

THOUGHT.

Swifter than arrows in their flight
In the future and the past,
In the darkness or the light,
Flying past.

From hemisphere to hemisphere,
With more than speed,
An instant there, an instant here,
No rest you need.

So uncontrolled by thy possessor,
So unlimited in power,
Often huge as a transgressor
At midnight hour.

Now hinting good, now hinting evil,
Building castles in the air,
Then leading to a fitful revel,
Or to despair.

Oft would I banish thee from me
To parts unknown,
Yet wish to be so full of thee
When older grown.

Chatham, Ont.

A. MACPHEE.

BENEATH THE WAVE,

A NOVEL

BY

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CHAPTER I.

THE SEA SHALL GIVE UP HER DEAD.

One Sunday morning, towards the end of October, now some nine years ago, the usual congregation was assembled in the primitive and simple church of Sanda-by-the-Sea.

Sanda is a small, rather picturesque looking village, standing on the very verge of our storm-beaten, rock-bound, north-eastern coast, and is inhabited almost exclusively by a fishing population, which for many generations has been settled at the place.

A few houses of a better class are, however, intermingled with the humble cottages where live the hardy men and women whose entire subsistence depends upon the unquiet and precarious sea. These houses are strange, old-fashioned dwellings, and like the rest of the village have an ancient and storm-worn look, reminding one unconsciously of the blasts and winds which have swept over them during the long years of their weather-beaten existence. In one of them at the time of which I am writing, lived the incumbent of Sanda—the incumbent who, about twelve o'clock on the Sunday morning in October when this story begins, was preaching his sermon.

There he stood in the ancient wooden pulpit, where had stood many incumbents before him, telling his scanty congregation, with a certain amount of fluency and ease, about the old story of which we never tire. A pleasant, rather comical face had the Rev. Matthew Irvine—the Rev. Matt, as he was very commonly called when he was not present, by his not-over-respectful parishioners. But he had a pleasant face, sweet, thoughtful, and humorous, and with a sort of pathetic comicality in its expression which surely never belonged to an Englishman. He was, in fact, Irish, but had lived so long in England that most of his original nationality had passed away. But the sweet, comical smile lingered about the face still, and he had a sort of light-heartedness also which is not very usual among our grave and somewhat solemn countrymen.

Yet he had had many trials, and life for him had lain along no smooth or pleasant roadway. To begin with, he was poor; to go on with, he had a sickly wife; and to end with, he was a schoolmaster as well as a clergyman, and driving Latin and Greek into the brains of stupid or idle boys, is by no means conducive to enlivening existence.

"But we must take things as they come," he used to say, and so he went on, bearing his burdens along with him, and stopping often on his way to help a fellow-traveller who was perhaps more heavily laden than he was.

His heaviest burden most men would have thought was his wife. She was not a lady; she was very sickly; and he had never been in love with her. His marriage came about in this fashion. His first curacy was in a remote part of the country, and when he was appointed, there was not a lodging to be procured in the neighbourhood. His vicar was in despair, but at last a grazier in the village, a well-to-do and jolly man, offered the young curate (as an accommodation to his friend the vicar) a temporary home in his house.

The grazier was a widower with one daughter, and though this young woman was by no means handsome, she had many suitors, for the grazier was supposed to be, and at that time actually was, very rich. But after the arrival of the Rev. Matthew (then a handsome young man of twenty-four), Miss Shadwell (the grazier's name was Shadwell) would never look again either at farmer, or grazier, or butcher, or indeed at any of the young men of her own class of life, who had come courting her before. She fell, in fact, in love with the dark, soft-eyed young Irishman, and what chance had the poor fellow with his generous nature and sweet disposition to escape? She would marry him, and she did marry him, for the Rev. Matthew felt that he could not

break the poor girl's heart. She was really deeply in love with him, and when he saw that it was to be, he tried his best to return her affection.

Well, they married, and by-and-bye, as years rolled on, when perhaps the curate was naturally expecting from his supposed wealthy father-in-law some little help more than the small yearly allowance he had agreed at the time of the marriage to give them, the grazier himself fell into difficulties. This was a great blow. Mrs. Matthew was frightfully delicate. Indeed, as she herself expressed it in her somewhat peculiar phraseology, she "was only held together by a pin." The necessary pin had, however, apparently been left out in the composition of the various little babes that she had presented to the unhappy curate, for one after another they had all died. Of the ten children that were born to him, one only survived, but the advent and departure of the little ones all cost money, and so the Rev. Matthew had got poorer year by year.

