

clothing in which it had been attired, was rent and torn. But on the hands glittered and sparkled, as the water fell away from them, some valuable rings. The tutor lifted the left hand and looked at the third finger. The symbol of marriage was there. It was a wife, perhaps a mother, then, that the sea had given up from its wild keeping.

CHAPTER II.

THE STORM.

There was great excitement in Sanda during the afternoon after this incident. Dead bodies were not very unusual visitors to this shore, but these were mostly of rough seamen, or of the hardy fishermen, whose little cots stood on the great brown cliffs above. But this woman's body was another thing. The Squire himself came down on the sands and condescended to examine the cold damp hands, where glittered and shone four costly rings beside the wedding one. The gems in these rings he pronounced to be of great value, and three of them to be of foreign workmanship. One, however, was apparently an English ring—a great, heavy, diamond hoop.

"It looks like a family ring," said the Squire.

"Ah, poor soul, it won't matter to her now, whether it's a family ring or otherwise," said the Rev. Matthew, who also had come down upon the shore.

"It may to her surviving relations, though, Mr. Irvine," said the Squire, throwing his head high in the air.

"I was thinking of the poor creature herself," answered the gentle parson, "and how now she will be far above such gauds as these." And he reverently lifted one of the cold, damp, decorated hands in his as he spoke.

"It is our duty," said the Squire, pompously, "to endeavour to discover who is now the legal owner of these rings."

"To be sure," said the parson, "and in the meantime won't ye take charge of them, yerself, Mr. Trevor? Ye see," he added with his comical smile, "ye're the only one of us about here rich enough to trust with them."

"I trust that this is not so," answered Mr. Trevor yet more pompously. "But if you think it is my duty to take charge of these jewels," he added, "as the lord of the manor, I will not shrink that duty."

"I thought ye wouldn't, Squire," said the parson (for you see he was Irish, and loved to say pleasant things), and the Squire bowed gravely in acknowledgment of the compliment.

So the Squire became the custodian of the dead woman's rings, and by his direction the corpse was carried up the rough road from the sands to the cliffs, on which Sanda stands. The next day the inquest on the body was held, but nothing further was elicited on that occasion. The tutor, Philip Hayward, gave evidence, and the school boys. The Coroner, in summing up, said something complimentary to Mr. Hayward for the courage he had displayed in swimming out to recover the body.

"There was no danger," interrupted the tutor gravely.

Still the Coroner considered that courage had been displayed; and after the inquest was over, Mr. Trevor said pretty much the same thing.

He went, indeed, up to the tutor as he was leaving the room where the inquiry had been held, and slightly touched his arm.

"Mr. Hayward," he said, as the tutor turned sharply round, "I also wish to say a word to you about your conduct yesterday."

The tutor was now facing the Squire, and measuring him mentally, as such men as Hayward unconsciously measure their fellow-men.

"I do not suppose," continued the Squire, "that, as you justly stated, there was much danger to life or limb in recovering the unfortunate woman's body that we have just viewed. But I consider there was moral courage, and promptness of action, and such qualities deserve praise. I, therefore, who am ever ready to give praise where it is deserved, wish now to express to you my sense of appreciation of your conduct, and I assure you I do so with much pleasure."

All the time that this long speech was going on, the tutor was looking at the Squire. The tutor, with his pale, earnest face and thoughtful eyes, was looking at the narrow-minded being that social position had made his superior.

"I deserve no praise," he answered, quietly, after the Squire had finished his speech.

"I have pleasure in thinking that you do," said Mr. Trevor, with a bow. "I also appreciate another good quality that you appear to possess, which is modesty—a quality peculiarly fitted to a young man who has his way to make in life—and if I can be of any future service to you, I assure you, young sir, that I will gladly exert my influence in your behalf."

"You are very good, sir," replied Hayward, and the Squire then bowed again, and having bowed also to the Coroner, majestically left the room.

Isabella Trevor had heard with almost contemptuous indifference of the body that had been washed to the shore.

"It is probably some foreign sea captain's wife," she said.

"Poor, poor woman!" said Hilda Marston, with a sigh.

