



## THE WEDDING RING,

By ROBERT BUCHANAN.

Author of "THE SHADOW OF THE SWORD," "GOD AND THE MAN," "STORMY WATERS," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER VI.—Continued.

The experiment succeeded, well enough, at least, to give me hope that it might succeed altogether if I give it time. Sir George consented to sell me the place—it is an outlying piece of property, bought by his father only a few years ago, and since then I have remained here, working and educating Dora. You are the only person in the world, Mr. Bream, who knows my secret. I know that I have no need to ask you to keep it, but I do ask you to pardon my ingratitude in being silent all these years."

"Are you quite sure," asked Bream, "that you have been silent?"

She looked at him questioningly.

"Do you remember the date on which you left the hospital? It was the 8th of April. On the 8th of April of every year I have received a £50 note, with a slip of paper bearing the words, "For the poor of your parish, from a friend grateful for past kindness." It was not your hand, but I have always thought it came from you."

"Yes," she said quietly. "It came from me. Conscience money, Mr. Bream."

"More than enough," said Bream, "to buy you all the absolution you ever needed. I hardly required your explanation, I understood from the first. I am sorry that circumstance has brought me here, since my presence awakens such unwelcome memories."

"Do not think that," she answered. "Since I have never forgotten, you cannot charge it to yourself that you have made me remember. You are as welcome to me now as you will be, before long, to every one of your parishioners."

"It was some little time before silence was broken between them again. Then Bream asked: "You have never had news of—him?"

He shrank from mentioning O'Mara's name, remembering that she had avoided it.

"None, whatever."

"You have made no inquiries, caused none to be made?"