At last he was appointed by an amiable Bishop to the incumbency of Sanda, which was then worth about two hundred and fifty pounds a year. There was a large house also attached, and the good Bishop suggested that as Sanda was considered healthy, a school would be likely to succeed there. Upon this hint the Rev. Matthew acted, and he had been tolerably successful in his undertaking. He had indeed a fairly good school—some twenty boarders, perhaps—and some day scholars. He was thus in easier circumstances, and the sweet temper that had carried him through all his troubles was his still.

Such was the Rev. Matthew Irvine, incumbent of Sanda, who, now some nine years ago, was on a certain Sunday morning in October, preaching to his congregation.

This congregation is easily described. In a square pew near the pulpit sat a pale, gaunt woman, who was the parson's wife. In the two next pews were the schoolboys—pale boys, rosy boys, fat boys, and thin boys, but the fat ones and the rosy ones were in the majority.

Among the boys sat Philip Hayward, the tutor. He was a broad-browed young man, with a straight nose, but not handsome. He was clever. You saw that when you met the grey, thoughtful, inquiring, dissatisfied eyes. He was also unhappy, and was at that age when such men as he look for perfection they cannot find, and then see more imperfections than really exist around them.

He was looking now steadily with his grey eyes fixed on the red curtain and the brass rod round Mr. Trevor's pew. Mr. Trevor was the squire of Sanda; the largest landowner, nay, the only landowner, for miles and miles around. He was a wealthy man also, having married for money, and in his own estimation, and in the estimation of the little world around him, he was a very great man indeed.

So Philip Hayward sat with his eyes fixed on the red curtain of the squire's pew, but though he could not see through it, we are privileged to do so, and I can promise you that the occupants of this pew were well worth looking at.

First, there was Mr. Trevor—Reginald Trevor, Esq., J.P.; a tall, thin, grey-haired, gentlemanly-looking man, with a narrow forehead and thin lips, and a brain of no great capacity, filled with narrow ideas and prejudices to the very brim. Then there was Miss Trevor—Isabel Trevor. What was it that made you think when you looked at her face of all the fair and frail ones, famous in history and song, who have tempted men to destruction and shame! Yet it was a beautiful face—almost too beautiful, with the rippling golden hair swept from the white brow, and the rarely regular features, and full ripe lips. Yes, she was a beauty, and knew it, and prized it above all her other possessions. She was Mr. Trevor's only daughter, and would be very rich, but she cared and thought very little about her wealth. She thought a great deal more about the straight, regular features, and the large, restless eyes whose power she knew. She was then about twenty-two, and had had many lovers; though prudent men were afraid somewhat of this imperial beauty, and contented themselves with humbler women, who gave them more for their love than Isabel Trevor ever would have done. It was said of her sometimes that she had no heart; but we shall know her better by-and-bye, and be able to judge whether the soul within suited the splendid garb in which it was clothed.

Seated near her, but still at some little distance, was her second, or rather third cousin, and companion, Hilda Marston. Here was a very different face—a sweet, sensible, clever face, scarcely pretty and yet attractive, and with something in it that told you that the girl had thought of many things beyond the narrow circle in which she lived. She was a distant cousin of the Trevors, but this relationship was never mentioned in the household. It was understood there that it was not to be mentioned; and Miss Marston understood that she ought to consider herself a very fortunate young woman to be allowed to be one of the inhabitants of Sanda Hall. This is easily accounted for. She was the orphan and penniless daughter of a clergyman, and the Trevors naturally considered that they had done a very exemplary action in taking their poor relation to live with them. She was about the same age as Isabel Trevor, and very useful to her. She was indeed a clever girl, and tried to do her duty fairly enough, but sometimes, no doubt, she found it a little irksome.

These, then, were the three occupants of the Squire's pew—Mr. Trevor, Miss Trevor, and

Miss Marston—and by-and-bye, after the Rev. Matthew had pronounced the benediction over his scanty flock, in that strangely half-pathetic, half-comic voice of his; and after the commoner portion of that flock had disappeared through the humble door-way of the church, the Squire opened his pew door, and walked majestically down the narrow aisle, with his head thrown high in the air. Then followed Miss Trevor, with her head thrown back proudly also, and then Miss Marston, who carried herself with a meeker carriage, remembering, perhaps, that this was the house of God.