The two ladies were sitting in the drawing-room of Sanda Hall, when this conversation took place. Sanda Hall was then, and is now, a grey and ancient house, the stone of which is green, mildewed, and worn; that of the pillars of the gateway being absolutely hol-

lowed out with the action of the sea air. It is built in two wings, with a broad front, and is in the centre of extensive grounds. The wood around it is, however, a failure; stunted and dwarfed are the trees by the piercing winds and uncongenial climate of the north-eastern coast. Everything that wealth could do there was done to make it look cheerful, yet Sanda Hall was, and is, a cheerless-looking dwelling. In the drawing-room, at the time of which I am writing, Isabel Trevor's luxurious tastes were plainly visible. Everything here was rich and brilliant-hued, and well suited the tall, golden-haired, beautiful woman, who had adorned it to her taste.

She was standing in one of the deep windows tormenting a grey and rose-coloured parrot with a gold pen, when she made the remark about the poor woman's body recovered from the sea being a foreign sea captain's wife, and she had scarcely noticed Miss Marston's reply, so occupied was she with her present amusement. She was still thus employed (the parrot bristling her feathers and screeching her disapproval) when Mr. Trevor entered the room, and approaching his daughter, said:—

"I have just returned from the inquest, Isabel, held on that unfortunate woman. See, these are the rings I told you of."

Isabel turned sharply round at these words, and flung down her pen on a table near, and stretched out her hands for the rings.

"Why, papa," she said, after examining them for a minute, "these are splendid rings! I do not think," she went on, "that these could have belonged to a common sea captain's wife."

"No, impossible," said Mr. Trevor. "Look at the diamond hoop, Isabel. Are they not splendid stones?"

"Splendid!" echoed Isabel almost covetously.

"I have none such, papa."

"Well, my dear, if we could only discover their rightful possessor, we might buy them, perhaps," said Mr. Trevor.

"And there was no clue discovered to-day, then?" asked Isabel. "No one identified the body?"

"There were no witnesses but young Hayward, Mr. Irvine's tutor, and some of the school-boys," answered Mr. Trevor. "But I proposed after the inquiry was over, that advertisements should be inserted in the *Times* and some of the local papers, and what else can be done?"

"What else, seemingly?" said Isabel. "But, papa," she added, after thinking a minute, "if these rings never find a proper owner, won't they become legally yours as lord of the manor?"

"I should not care to broach that claim, Isabel," answered the Squire, who was not so fond of rings as his daughter.

"Well, at all events," said Isabel (who was a woman who took sudden fancies), "I think I shall wear this one for the present." And she kept turning the heavy diamond hoop, as she spoke, slowly round one of her delicate fingers. Suddenly she drew it off, and examined the inside rim attentively. "Look here," she cried, "look, papa; look, Miss Marston—here's a discovery! What do you think is engraved here. See, quite distinctly. '*To my Beloved*.' It's a romance, I declare, a complete romance!"

The Squire and Miss Marston examined the diamond hoop in turns. The inscription in the inner rim was quite plain—"*To my Beloved*."

It seemed sad to Miss Marston, who laid down the ring gravely, and with a sigh.

"Poor woman!" she said, "then her death has left someone's life desolate!"

"Some one will console himself," replied Miss Trevor, carelessly, and she again lifted the diamond ring, and this time placed it on one of her fingers.

"I shall wear Mr. Someone's ring until he comes for it," she said. And she held out her slender hand to admire it.

"I would be afraid," said Miss Marston, almost with a shudder, looking at the ring on Isabel's white finger.

"Would you?" answered Isabel Trevor, with a little laugh. She was thinking, "Poor thing, she hasn't a chance of wearing it," but she did not say this.

Thus Isabel Trevor took possession of the diamond hoop, and continued occasionally to wear it. She did this from a mere whim. But she took whims—fancied one thing particularly one week, and entirely forgot it the next. At the present moment her whim was the dead woman's diamond ring.

The dead woman herself was buried a few days after this, for obvious reasons. She was buried in the churchyard of Sanda-by-the-Sea, and the Rev. Matthew Irvine read the service over her body.

She had only two mourners who followed her to the grave, and one of these was the tutor, Philip Hayward; the other his friend among the schoolboys, Ned Marston. Miss Marston was pleased when she heard that her young brother had gone, and she told him so.

"Old Hayward wanted me to go," truthfully affirmed Master Ned, "but it was rather a sell."

