

STORY OF THE WEDDING RING.

By BERTHA M. CLAY,

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CHAPTER II.

Martin Schofield, Esquire, was lord of the manor of West Dene. He was a wealthy man, and one who enjoyed life to its full extent. He had a great aversion to all kinds of responsibility and trouble; he had a land agent who managed one portion of his estate—the woods of Dene and the farms beyond them were under the care of Paul Waldron. By courtesy Paul was called the squire's steward, but in reality his duties were more those of head keeper than anything else.

He was the son of poor parents. His father had been the head gamekeeper at West Dene Manor for many years; his mother was an amiable, gentle woman, whose very life was centered in that of her boy. They had given Paul a fair education—something above his station. The boy was naturally quick and clever, but his chief delight lay in mechanics; he liked all kinds of machinery; he enjoyed finding out how he could improve upon anything he saw made; he longed to learn some practical trade, but his parents were not willing.

"The squire had always promised," they said, "that their son should have charge of the West Dene woods, and it was not kind of him even to wish for anything else."

So, to please them, he accepted the squire's offer, and before he reached his twentieth year he was master of the keeper's cottage.

"I can study," he thought; "I shall have long hours to myself, and I can work out the ideas that have lain so long in my brain."

But in a short time a change came over him. He went one day to a pretty little town called Ashburnham, and there he met his fate. There he saw Ismay Hope and from that moment until the hour of his death he loved her with a deep, true, lasting love, and gave no thought to another.

He was walking down the principal street of the town when he met her. Her lovely face, her light graceful figure, her wealth of waving brown hair, the pretty blue cloak—she remembered the picture while he lived. He looked earnestly at her as she passed, and a faint smile rippled over her lips. The long, lingering gaze amused her. As a sudden glow of warm sunshine will bring to life some late blossoming flower, so that half smile, that one look at her seemed to bring Paul's whole soul to life; a new world opened to him—a great, golden blaze of light seemed to have fallen at his feet, and he walked on, dazed, giddy and confused.

Then he turned back to see where she went. She entered a small house that stood by itself at the end of the street.

"I must know who she is," he said to himself, "I feel that I must win her."

His soul seemed on fire; there was no more peace, no more rest for him, until he had won her. He did not leave Ashburnham that day until he had been introduced to Mrs. Hope and the beautiful girl who had so completely stolen his heart. Mrs. Hope was a widow; her husband had been in the Civil Service, and she was left with barely sufficient to live upon.

Paul told her frankly that he had been her daughter and had fallen in love with her.

"Many people do that," was the quiet reply. "But I must tell you something; I call her Ismay Hope, she is not my daughter."

Won by Paul's manner, his handsome face and eloquent words, she told him Ismay's story.

"She is no child, not even a relative, of mine," said Mrs. Hope; "nor have I the least idea where she comes from, or who her parents are. One summer night—it was very warm, and I was standing at the open window, watching the passers-by—I saw a woman entering near my house—in my own night I called her then a lady, and I am inclined to call her so now; she had a pale, beautiful face, with wavy brown hair; she was poorly dressed, and held by the hand a little child, I saw her turn aside and drop a letter into the post office; then, when she walked on again, her face grew paler and her eyes had in them an agony of misery when they had met mine. I saw that she could hardly walk, and that in a few minutes more she must fall, so I spoke to her, and she, looking at me, said:

"Oh, if you would but let me rest for one half hour in your house! Will you, for the love of Heaven?"

"I could not refuse such a request," she entered my house, never to leave it alive.

"My heart seems chilled," she said, when I had placed a chair for her.

"She sat down and called to her maid."

"Ismay, my darling, my heart is growing cold! And immediately afterward, when I went to help her, I found that she was dead. The coroner's verdict was that she died from disease of the heart, increased by over-fatigue and privation. We buried her—all the neighbors were kind, and, looking at the beautiful dead face, no one could suggest a workhouse funeral for her. We buried her, and then my husband said he would never part with the child. She was so like her mother that the resemblance started me. We buried the mother and kept the child. My husband almost worshipped her, and she has been called Ismay Hope ever since."

"You never discovered anything about her mother?" asked Paul.

"No; our vicar, Mr. Kirrell, inserted some advertisements in the papers, and made some inquiries, but all was in vain. The poor mother had round her neck a little gold locket containing the portrait of a gentleman, and besides her wedding ring she wore one with a motto inside it. The vicar took

them all away with him. I fear we shall never know who that poor dead woman was."

"And this—the child—has been as a daughter to you ever since?" questioned Paul Waldron. "If I can persuade her to love me, Mrs. Hope, will you give her to me?"