They passed into the churchyard beyond—the seaside churchyard. Let us pause a moment here, and look at the fisherman's gravestones. Here is one—Joshua Davidson, aged forty-two, drowned on such a date; also his son Joshua, drowned the same date, aged eighteen. Turn to another, James Johnston, whose fishing-boat capsized on such a night, drowned with three mates, whose bodies were never recovered, and so on. All around are the records of the cruel sea. Boys, middle-aged men, and old men; all have gone down. Some, you will see, have been drowned far from home, when some big ship disappeared with all her crew, but mostly the inhabitants of this place have perished almost within sight of it.

Through these common monuments by the shore, the Squire passed down, with his head still thrown high in the air. It was its natural position, he thought, and he held it high to show how superior his head was to all the heads of his fellow-creatures around him.

One of the schoolboys (a curly-haired, rosy-cheeked urchin) was lingering behind the rest in the churchyard to speak to the Squire's family. Mr. Trevor looked at him, did not smile, but with one of his thin, well-gloved hands, gave a little pat on the boy's shoulder.

"Well, Edward," he said, and that was all. The boy upon this grinned, touched his cap, and then ran up to Miss Marston.

"How are you, Hil'?" he said, and Miss Marston stooped down and kissed his rosy cheek.

He was her brother, a dependant also on Mr. Trevor's bounty, and he was one of the Rev. Matthew Irvine's scholars.

"Well, my dear," said Miss Hilda, "and have you been a good boy in church?"

"Of course," replied Ned Marston, and his sister playfully and unbelievably shook her head.

By this time the party had reached the end of the narrow pathway among the graves, and had come to the gate of the churchyard. As they passed through this they overtook the grave-faced tutor, Philip Hayward, who was lingering there under the pretext of waiting for his pupil, Ned Marston. He touched his hat to the Squire as he passed him, and the Squire touched his hat in return. Mr. Trevor paid the tutor this compliment because he was a B.A., and a gentleman, and because he had never seen anything in his conduct that he disapproved of. Miss Trevor, too, looked one moment at Mr. Hayward as she went by, and a faint smile—scarcely a smile—stole over her lovely lips in token of recognition. She had hardly ever exchanged a word with him, but she had been with Miss Marston when Miss Marston had talked to the tutor about her little brother, and so she did not utterly ignore his presence. A sudden flush rose to Hayward's face as Miss Trevor thus acknowledged him, and as he took off his hat and stood bareheaded before her, his eyes were fixed upon her face with a look of almost passionate admiration. Then, as she passed on, he gave a restless sigh and turned away; turned to face Miss Hilda Marston, who held out her hand to the tutor with a smile.

"What a bright fine day it is, Mr. Hayward," said Miss Marston courteously.

"Yes," answered the tutor, but he said even that brief monosyllable absently. He was not thinking of the pleasant face before him, but of the beautiful one that had passed by. Not of Hilda Marston, who was willing and anxious to be his friend; but, of a woman to whom he was nothing, nothing, at least, but one of the many men who greatly admired her, and as such, perhaps, he was not quite indifferent to Miss Isabel Trevor.

The tutor did not offer to accompany Miss Marston and her brother to the Squire's carriage, which was waiting a few yards off the churchyard gate on the roadway. He knew that to have done so would have been to have forgotten his proper station in the Squire's eyes; but he stood still and watched the ladies enter the carriage, and saw the disappointed look of the boy, Ned Marston, when it drove away. Sometimes (not every Sunday, though) Mr. Trevor would ask Ned to lunch with them at the Hall. He did not do so this Sunday, however, and Ned came back to his master with a disappointed look; for besides the lunch the Squire always gave him half a crown when he went away.

Thus, the half crown and the lunch, and not seeing more of his sister, combined, naturally created great disappointment in Ned's youthful heart. Could we have seen straight therein, we would have seen that though the lunch was nice, and seeing his sister nice, that the half-crown was the nicest of all to Ned's imagination. Pray do not despise Ned. He was merely an ordinary schoolboy, and had private necessities of his own for that half-crown, in the liquidation of debts which he had incurred in the vain expectation of receiving it.

He came back with rather a rueful countenance then to his tutor, and Hayward smiled grimly at the boy as he did so.

"So they haven't asked you?" he said.

"No, it's a shame, isn't it?" answered Ned.

