

MASTER OF THE MINE

By Robert Buchanan.

CHAPTER XI.

It was now late in the year, and the winter storms were beginning. There were intervals of calm, cool weather, when the wind came from the east, and still frosty days, when a breath as cold as steel crept from the red sunrise of the north; but ever and again the trumpet of the tempest sounded westward and southward, and the ocean rose up before it in mountains of furious storm.

One night as we lay in our beds we heard the gathering of such a tempest as has seldom been seen, before or since, on those shores. It came with fearful lightning and close-fellowing thunder, followed by drops of black and hideous hail; and then, with a crash and a scream and cry, the wind rushed from the sea. I lay thinking every moment that the house would come down, shaking as it did to its foundations, or the roof be blown away; and every minute the blasts grew more terrific. Presently, I saw my uncle, partially dressed and holding a light, enter my chamber.

"Hugh, my lad, be you asleep?"

"As if anyone could sleep on such a night!"

"Mother be frightened badly," he returned. "She be praying, lad, dawn 't the kitchen. Hark to that!" he added, as a flash of fiery lightning filled the room, and wind and thunder mingled together in awful reverberation.

I slipped on my clothes and went down with my uncle to the kitchen, where I found my aunt full of superstitious terror. She had got out the old Bible, and, having opened at random, was reading in a low voice from one of the Psalms. I did my best to allay her fears, but succeeded very badly.

For the greater part of the night we remained sitting up. With the first peep of daylight I seized my hat and moved to the door.

No sooner had I left the cottage than the wind caught me, and almost dashed me from my feet. Short as the distance was to the seashore, I thought I should never reach it, so terrible was the fury of the blast! More than once I had actually lie down on the ground and let it trample over me! And with the blast came hail and heavy rain, blinding me, smiting my cheek like whiplash, and drawing blood, so that I could scarcely see a yard before my face.

At last I gained the cliff, and here I had much ado to prevent myself from being lifted up bodily and blown away. But I threw myself on my face, and looked seaward. Nothing was visible, only driving mists and vapors. Gaining courage presently, I crawled down the path leading to the shore. As I went I was sometimes flattened like a rag against the rocks, by the sheer force of the wind; but I persevered, and at last reached the bottom.

I perceived, to my consternation, that the gale had struck the boat house with such force as to sweep the wooden roof away and dash it into fragments against the cliffs. I crept on to the door, which was on the lee and sheltered side, drew forth from my pocket the key of the padlock, opened it, and went in. The great boat lay there unharmed, but was half full of water. One of the oars had been lifted out and snapped like a rotten twig, but that was all.

Suddenly, as I stood here sheltering from the gale, I heard a sound from seaward, like the sound of a gun. I started, listening. In a moment the sound was repeated—a vessel in distress!

Quitting the boat house, I stood on the shore, and strained my eyes against the drifting vapors and blinding wind. There was another faint report of a gun, and finally the red light of a rocket, which shot up through the black vapors like a shooting star, and disappeared!

Greatly agitated, I made my way up the cliff, and reached the summit, where I found that an excited group, composed of fishermen and miners, had already gathered. Among them was my uncle, who addressed me eagerly the moment I appeared.

"Did you see the lights, lad? Sure as death, there be a ship on the rocks out there!"

"On the South Stack," said an old fisherman, naming an ugly reef which lay right across the mouth of the bay, three-quarters of a mile from shore.

Suddenly the storm-smoke blew upward here and there, leaving visible wild patches of tossing water. Straining my eyes, I saw something like a white wall of vapor rising right out to sea in the direction of the South Stack, and right in its center the black outline of a large vessel, wedged firmly on the jagged rocks. I could discern a black funnel and two masts, a mainmast intact, a foremast broken off just above the decks. She was a large screw steamer, with her back broken right across, and only saved from sinking by the very rocks which had destroyed her.

How she had got into that fatal position it was difficult to tell. Possibly her propeller had snapped, or the water had swamped her engine and put them out. More than once I fancied that I discerned shapes like human forms clinging to or lashed to the rigging of the mainmast, but it was impossible to distinguish them with any certainty.