So the poor bruised body lay still beneath the earth at last, after its long wanderings apparently amid the restless waves. On the following Sunday Miss Marston went up and looked at the newly-made grave; but Miss Trevor, though she still wore the dead woman's ring, did not approach it. This was not from any feeling on the subject. The freshly cut turf lying over the poor tenant beneath, awoke no emotions in Miss Trevor's heart; but she

simply left the churchyard quickly, because it was beginning to rain, and because the weather was threatening to be yet more wet and stormy.

This was not only a threat. The wind veered round to the south-east during the afternoon, and by midnight a perfect gale was blowing on the coast. Long before the night set in, the fishermen had lit the beacon on the cliff, and had drawn their boats high upon the shore, and had gathered in their gear, and had placed everything, as far as they could, in safety from the expected storm. And the storm came. Such a storm as had not raged on the coast for thirty years. Isabel Trevor heard it, and trembled lying in her down bed, beneath the substantial roof of Sanda Hall. The Squire heard it, and felt uncomfortable; and Hilda Marston heard it, and turned on her pillow to pray.

"God help the poor sailors," she said, "God help all those at sea."

Other prayers, too, were offered in the village of Sanda that night for the poor seamen out in this awful gale. The Rev. Matthew got up, and knelt reverently down.

"Lord, be with Thy poor creatures exposed to this dreadful blast," he said. "God be merciful to us sinners this night and for ever more."

Under his roof, too, the tutor rose restlessly, and looked out on the blackened sky. He, too, was thinking of the men at sea—thinking vaguely and passionately of the great unsolved problems which lie between this life and the life which is to come. He had none of the Rev. Matthew's simple faith; he had only a great heart "crying for the light." To him had not come "the peace of believing," and yet he knew, he felt, that his soul would not die here, nor perish when the time came that his earthly form should be consigned to the dust.

He stood and looked at the blackened sky, and heard the raging of the waters below. He knew that unheard and unseen, strong men would at that moment be in their death agony. Where would these poor souls go, he thought, after their brief struggle for life was over? He did not pray for them. He stood there gloomy and irresolute, wondering if anything could be done—if his weak arm could save one victim from the cruel sea?

When the morning broke, the sky was one dull, uniform, leaden grey. The wind was blowing a hurricane, and the rain fell in great splashing, blinding drops, and the banks and cliffs were white—white with the wild sea foam that blew inland every moment in huge flakes on the flying scud.

Below, near the steep cliffs on which Sanda stands, wrecked on one of the great shelving rocks that jut out into the sea, a ship was lying with her keel uppermost. She was a foreign brig, and broke up before the day was over, and her crushed and rotten timbers were all that came on shore to tell the tale of her last struggles during that wild night.

The storm continued the whole day, and about three o'clock increased in intensity. By this time nearly all the inhabitants of Sanda (men and women alike) were gathered together on the high cliffs, on which it is built to watch the ships endeavouring to run for shelter to the nearest harbour. About half-past three a thin, blue line of steam appeared on the horizon. This rose and fell. Then a steamer, gallantly holding her own amid the mighty mass of foaming water, grew visible. Now but her funnel was seen, now her decks. The excitement on the cliffs grew intense. The waves seemed to sweep right over her, but still she went on—on past the wild headland of Sanda—on, prayed many a woman present, safe to port.

As she disappeared there rose a cry—a cry that rang through the crowd. Philip Hayward, who was among the watchers of the sea, turned round when he heard it, and as he did so, found himself face to face with Isabel Trevor. There she stood, the rain beating and dashing on her golden hair, and streaming down her lovely features. She was pale and excited. It was so grand, she thought, watching this death struggle with the waves.

Unconsciously, almost, the tutor drew nearer to her. Then again rang that cry—the cry from the crowd—"Another ship in sight! Look no! Look no! Another ship labouring in the sea!"

"She is a yacht," said a sailor who was standing near Hayward, inspecting her through a long telescope that he held in his strong brown hands.

"She'll never live through it," muttered an old fisherman shaking his grey head.

Everyone on the cliffs now saw the yacht and her fearful danger. She was driving rapidly on—fleeing as it were, before her devouring foe. Then, suddenly, when every eye was fixed upon her, she veered round. She had been running apparently for the nearest harbour; now she turned, and began drifting, drifting fast upon the rocks below.

What a cry there was then! The women threw their aprons over their faces, and ran backwards and forwards, screaming and gesticulating, while the men stood silent and pale.

