

shores of Ireland. Some of these cliffs rise sheer from the water's edge many hundred feet in height, and to look even from their margin down on the white hovering sea-birds that haunt them in flocks, and on the surfy waves far beneath, is enough to fill the eye and brain with terror. Picture, then, what it must be to be lowered down midway over their face in a sort of wicker basket, attached by a single rope, as is the custom with many of the natives, who make a kind of livelihood by taking the eggs of the wild fowl from the shelves and crannies of the rocks!

In the case of which I wish to tell you, a pair of very large and fierce eagles had made their nest on a jutting point that was seen hanging far out above the abyss. It was a point the boldest climber had never set foot upon, and for long in their eyry the eagles made their home, and reared their young undisturbed. At last a young man formed the daring resolve that he would rob the nest. The basket was prepared—its rope was fastened in the usual way by a party who were to wait his signals on the top of the cliff, and armed only with a large knife or hanger, the youth, in his frail cage-like apparatus, began to descend. Slowly but safely he reached the giddy platform. A couple of young eagles lay huddled in the nest, but the parent birds were absent. It was an opportunity not to be lost; so, joyfully seizing the unfledged birds, he was about to give the signal that he should be hoisted up, when suddenly the air above him became darkened, and looking upward, he beheld the two parent eagles casting a fearful shadow, and with a fell swoop and wild screams hovering just above his head. They were so near that he could see the fiery glare of their eyes, and the huge talons that were spread out as if to rend him in pieces. Presence of mind failed him, and, instead of giving the signal, as he should have done, to be raised, with his drawn knife he made a stroke at one of the eagles, as it swept so near as to fan his face with the edge of its wing. Horrible to relate, instead of striking the bird, the knife struck the rope by which the basket hung. Yet it was a side stroke, and the rope was not severed quite through. It was parted all but a *single thread!* What a moment of stricken horror!

The great foaming abyss below, that made the head now whirl to look down—and all that saved him from it, only this *single thread!* And where the gush had been made, too, was just so high up as to be beyond the reach of his hand to grasp over it. For a minute he dared not stir. His eye was wild—his face was blanched—the next breath might carry him into the hideous depth. Yet for dear life he made one great venture—he sprang clear of the basket, catching, as he did so, desperately at the rope above its divided threads—the effort was successful, although no more than barely so—just over the *single thread* his hand seized the cord with a grasp of iron; those on the cliffs felt the strain, and fearing some peril had befallen, they began to raise it by a quick and timely effort. In a few minutes the young man was brought safely to the solid ground above, but as the story tells, by the horror of that brief but awful period his hair was bleached white as the locks of age.

Whether, dear readers, the *single thread* of this story be a fiction or no, I cannot say; but I am quite sure that, in the lives of those who are not safe in Jesus, it is an awfully true thing. They hang over a gulf—oh, how dark, deep, and full of terror! The life God gives in this world is the cord by which they hang, but then it is a cord so slim and fragile, that any moment it may snap. And what then? Nay, so bad is the case of some, that with their own hands they do blindly and rashly cut it almost in twain. Every sin is just a cutting of the soul in this way off from God—it is a severing of the cord well nigh through, even till but a *single thread* remains. How long, long, and patiently God attaches some souls to Himself, by no more than this single thread, giving yet a chance, waiting yet in mercy, not willing yet that they should perish! Then, when some are awakened to their danger, how desperate often does the case seem! The *single thread*—the stroke given then cannot be recalled—the gulf below! Yet, one great effort, if the heart has courage to make it, may save the soul, after all, alive. Above the thread *He* stands who is mighty to save. The instant He feels the anguished grasp, and hears the heart's deep and stricken cry, that instant He makes haste to help. He is sure to rescue—so as by fire, it may be the case of many, yet He is sure to rescue. Reader, put Jesus to the test in this way—try his strong arms, instead of hanging over the brink of eternity by a *single thread*. Cast yourself on these, and swift and certain He will draw you up out of all dangers, into the Father's rest!—*Juvenile Missionary Record.*