While we stood hesitating, the mists rose all round the ship; and we saw, to our amazement, that a stir was taking place upon her decks. A boat was preparing to leave her sides, and, freighted with human beings, push away for the shore.

Never shall I forget that sight! Just in the lee of the crippled vessel, under the cloud of white smoke which rose for a moment high above her remaining mast, there was a heaving patch where the boat could float in safety; but beyond it the waves rose again in awful crested billows, whirling and swirling toward the shore. Seen from our point of vantage, the boat seemed a mere cockle-shell. The under-swells caught her and rushed her along at lightning speed, and in a few moments she reached the broken water. There the wind seemed to smite her side-long, and she was buried instantaneously in the trough of the sea. But she re-appeared, half smothered in surf and flying foam. Then we saw, rapidly approaching her, a mountainous and awful wave!

The little boat, as if it were a living

thing, seemed to see it, too, and to struggle to escape. Sick with horror, I covered my eyes; I could not look. Then I heard a deep groan from the men around me, and looked again. The boat had gone, never to reappear. The mighty wave had broken and was roaring shoreward, and amid its foam I saw, or seemed to see, shapes that struggled, sank and died.

"Man the lifeboat!" I cried. "Quick, lads! Follow me! Look yonder! There are living men on the deck still, and in the rigging. Come!"

Down the path we rushed. Each man knew his place. They urged the boat, bow forward, into the surge, and waded with it, those the furthest from shore wading breast deep in the waves. Thrice we were beaten back, but at last she floated—the men leaped in and took their places—the oars smote the boiling surge, and out we crept to sea.

Once fairly afloat, we realized for the first time the strength and fury of the storm. Clouds of flying foam covered us, the strong seas caught the oars and almost tore them from the grasp, and for a moment we scarcely seemed to gain a foot of way.

More than once the seas made a clean breach over us, but the air-tight compartments and cushions of cork kept us from actually foundering. On we went, with the light of the kindling east turning from red to reddish-gold behind us, and the mists, struck by the new radiance, thinning to seaward; and so, after a fierce tussle with wind and water, we came in full sight of the doomed vessel.

Stuck fast on the cruel reef, her back broken, she was struggling like a crippled bird. At first I could discern no sign of life, but as we drew nearer and nearer, I saw one or two figures clinging in the rigging, from which many of their comrades had doubtless been washed away. They saw us coming, for one of them waved something white.

"All for your lives!" I cried. "There are men aboard!"

The lady answered me with a cheer, and the boat shot forward within a hundred yards of the steamer. Then I saw a slight figure filled all my soul with fear and pity. Lashed to, or clinging to, the mainmast, was the solitary figure of a woman. I knew her sex by the wild hair falling over her shoulders, and the curious feminine grace of her form, visible through a dark cloak that had been thrown hastily upon her shoulders; but her head was drooping and her face hidden, and she did not seem conscious of what was taking place.

I told the men that a woman was there, and though they needed no new incentive to give them strength, their faces grew more animated, and I knew they would have faced fire as well as water in such a cause. In a few minutes more we were close at hand, rising and falling on the white surge in the vessel's lee.

Then the woman raised her head, and looked in our direction. The men saw her, and gave another cheer; but I—I could have swooned away in consternation. My head went round. I looked again and again.

Either I was mad, or dreaming, or the face I gazed upon was that of the love of my boyhood—Madeline Graham!

CHAPTER XII.

Yes; I knew her in a moment. The lurid light of the tempestuous morning shone full upon her face, and on the clinging dress and cloak, which more expressed than bid her lovely form. Her eyes were wildly fixed, her face pale as death; but in her features there was a splendid self-possession far removed from common fear.

She was fastened to the mast by a rope. Her feet were bare, and I saw, to my horror, that all she wore save the great fur cloak was a night dress of white cotton, reaching to her feet. Peering more closely, I perceived that her lips were blue, and her form shivering with cold; indeed, it was a miracle that she had not perished in the chill of that cruel night. With an eager cry I leapt upon the deck, and staggered up toward Madeline Graham.

