



## THE WEDDING RING.

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

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"Your man is now in New York," said Mr. Hawk. "I could take out papers to prevent him leaving, but I have private reasons for not doing so; he sails this forenoon on the Mesopotamia. You have only half-an-hour to spare if you want to see him," and with an ugly look and a nod Mr. Hawk disappeared.

Jake hesitated a moment, then hailed a yellow cab which was passing.

"Drive like — to the Cunard wharf."

Away they go as hard as they can drive. As they come down to the wharf they can see the steamer still alongside the wharf, a crowd of people looking on.

"There would be just time—nearer, yet nearer still. Once aboard, that is all he asks."

"Quicker, quicker!" he cries. "Five dollars if you're in time."

Thus urged, the man makes a detour through a narrow lane to the left, which he calculates will enable him to cut off a few hundred yards. As he rattles down, they encounter full butt a government van laden with stores leisurely rolling along from the opposite direction.

"This is an obstacle impossible to pass. — you, drive on," roars Jake, "drive over it, over the pavement, over anything."

The driver catches the fever of excitement and makes horse and cab upon the pavement. Even then there is not room. The cab and van collide; with the shock Jake is thrown out head foremost. He is not killed; the poor maimed hand saved his head—perchance his life. He takes no heed of that, but runs as fast as his feet can carry him towards the pier.

As he reaches the mouth of the lane the great liner is moving from the quay side.

If he can only be in time to take a flying leap on deck!

Fast as he speeds, the preparations on board speed faster still. A forest of waving hats and handkerchiefs shut out the vessel. He buffets his way through the crowd. He reaches the edge of the pier to find that he is too late.

Not too late, however, to catch a passing glimpse of his dead wife's paramour, who stands aloft upon the hurricane deck, dressed as though he had just turned out of a handbox. He nods pleasantly and kisses his hand to some quondam friend. Jake's curses are drowned by the mighty roar of "God's speed—good-bye!" amidst which the great ship passes out to sea.

### CHAPTER XIX.—THE GREAT WATERS.

For a brief space Jake Owen was paralysed with disappointment. He stood haggard and wild upon the quay, watching the mighty ship till it disappeared, and to the eyes of those who observed him, he seemed rather like a man mourning some loved one who had departed from him, than one intent on terrible revenge.

But his was a nature of strange tenacity. Had he lain hands upon his enemy, as he had hoped, he might have spared him; but his purpose, from being defeated, grew in strength and violence—so that he was more than ever bent on bringing the foe to bay. Recovering at last from his stupor, he rushed to an hotel and consulted a time table, from which he discovered to his joy that a vessel sailed that day for Liverpool from Hoboken, on the other side of the city.

Without losing a moment he proceeded by car and ferry to Hoboken, and arrived there in time to get on board the vessel, which was under weigh.

The John Macadam was a screw steam-vessel of about 3,000 tons burthen, belonging to the famous Macadam line of packets, trading between Liverpool and New York. She carried both cabin and

intermediate passengers, as well as a large steerage complement forward. Her captain was Andrew Macpherson, a sturdy weather-beaten Scotchman, and all the officers, as well as the surgeon and a large portion of the crew, belonged to the same nation. On week-days the vessel was spick, span, and business-like from stern to stem, and on Sunday it was solemn as a church. When the captain read prayers in his broad Annandale accent, it was like a Covenant meeting on a Scotch hill-side.

Jake Owen, not being wasteful of money, had taken a berth in the intermediate, or second, cabin. His companions were small traders, Jews on the pilgrimage to the shrines of Mammon, farmers returning from a trip to the new country, and one or two rough miners returning home to bring out their families.

Lost in gloom, and deeply determined on revenge, Jake kept almost entirely to himself, while the great vessel steamed out through the dark waters, leaving the white elephant of Coney Island behind her and steering due east into the ocean. The dull mechanical thunder of the engines, ceasing neither night nor day, kept tune to the miserable throbbing of his brain, to the deeper beating of his sad, overburdened heart.

Surely, he thought, no man breathing on this planet could be more miserable, no man, however unfortunate, could have had a heavier load to bear. His passion for Jess had been the master-purpose of his simple life. What tore his soul to frenzy, what he could not endure or reason calmly upon, was the bitter sense of shame at having been so cruelly befooled. For the poor fellow was proud as Lucifer, and he felt himself in the present situation an object for all the world's contempt.

Well, it was all over. Jake had drunk his cup of humiliation to the dregs; and all he thirsted for now was a meeting with the man who had mixed the poison for his drinking. Would he find him? Yes, if he hunted the earth from pole to pole. And then!

Revenge, more than almost any other evil passion, leaves its signs upon the outer man. Few men would have recognized in the gaunt, moody, gray-haired creature, with that cruel, far-off look in his eyes, the tall and powerful Jake Owen of a year