

BETTER DEAD

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Better Dead by J. M. Barrie

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BETTER DEAD

BY
J. M. BARRIE



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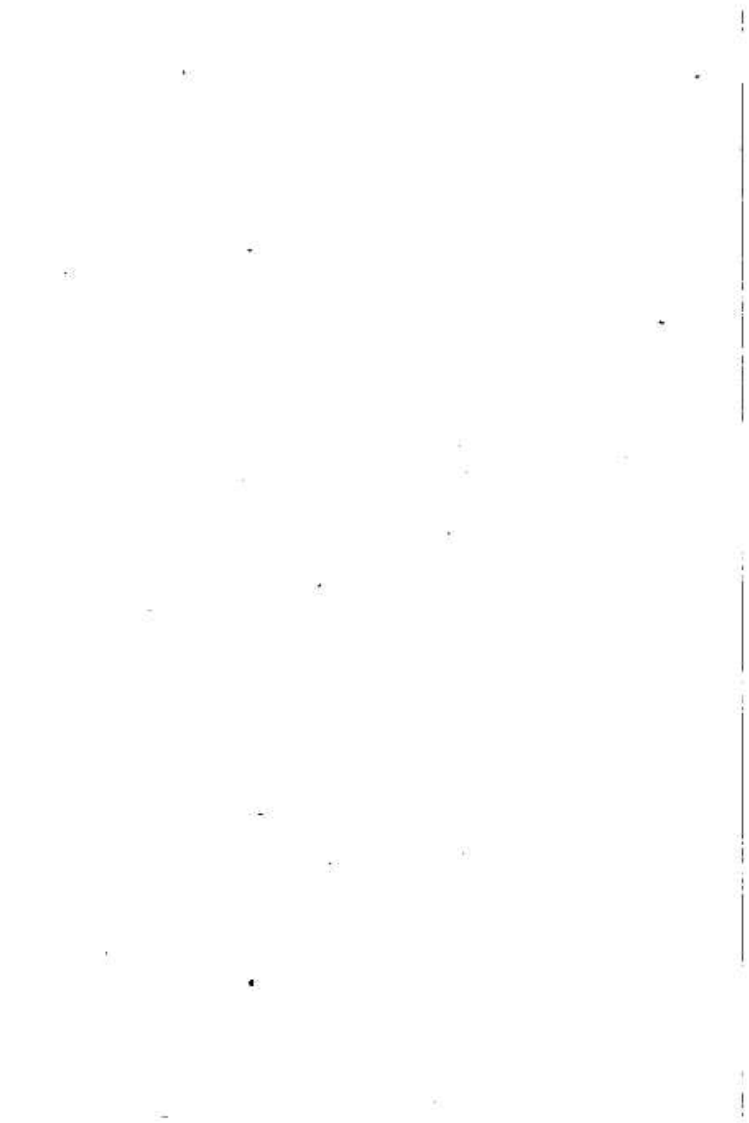
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BETTER DEAD.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN Andrew Riach went to London, his intention was to become private secretary to a member of the Cabinet. If time permitted, he proposed writing for the Press.

'It might be better if you and Clarrie understood each other,' the minister said.

It was their last night together. They faced each other in the manse-parlour at Wheens, whose low, peeled ceiling had threatened Mr. Eassie at his desk every

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time he looked up with his pen in his mouth until his wife died, when he ceased to notice things. The one picture on the walls, an engraving of a boy in velveteen, astride a tree, entitled, 'Boyhood of Bunyan,' had started life with him. The horse-hair chairs were not torn, and you did not require to know the sofa before you sat down on it that day thirty years before, when a chubby minister and his lady walked to the manse between two cart-loads of furniture, trying not to look elated.

Clarrie rose to go, when she heard her name. The love-light was in her eyes, but Andrew did not open the door for her, for he was a Scotch graduate. Besides, she might one day be his wife.

The minister's toddy-ladle clinked against his tumbler, but Andrew did not