Twice I slipped to my knees, and was driven back and bruised against the bulwarks; but the third time I succeeded, and, reaching her side, clung to the mast, and gazed into her face.

"Madeline!" I cried.

Her eyes met mine, but she gave no sign of recognition. It was clear that what I remembered so vividly she had utterly forgotten.

Drawing my clasp knife, I cut her free, and put my arms around her to bear her back to the boat. The decks rocked and split beneath us; she clung to me, as if in terror. Then I watched my chance, and, raising her bodily in my arms, carried her to the vessel's side and handed her to the men.

I was about to follow her, when I was attracted by a wild scream, and, turning, I perceived the figure of another woman crawling on the deck. She was dark-complexioned, like a mulatto, and almost naked. Without a moment's hesitation, I ran to her, and half lifted, half dragged her, to the vessel's side.

I now perceived that we had saved, in addition to the two women, two white seamen and a black man, who afterward turned out to be the ship's cook. I clung to the bulwarks, and looked round, searching for any other signs of life.

"Come, lad, come!" cried my uncle. "Quick! the ship's breaking up!"

I looked at the strange sailors, who sat shivering in the bottom of the lifeboat.

"Are there no more souls aboard?" I cried.

"Not one," they answered. All the rest had perished in the long boat, in the fatal attempt to reach the shore.

"Give way, lads," I cried. "Pull for your lives!"

Away we went through the surging sea. Not a minute too soon did we leave the vessel; for ere we were thirty yards away the decks were rent asunder, and the huge funnel toppled over and fell like a battering ram upon the bulwarks, which broke like tinder beneath the blow.

As the keel struck the sands, a dozen men rushed in waist deep to seize the boat; our men joined them, and then, with a long pull, a strong pull, and a

great ringing cheer, the boat was hauled high and dry, and we were safe.

My first thought was of Madeline. I carried her into the shelter of the boat house. Her face and hands were cold as ice, and she was still swooning. Supporting her head on my shoulder, I breathed her name. She looked upon me; still there was no sign whatever of recognition.

Gradually I saw the color come back to her cheeks, but very faintly.

"Anita," she murmured, and looked round as if seeking someone.

The rough fellows, clustering in the boat house, murmured sympathizingly; whispered encomiums on her beauty passed from mouth to mouth. And indeed she looked strangely lovely, even in her desolation—her eyes brightening, her color coming and going, her hair streaming over her shoulders, her neck and arms and feet as white as driven snow. At that moment some of the lifeboat's men appeared, leading with them the colored woman, who, the instant she saw Madeline, sprang toward her and knelt by her side, hysterically sobbing and kissing her hands.

Madeline bent over her and addressed her in some foreign tongue—Portuguese, I afterward discovered. She answered volubly in the same speech. I suspected the truth, that this black girl was an attendant or waiting maid of some sort, and that Madeline was her mistress.

Turning to one of the rescued sailors, I questioned him concerning the lost vessel. She was a large trading steamer, he said, bound from Demerara to the port of London; her name, the Valparaiso. He explained that two of the boats had been smashed into fragments when the ship first struck. The long-boat remained, and at daybreak the first officer determined to make for shore. All the crew followed him but my informant and two others, who preferred sticking by the steamer to facing certain death. The men, in fact, were mad with fright, and for this reason, perhaps, altogether forgot to wait for Madeline, who had gone below.

So the last boat left the ship. It had not gone far when Madeline reappeared. She would have been swept away but for the assistance of the sailors, who strapped her to the mast as the only chance of safety; and as she stood there terror-stricken, she saw the boat engulfed with all its crew—the same sad sight which we had seen from land.

It turned out, on further questioning, that Miss Graham was the only passenger, and occupied, with her colored maid, the captain's own cabin. Her father, a rich Demerara planter, had died some months before she took passage, leaving her a great inheritance. I looked at her again, and though how different she was from all the other women I had known, in her queenly grace and warmth of beauty. Beside her, even my cousin Annie would have looked coarse and common.

