, and cold as well. Push on, my worthy guide, and let us get beneath this roof of yours."

"Roight, roight, sir," was the good-humored answer. "We beant' so fur, neither."

They turned a corner of the cliff, and the little cluster of cottages nestling close up to its side lay right before them. From the window of Jim Doore's abode there shone a pleasant, warm light, reflected from the roaring fire which his wife had been making up in anticipation of a visitor. The stranger saw it and quickened his pace.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "if that isn't the pleasantest sight I've seen to-day. Is this your house?"

Jim pushed open the door with his foot, and ushered in his guest with a rough gesture which was meant for a welcome.

"Doan't 'estean out noa longer in this cold, yer 'onor," he said. "Coom thee in, by t' foire, and my missus shall find 'ee some dra cloathes. Get thee by t' fire. Missus! Missus! We a' found 'm—'twas a gentleman as a' lost his way t' the castle Coom thee and bring ma' Sunday cloathes. Why, dang it, lass, what is ta staring at?"

During the first part of this speech Jim had been busy stirring up the fire and otherwise arranging for the comfort of his guest, whose clothes were steaming in the warm blaze. But toward its completion, somewhat surprised at the non-appearance of his better half, he had turned toward the door and had received something of a shock. Standing on the threshold was his wife, with her hands raised upon the stranger, and her hands raised to her temples.

There was an expression in her face which, during his many years of wedded life, Jim Doore had seen nothing of before. Her cheeks were colorless, her dark eyes were full of horror, and her whole attitude was that of a woman paralyzed by the sudden appearance of an unlooked-for danger. The young man at the fireside, unconscious of her scrutiny, leaned forward toward the blaze, which shone full upon his handsome face, and appeared to be making himself decidedly comfortable.

She made no answer to her husband's impatient questions. She stood there quite still, her lips trembling a little and her eyes still fixed upon the face which was glowing in the ruddy firelight. Her husband repeated his impatient question, and the stranger turned carelessly round in his seat, as though mildly wondering what had provoked it. His movement seemed to effect what her husband's words had failed to do. She moved slowly forward into the middle of the room, and her face resumed its usual expression save for a light shade of pallor.

"They're down here in the corner, Jim. I thought as they might be wanted. Would this gentleman like anything to eat?" she added hesitatingly.

"Anything to eat!" he repeated, turning a good humored, smiling face upon her. "My good woman, there is only one word which would explain my condition at the present moment. I'm starving—literally starving! Forgive the question, but what have you got in the house?"

"Not much that's fit for you, sir, I'm afraid," she answered quietly. "There's a bit o' bacon, and some fish—the fish is fresh and good if you like it, sir—and I could get you some tea."

"I should think I do like fish!" he answered her. Let me have some, by all means, and some tea; and I'll try the bacon, too. What a lucky thing for me you heard that about, my good fellow! Now, where can I get into these things?"

"Here, sir, by the fire. Jim'll come with me into the back room. I've got a fire there, sir; and your supper won't be long."

She turned away and her husband followed her. Presently she returned with a clean white cloth on her arm and commenced making preparations for the meal. Her guest had attired himself in the clothes which she had provided, and, overcome by the pleasant warmth after his long exposure to the wet and cold, had sunk down in his chair and was dozing. Once or twice she glanced across to him, and then seeing that he was really asleep she moved softly over to his side and looked down into his face.

In her husband's rough clothes his fair boyish face looked all the handsomer by reason of the contrast, and as she looked into it she felt a lump come into her throat, and her heart beat fast. Again there came that sensation of fear. Why had he come? What was the meaning of it? If only she dared ask him!

Her husband's heavy footsteps outside warned her of his approach, and she retreated to the table, still holding her hand to her side, as though in pain. Presently he entered bearing in his hand a smoking dish and a kettle from which the steam was issuing in a little cloud. The tea was soon made, and when all was in readiness they awakened their guest. He sprang to his feet at once and drew up his chair to the table with alacrity.

"I've actually been dozing, have I?" he exclaimed. "I should have thought that hunger would have kept me awake. Mrs.

Doore," he continued, "your fish is excellent. I never tasted better."

"I am glad you like it, sir," she answered. "It's about the only thing we have fit to offer you."

"And the tea is delicious," he added, setting down his cup. "I feel a different man already."

One or twice during the meal the door was softly opened and some one would put a head in and retreat with an awkward apology. At first the stranger seemed puzzled, but before long the truth began to dawn upon him.

"Mrs. Doore, is this an inn?" he asked.

"It be, sir. Surely."

"And those men want to come in, of course. Let them in at once, Mrs. Doore. I insist upon it."