"They've lost power over her," presently said the sailor with the telescope, to Hayward.

"Her time's come," said the old fisherman.

"God be merciful to the poor souls on board."

The yacht was now rapidly approaching the cliffs. But before she struck; before the fatal, grinding, crushing blow could come, a great sea lapped over her, and then another. But she rose from the mass of waters, though an appalling shriek from the crowd told that all believed her fate was certain. Then a third sea struck

her, and this time she went down to rise no more.

She disappeared so suddenly that she might have been a phantom ship. Hayward rubbed his eyes. She had been there a moment ago, now she was not there. It was like a dream. Isabel Trevor gave a cry, and the crowd swayed backwards and forwards, and pressed nearer to the edge of the cliffs. Every eye was fixed upon the sea; the sea that had just swallowed up the ship and her living crew.

(To be continued.)

CHESS.

AN EVENING WITH SOME OF ITS CELEBRITIES.

BY IVAN RYBAR.

A pleasant place is the town of Laertnom, pleasant for the contrasts to be found in its buildings—here a clap-boarded house, there a brick one; here an elegant limestone mansion, there a verandah, doll-sized, indescribable cottage; here a shingle roof, there a tin, iron, or slate one. Pleasant from the national differences existing among its inhabitants, one section of its area almost exclusively appropriated by residents of Gallican descent, another by an admixture of American, German, Scotch and English, whilst a third is decidedly under the control of that lively element, sent out in rich profusion by the Emerald Isle. Pleasant from the sociality of its people, mixed though they are, yet a general emulation is evinced to render all their differences companionable. Pleasant for its situation, with its hilly background, covered with the variegated foliage of an abundant forest growth, while in its front sweeps a magnificent river, whose flood is swelled by confluent tributaries from an almost boundless western territory.

Well, to this pleasant city circumstances had directed my way, and, after an active day's occupation, I was enjoying a quiet evening's rest, when a visitor was announced. On his introduction I recognized an agreeable gentleman, with whom I had become acquainted during the forenoon's engagements, and, rising, I extended my hand cordially, as on our previous interview he had impressed me favourably.

"Good evening, Mr. Skintone," I remarked; "it gives me pleasure to see you again, and now that the day's work is over, I hope a little leisure will enable us to cultivate more of an acquaintanceship."

"I entirely reciprocate your advance," he replied. "I imagined from your remarks to-day that you were a stranger, and concluding that you might find the evening somewhat lonely, I took the liberty of dropping in."

"Thanks for your consideration," I rejoined. "I was just beginning to feel a slight touch of homesickness, so your visit is kind and well-timed."

Thus we glided into a pleasant half-hour's chat, scarcely thinking of the passing moments, when I gave utterance to the platitude that "the world, after all, was only a great chess-board, on which different characters figured according to their peculiarities."

"Ha! Mr. Rybar," my visitor observed, "your mention of a chess-board reminds me that the chess club of this city meets to-night, and as I have the *entree* there, if you feel any interest in the game, I shall be pleased to act as your guide to the rooms."

"Nothing, my dear fellow, could be more to my mind; although no great player, yet I always feel gratified in witnessing a right good combat at the royal game, and I'll just don my hat and follow you."

A ten minutes' walk brought us in front of a stone building, whose architectural pretensions might have distinguished it as a cross between a portion fractured from the ancient temple of Solomon and an off-shoot from the great Nauvoo Cathedral. On entering, we commenced climbing a tortuous staircase, barricaded by a swing door, that threatened vertebral dislocation as you went up, and olfactory reduction as you descended. After escaping a spinal disaster, we found ourselves in a large-sized room, but dimly lighted, for although the usual distribution of gas arrangements were to be found, yet it seemed as if economical considerations limited the jets to a mere sufficiency for producing an obscuring haze.

The room itself had somewhat the appearance of a lecture hall, in which a lecture had never been delivered—desk, benches and tables crowded its space, but they looked as if they had never been placed for the uses of an audience or lecturer. It had, too, somewhat the character of a library hall; at one end and at one side were shelves, on which, in badly-assorted manner, were ill-conditioned-looking volumes, that in their dusty repose appeared supremely remote to the slightest approach to anything like circulation.

Under the few gloomy gas flames were five or six chess-tables, at only two of which were