"You must not stay here," I said, approaching her, "or you will catch your death. Do you think you can ascend the cliffs? My aunt's cottage is close by, and I should like to take you there at once."

She rose at once, shivering, and took my arm. Half leading, half supporting her, I guided her out of the boat house and up the steep ascent leading to the summit of the crag, my uncle helping her upon the other side. Some of the others followed, leading the colored girl. I conducted her to our cottage and handed her over to the care of my kind aunt.

Thus God, in a mysterious fashion, had restored to me the being who had been to me for so many years a sweet memory and a delightful vision. I felt strangely happy, yet troubled. When my aunt had led Madeline to a chamber upstairs, where she tended her with motherly sympathy and tenderness, I sat in the kitchen, waiting and wondering, like one in a dream.

(To be continued.)

Three Black Crows Again.

In writing about the cowboys of South America, Paul Fountain represents them as having been maligned by other travelers who had not come in contact with the men themselves, but had listened to stories told about them. To show that such stories increase as the square of the distance, he tells the following anecdote, which reminds one of the classic three black crows:

A friend was traveling on foot to a place which he called "Chip City." At the first stop he heard exclaimed:

"What! Going to Chip? Why, they killed seventeen men there in a street fight last week!"

The next day the host with whom he happened to stop varied the story thus:

"Going to Chip? Terrible place! Why, they stabbed twelve men to death there a month ago!"

At the third stopping place the story was:

"I wouldn't go to Chip if I were you. Worst rowdies in the State. Six weeks ago they shot seven men in cold blood."

At the week's end it was:

"Not a nice place, Chip. Three months ago they killed two men in the street."

Arrived at Chip City, which was a mining place, my friend found that a single man had been killed in a fair fight about two years previously.

Feminine Figures.

"No," said the woman in the case; "I cannot marry you; the disparity in our ages is an insurmountable barrier."

"But," answered the man who would a lubby be, "you admit to having celebrated twenty-two birthday anniversaries, and I am only ten years your senior."

"True," said the fair one; "but think of the difference twenty years hence; you will be 52 and I will be 27."

And, being a wise man, he said never a word, but let it go at that.

Dr. Calmette of Lille, by immunizing horses with a mixture of snake venoms, of which cobra venom is the principal ingredient, has produced an anti-venomous serum which is reliable in cases of cobra bite.

Calumny would soon starve and die of itself if nobody took it in and gave it a lodging.—Leighton.

CHILDREN STILL.

We seek no more a daily prize,
Nor triumph in our dreams.
So changed the luster of the skies
So faint and few the gleams.
Yet comes anew, when others play,
That unforbidden thrill,
And are we dull and old to-day,
Or only children still?

We loved the battle once, but now
We are not overbold,
There's wisdom on the weary brow,
And in our hearts the cold.
Yet in the light of eager eyes
We lose the wintry chill,
And then we are not otherwise,
But simple children still.

The visions of our glorious youth
Have faded long ago;
We hope no more to find the truth,
And should we care to know?
Not ours to scale the viewless height,
But there's a purple hill,
And still we gladden at the sight
And climb as children still.

How much of all the good we planned
Is perfect or begun?
Who watched the lifting of God's hand,
And waits for his "well done"?
But when the children whom we love
The good we missed fulfill,
Thank God our hearts prevail to prove
The hearts of children still.
—London Saturday Review.

Her Inconsistency.

FROM the open windows came music by the orchestra in the ballroom on the further side of the house, softened by distance. Moonlight, broken up by intervening trees into bars and blotches of golden radiance, lay all about them as they walked up and down the veranda.

"The right kind of a woman always appreciates a proposal of marriage from any man as a great compliment. Coming from you it is the much more to be valued, but I cannot marry you," said the woman.

"I have to thank you for having listened to me so patiently. Might I trespass a little more upon your good nature and ask permission to discuss the matter further with you?"

"No amount of discussion can profit either of us, so far as I can see. But, as I have said, in asking me to marry you a great compliment was paid me, and, in return for that compliment, I suppose I owe you permission to indulge your love for discussion or argument."