"And I hadn't time to say a word to Hil'." Oh, Ned, Ned, have you begun so soon! Here was a boy scarcely eleven years of age, putting his best foot forward already. "Not time to say a word to Hil'," indeed! While all the time he was thinking of that lost half-crown.

The tutor, who did not know of the half-crown inducement to visit the Hall, now smiled more kindly on the boy.

"Well, they'll ask you another time," he said, "and then you'll see more of your sister." And he drew the lad's arm through his as he spoke.

He, too, did this for a motive; a motive, however, unconscious to himself. This boy was the link—the one link—between him and Isabel Trevor. For this reason the tutor clung to this boy, and gave him little boats and bats, and talked to him as he talked to no other boy in the school. Thus, Hilda Marston was grateful to the tutor for his kindness to her little brother, and anxious to be his friend. But such a friendship would never have been allowed, they both knew, by the Squire, and therefore their acquaintance continued to be of a very distant description.

The two—the tutor and Ned Marston—then followed the rest of the schoolboys to the incumbent's house. This stood in the village, nearly surrounded by the broken-down, quaint, and in many instances, squalid cottages of the fishermen. You entered it by rather an imposing iron gateway, and in the front of the house was a large grass plot, with a sun-dial in the midst. Then you came to the house. Grey and green with damp and mists were its walls, and blown and torn even in October, were the creepers that the Rev. Matthew endeavoured most assiduously to train against them. It was a large, roomy and commodious house, and built back; the back windows looking out on the sea, and the front ones on the village. Scarcely a healthy place for boys, you would say, and yet it was so, for if in the front sometimes came the smell of stale fish and other impurities, at the back did not the glorious sea breezes, fresh and health-giving, blow with uninterrupted vigour?

Presently the effect of these breezes was shown at the dinner table. Round the Rev. Matthew's substantial board gathered the fat boys and the thin boys, the pale boys and the rosy boys. Oh! how they ate! But not until the Rev. Matthew had blessed the meal. In his quaint and pleasant way he stood up and said a simple grace, and after this, with right good will, they all began. The Rev. Matthew also played a fair knife and fork, and ate his dinner with a grateful and contented mind. There was real piety indeed in the heart of this humble parson. He believed. He saw beyond the trials and discomforts of his earthly home. He saw a kingdom which would never end, and joys and glories, to which he was the heir. Oh! scorn him not, you higher clergy, who dwell in the pleasant places of the Church, and sit beneath the shadows of the grey cathedral towers. He is not one of you now, but his promised reward is the same; and if you have ten talents laid out in well-doing, he has his five also employed in his Master's service.

So the Rev. Matthew enjoyed his dinner with a grateful heart, and the boys enjoyed theirs too, with no especial feeling about the matter except that roast-beef and plum pudding are good and pleasant to the taste. Then, when the meal was over, they went bounding out of doors—bounding, running, racing, leaping along the big brown rugged cliffs, on which Sanda stands, and down the rude roadway which leads to the long yellow sands beyond.

On these sands, this afternoon, the sea was breaking in deep white-crested waves—waves which came rolling slowly and majestically on the shore. It was not a storm; not one of those days when the voices of the deep bring terror to the dwellers on the land. But it was a heavy sea, and as the boys ran on in their play the tutor walked apart, moody and restless, as the great mass of waters spread out before him.

Suddenly he was startled by a cry—a cry from the boys. Ned Marston ran up to him, gesticulating and pointing to the sea. Then some of the others followed.

"Look, Mr. Hayward, look there, sir," cried Ned.

"It's a corpse!" said another.

"It's a whale!" said a third.

Upon this the tutor looked at the dark object in the sea which had attracted the attention of the school-boys. This object came forward and went backward with the waves. It was receding when the tutor first saw it, and behind it and around it floated something long and dark. Hayward was keen-eyed, and he was also brave.

"It's a body," he said briefly, and as he spoke he began to prepare himself to plunge into the sea.

There was no great danger, though the surf was heavy and rolling, for the tutor was a practised swimmer, and in almost as short a time as it takes to tell it, Hayward had swam into the sea, had reached the dark object floating there, had twined some of the long hair which floated round it over his strong arm, and so swam backwards to the shore, bringing the body with him.

The boys ran forward to assist him to land it; to assist him in laying it straight and decently on the sand, and then clustered eagerly round. It was a woman's body—a woman past her first youth, and dark and foreign looking. Many days apparently had this poor corpse tossed in the restless sea. It was bruised, and the rich