"Won't they annoy you, sir?" she asked doubtfully. "They're but rough sort o' chaps like, and—"

"Not another word, Mrs. Doore, but let them come in. I should be sorry to monopolize the whole room."

She moved to the door and called to them. One by one they came in and seated themselves around the wide fireplace, each making some sort of clumsy salutation to the stranger as they entered.

"My good men," he said pleasantly, when they had all entered, "I am much obliged to all of you for coming to look for me. Fill up your glasses, and remember," he added, turning to Jim Doore, "what-over is drunk to-night is drunk at my expense."

There was a murmur of thanks and general brightening up in the little circle. In a few minutes the stranger had finished his meal, and drawing his chair after him, joined the circle. From the pocket of his coat, which was stretched out before the fire, he drew out a morocco case and lit a cigar. Then stretching himself out in his chair, he turned to the landlord.

"Now, Mr. Doore," he said, "I'm ready to hear all about that mysterious light up in the castle and all about the ghost. Fire away."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

SECESSIONISTS IN QUEENSLAND.

The Central and Northern Districts Wish to Go It Alone.

The people of central and northern Queensland have petitioned the British Government for legislation that will erect the districts into separate and independent colonies. Similar movements have been started there before, but none that had the force and serious enthusiasm that is behind the present petition. The case which the delegates have presented to the Secretary of State for the Colonies is very strong. Few persons realize the immense extent of the territory which was assigned to Queensland when that colony was carved out of the mother settlement of New South Wales in 1859. Queensland is larger than the United States between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mississippi River. It is almost as large as the Indian empire of Great Britain. It presents a wide diversity of climate and resources. The whole population of the colony is only 400,000, and more than three-fourths of the inhabitants live in the temperate regions of the southern district of which Brisbane is the business centre.

Brisbane and the southern district command a permanent majority of the members of the Legislature, and the inhabitants of the central and northern districts complain that their interests are neglected; that the revenue raised by the colony is spent as Brisbane pleases; that central and northern districts of Queensland do not get their fair share of public improvements, and that, in fact, the Brisbane district is flourishing at the expense of the rest of the colony. Inasmuch as their interests and industries differ so greatly from those of the southern part of the colony, they think they should be permitted to separate from Queensland and have the privilege of attending to their own interests. They desire, however, to erect two colonies, one in central and the other in northern Queensland, because the interests of the two regions are far from identical. Rockhampton, the chief town of the central region, has a very large trade in cattle, supplied by the great ranches to which railroads extend far to the westward. On the other hand, the people of the northern settlements are very active in mining and sugar enterprises and other pursuits fitted for a tropical climate. They say the Rockhampton district cannot legislate for them any better than the people of south Queensland, and so the original demand for the creation of one new colony is now supplanted by the present scheme for two colonies.

It is not certain what the imperial Government will decide to do. Brisbane desires the entire colony to be kept together, and promises to legislate in the future more for the interests of the northern part of the country. The loyalty of Queensland has never been very great, and on some previous occasions, when they have had grievances to air, they have threatened to cut off entirely from the control of Great Britain. It is probable that the Colonial Office in London will endeavor to gain a little time by advising the delegates to await the action of the Parliament now in session at Brisbane.

The colonists of the northern districts have received the most ample promises that the present Parliament will look out carefully for their interests and vote for what is necessary for the development of their districts.

THE WARSHIP BLAKE.

Arrival at Halifax of the Flagship—A Powerful Vessel.

A despatch from Halifax, says:—The new cruiser Blake, the flagship of Vice-Admiral Hopkins, arrived from Bermuda to-night, having covered the 750 miles in 48 hours. Had she run full speed, the Blake could have done it in 36 hours. She is the most powerful warship of the British navy ever seen in North American waters. She carries 12 powerful long-range guns, 16 three-pounder quick-firing guns, 8 machine guns and 4 torpedo launchers, with a crew of 575 men. She is of 20,000 horse power, with a coal capacity of 1,500 tons. The cruisers Magicienne and Canada, which left Bermuda at the same time, have not yet arrived.

During the heavy gales the waves of the Atlantic are from 24 to 36 feet in height—half above and half below the mean level of the sea.

Salt does not enter into the food of the poor Venetians. They never taste it, and the hospital for the scrofulous children at Lido is filled by those who have not had this necessary article in their food.

AN ESSAY ON BALD HEADS.

The Consolation of the Baldness—Gas as a Cause of Baldness.