"Thanks for the permission," said the man, still in his stolid manner. "I cannot recognize my proposal as, in any sense, a compliment, but I am willing that you should, if you wish, take the manner in which I made it as a compliment. Recognizing the splendid development of your own logical faculties, I have made my offer of marriage in perfectly business-like form. I have heard you often declare that a contract of marriage is like any other contract, and should be entered into only when both parties are fully aware of what they are doing."

"Do you think women are ever entirely consistent?" interrupted the woman.

"The man looked a trifle surprised and replied:

"At least I give you credit for having a splendidly consistent mind. You do not mean that I have erred in my manner of proposing, that you would have preferred more of an air of romance, and all that sort of thing?"

"Now the situation is something like this," continued the man in very much the same tone of voice that he would have used in arguing an important case before the Supreme Court. "You are twenty-nine—or is it thirty?—years old, have a reputation as a beauty, and all that. You can, I know, marry any one of two or three men who can offer you at least as much as I, but modesty was never a prevailing characteristic of mine, and I have not feared to measure myself with these other men."

"On the other hand, I can give you pretty much anything you desire that costs money. I stand well in my profession, and have prospects of soon being near the top of it. Altogether, I am satisfied that any one would call it a very suitable match all around."

"Does the prosecution here close its case?" inquired the woman, laughing a little.

"I hardly care to regard the matter as one of prosecution and defence," said the man imperturbably, "but if you wish to use the terms I am forced to admit their applicability. Will the defence rest its case on the testimony submitted by the prosecution, or will it elect to submit an argument?"

"The defence will submit an argument," replied the woman. "I admit that the match would be, as you say, pronounced suitable to every one. As for the two or three other men whom you aver that I can marry at any time, I cannot answer. I have noticed that the number of my proposals has been falling off of late, and attributed the fact to advancing age—you were right when you said I was thirty. I may close the discussion by saying that I have made up my mind to become an old maid."

"Far be it from me to say anything against those estimable members of society—the old maids," said the man, "but I do not think you will ever be one of them. A wise man once said that the cowl of a monk hides either a disappointed lover or a great rascal, and while I do not endorse his opinion unqualifiedly, I am firm in the belief that every old maid is a woman who was disappointed in love or who was too cold-bloodedly selfish ever to

PATROLLING THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY.



One of the great necessities incumbent upon Russia in the present Eastern war is that of keeping open her railroad communications with the western portions of her great empire. Over the single track Siberian railroad must be forwarded all her re-enforcements and supplies, so that any serious interruption of traffic, whether by bandits or Japanese spies, might prove disastrous. The railroad is carefully patrolled in the entire Manchurian region by Cossacks and so thorough is the system of supervision that no serious injury has been inflicted on it, notwithstanding that the country is swarming with bandits, said to be organized and in cases led by Japanese officers. Russian staff officers frequently inspect the line and see that the Cossacks are performing their duties. These officers are mounted on tricycles, with which they readily cover great distances. Our illustration is from the Illustrated London News.

marry. Surely you do not come in either class?"

"No," said the woman, reflectively. "I can't say that I do, and yet—"

"Perhaps," said the man, and now his voice was very gentle, as though he feared he might here touch some old wound unwittingly, "there is in your life some romance which I have not guessed. Believe me, I would not wound you for worlds, and I trust you will pardon my clumsy speech."

"Oh, I am not a blighted being, nevertheless," this with a laugh that did not ring altogether of merriment.

"Then your refusal to marry me is not based upon the ground that you prefer some other man?"

"No, I am not in love—with some other man."

"Then why not marry me?"

"I have given you the best of all a woman's reasons, 'because.'"

"But your refusal of me is final, I may take it?"

"Yes"—the "yes" with an almost inaudible sigh, a sigh so nearly inaudible that it did not reach the man.

He had thrown away his cigar and stood for a moment gazing out toward the trees. Then he began to speak, and his voice was harsh with feeling that had been restrained.

"I think I quite forgot to mention one thing in my proposal. I did not say that I love you very dearly; that, not wishing to be a beggar of love, I have waited all these years to be in a position to offer you the things which I mentioned as rendering me eligible for your hand. You, who are so cool and calm, what can you know of love and passion? Now, I know that I have worked all these years in vain—no, not altogether in vain—for I am going to kiss you once, here and now, if it means the loss of all the little that is left me of your regard."

He gathered her in his strong arms and kissed her, not once, but many times, on her forehead, on her eyes and on her lips, and then released her, with the full consciousness that he had done an unpardonable thing which he did not regret.

But the woman held out her arms to him and said:

"Oh, Jack, dear, why didn't you tell me that you loved me at first."—San Francisco Call.

CUT THROUGH SOLID ROCK.

Centuries Elapsed Before Completion of Corinthian Canal.

"Speaking of canals," said the engineer who had been talking about Panama, "a very interesting canal, and one not much heard of, is that connecting the Gulf of Corinth and the Gulf of Aegina in Greece. It's some older than any we have in the Western hemisphere, also, for Pericles, tyrant of Corinth, proposed to cut through the Isthmus as long ago as six hundred years before Christ. Superstition stopped him, however. Julius Caesar and Caligula took it up again when Rome had hold of Greece, but it was too much for them. Then came Nero, and he went at it with vigor, but the work stopped when he died. Others kept pounding away at it for the next several hundred years, but it was not until 1881 that real work of the Nero energy was put upon it. Then Gen. Turr, aide-de-camp to Victor Emmanuel of Italy, organized a company and worked on till the money gave out in 1890, the chief

obstacle being some kind of a flint which dynamite couldn't break.

"About \$10,000,000 was spent up to 1890, and then Mr. Syngros took hold, organized a new company, with \$905,000 working capital, and finished the job in 1893. It is only about four miles long, but it is 69 feet wide at the bottom, about 80 feet at waterline, 26 feet and 3 inches deep in water, and it is cut nearly all the way through solid rock, rising at some points for 200 feet above the canal. It is like a canyon, and ships do not take kindly to it, the entrance being bad, a strong wind blowing through it as through a great air shaft, and there is at times a strong reverse current. It is an interesting trip through the canal, and it saves 123 miles of very rough water and 20 hours of time; but so far skippers prefer to go around the peninsula rather than through the canal, though with some changes which will be made it is believed the canal will become of general use as soon as a few ships begin to use it and remove the prejudice now existing against it."—Comfort.

Tagging a Fish.

The United States fish commission has contracted the small boys' habit of tagging fishes. Metal tags are fastened to marine fishes, which are let loose in the ocean with the idea of identifying them in case they are caught at any future time.

The tag, which is light and made of copper, is securely fastened by a wire passed through a fin near its junction with the body. No two tags are alike, each having its own markings. Fifteen hundred cod were thus duly tagged and released last spring on the New England coast. The object of the tagging is to ascertain the rate at which a cod grows, the frequency of its spawning and the extent of its travels in the ocean.

The same experiment is being tried this year with young salmon, artificially hatched, for the rivers of the Pacific coast. The fishes are "fingerlings," about three inches long. In this way it is expected that the age at which the salmon comes from the sea to spawn will be ascertained, also the rate of growth and the percentage of fry that attain maturity. The experiment is an interesting one and has an obvious bearing on fish culture problems.

One Genius and Another.

"A genius is a genius whether he's rich or poor. There's really no difference."

"Pardon me, there is a slight difference. A rich genius can afford to let his hair grow long; a poor genius can't afford to get it cut."—Philadelphia Press.

A Hard Worker.

"You oughter git me a job," the office seeker said. "Why, I done the work of a dozen men fur you on election day."

"You did?" replied the successful candidate, incredulously.

"Sure! I voted for you twelve times."—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

Workmen's Wages.

Wages in the United States in the average are more than twice those in Belgium, three times those of Denmark, Germany, Italy and Spain and one and one-half those in England and Scotland.