Long years ago a wise man remarked that nothing was entirely without mitigation, and when a bald head man asked him what consolation there was for a bald head, he answered: "It is better than no head at all." If he had made a study of the subject, he might have said much more for the bald man, but like many other wise men, he was satisfied to say the first thing that came in his head, so long as it seemed to him to be at once wise and witty. Now, what can be said to make a bald-headed man feel satisfied with his lot? There must be something to console him for the loss of his hair beside the fact that when there is no hair on a man's head he does not have to brush it, and can be comparatively free from the annoyances of the barber's chair. It may be some satisfaction to him to know that bald men are almost always neat men and cleanly in their habits. Men who are bald generally lavish considerable attention upon their scalps and make them their crowning ornaments. That they are generally sensible men is shown by the fact that few of them ever try to conceal their baldness by wearing detestable wigs. A wig, no matter how carefully it may be made, never proves to be an illusion to anybody but the wearer. He may deceive himself into the belief that his wig passes for growing hair, but he does not deceive any one else. The best thing for him to do under the circumstances is to discard the wig, polish his head and join the ranks of the irretrievably bald and sensible men. There is nothing dishonorable about being bald. Some of the best men in the world were hairless at forty.

If misery likes company it must be considerable consolation to bald-headed men to hear that baldness is increasing, and at the present rate of increasing, the whole human race will be bald in a few thousand years. What makes it is a question which is frequently asked and is answered in a hundred different ways. The latest theory is that the increase is mainly due to the extended use of illuminating gas. If this is true it should constitute a strong argument for the more extended use of the electric lights, and the electric light companies should make the most of the theory, especially as a well known citizen of Toronto testifies that his hair has entirely stopped falling out since he ceased working under a gas jet and substituted electric lights.

One of the aspersions that bald men write under is the common impression fostered by the alleged humorists of the country that they are always to be found in the front rows at the theatres. Let any man stand in the rear of the seats in any theatre when any good play is on the boards and look over the bald heads in the audience. He will be sure to see plenty, for bald men are sensible men and patronize theatres freely. He will notice, however, that the shining spots are scattered through all parts of the house, and not confined to the front rows. Indeed it will be strange if he finds even one hardened old bald-head seated in the front row, as bald men deem it their duty to combat this vile insinuation. Bald heads are beneficial in theatres to an extent scarcely appreciated by the owners or the public. Hair and dark garments absorb a great deal of light, while each shining pate acts as a reflector. Then, too, they relieve the monotony by their contrast and give a bright and cheerful character to the surroundings.

Like fat men bald men are generally good-humored and cheerful, and it may be said that the bald man is the better natured he will be. There is something to qualify this statement, however, and if you are a close observer you will find that the bald man who tries to hide his baldness by allowing his side hair to grow long and combing it up over his crown is not the same kind of a man as he who is bold in his baldness and attempts no deceit. And lastly it may be said without fear of contradiction that little children, philosophers and house flies love bald-headed men.

The Seven Bibles of the World.

The seven Bibles of the world are the Koran of the Mohammedans, the Tri Pitikes of the Buddhists, the Five Kings of the Chinese, the Three Vedas of the Hindoos, the Zendavasta of the Persians, the Eddas of the Scandinavians, and the Bible of the Christians. The Eddas is the most recent and cannot really be called more than a semi-sacred work. It was given to the world sometime during the fourteenth century of our era.

The Koran is the next most ancient, dating from about the seventh century A. D. It is composed of sublime thoughts from both the Old and the New Testaments, with frequent, almost literal, quotations from the Talmud. The Buddhists, Tri Pitikes were composed in the sixth century before Christ; its teachings are pure and sublime, its aspiration lofty in the extreme. The word "King," as used in connection with the sacred work of the Chinese, simply means "web of cloth." From this it is presumed that they were originally written on fine rolls of cloth.

The Vedas are the most ancient works in the language of the Hindoos, but they do not, according to the best commentaries, antedate the twelfth century before the opening of the Christian era. The Zendavasta of the Persians contain the sayings of Zoroaster, who lived and worked in the twelfth century B. C.

Across the Continent with a Wheelbarrow

The fact that a man is now trudging across the American Continent pushing a wheelbarrow before him revives interest in "Potter, the wheelbarrow crank," who traveled over exactly the same route in 1878. His full name was Lyman Potter, and his place of residence Albany, N. Y. He was a shoemaker by trade and much given to boasting of his feats as a pedestrian. O'Leary was doing his big walking about that time and had just finished a ten-days walk at New York city. One day in the presence of many witnesses Potter said that he himself could outdo O'Leary in feats of endurance. Some one suggested that he walk to San Francisco on trial. Potter did not hesitate a moment but offered to wager that he could make the trip in a given length of time, and, furthermore, that he could wheel a "paddy" barrow the entire distance. The money was covered and Potter left his home on Dove Street, Albany, on the morning of April 10, 1878, and arrived at San Francisco on the evening of October 6, being exactly 180 days in making the trip. The wheelbarrow and load (his clothing and cooking utensils) weighed seventy-five pounds. The distance traveled was 4085 miles.