And then the coy, blushing beauty came in, and Paul Waldron was more enchanted than ever. He was not long before he had told her how dearly he loved her, and had asked her to be his wife. There were times when she puzzled him. There was something about her quite different from other girls; she was so refined, so gentle, her very beauty was of an unusual kind—dainty, exquisite, unlike the rosy beauty of the country girls. He found, too, that her head was filled with romance. Who her mother was formed an endless subject of thought for her.

"I am sure," she said one day to her handsome young lover, "that my mother was a lady, even though she was wandering through the streets with me alone."

"What makes you think so?" he asked.

"I cannot tell. I feel sure of it. And feel sure of another thing, Paul; and that, that though I have been brought up in this homely fashion, I am a lady myself. You may laugh at me, but I feel like one—or, rather, how I imagine a lady should feel. I love all things bright and beautiful; I detest everything mean, sordid and little. I feel as though I had tastes which could never be gratified, longings which can never be realized. I have strange sensations always of not being in my right place."

They were sitting under the spreading shade of a large oak tree, the evening sun in its full splendor, making everything bright. The next moment he was kneeling at her feet.

"You are not in your right place, darling. Your place is my pretty cottage—that must be your home. You shall be my queen—and I will work for you as no man ever worked before because I love you as no man ever loved."

He wooed her as women are seldom wooed, with such eloquence, and truth, such love, such tenderness, that she could not resist him. His handsome face, his musical voice, his devotion, all touched her heart as nothing else could have done. She was too beautiful not to have many admirers, but none of them had pleased her. This handsome young keeper, with his dark eyes and thrilling voice was quite different. His great passionate love touched her—his utter and entire devotion flattered her; beside which, he talked of one day being rich, and that was the one great wish of her heart. She knew that she was beautiful. To have her beauty adorned by costly dresses and rich jewels, to live in a grand house, to have her servants to wait upon her, seemed to Ismay Hope the very acme of bliss.

She did not stop to consider how visionary, after all, was Paul's idea of growing rich. He would show her occasionally models of steam engines or of looms, and tell her that a patent for this invention and that improvement would make him a wealthy man. He painted the future for her in glowing colors, and after many months of chivalrous wooing he persuaded her to be his wife.

Did she love him then? Many times in the dark after years Ismay Walton asked herself that question. She believed she did; his devotion, the flattery of his great love, was as needful to her as the air she breathed. It was a grand thing, too, to win the love of the handsome gamekeeper; all the girls envied her. She did not dislike the idea of being her own mistress. Mrs. Hope had always been very strict with her; the cottage, moreover, was a pretty home; and then Paul loved her so—oh, how dearly he loved her! She was very young to marry, but Mrs. Hope seemed to think that did not matter.

"I shall die easier, child, when my turn comes," she said, "if I have left you in the charge of a good man."

Would she ever have a chance of doing better? It did not seem probable. The inhabitants of Ashburnham were quiet, prosaic people; they admired her bright beauty, but they were not of the kind who, "looking in at a fair face, forgot the whole world." The young squires and farmers, with most laudable intentions, always, to use their own expressions, married money; they admired pretty faces, but they required more. The men who looked up to her with keenest admiration were not men whose position had any attractions for her.

She thought long and seriously over the matter. There were many old maids in Ashburnham, and to Ismay, so bright and beautiful, so full of vitality, their lot seemed almost unendurable. She might spend her life there and never have another offer of marriage so good as this.

It was a prosaic way of looking at the matter. She repeated the question to herself—should she ever do better? Not there in that quiet little town; it was not probable. So one bright summer morning Ismay became Paul Waldron's wife, and he took her home to his pretty cottage.

CHAPTER III.

Paul Waldron had won the girl he loved; for a few weeks he was perfectly happy, and then clouds, light as the breath of the summer wind, came over the sky.

He thought his forest home so beautiful. He was so content with it that he wondered his wife was not the same. She was always asking about the great world, longing to be in the

midst of it, and he could not understand her.

"I have no desire for life, Ismay, outside my own home. Why are you ever wishing for change?"

He was too earnest even to understand her lighter nature; her wonderful beauty had so completely charmed him that he could not see her deficiencies of character. Her discontent troubled him; it seemed to him a want of love—and yet she must, she did love him.

They had been married a year when their little child was born, and Paul thought Ismay would grow more content then. She loved the child very dearly, but not with the passionate devotion some mothers give to their children. She was not a heroine; she would never have been a martyr; but she was wondrously lovely, gifted with marvelous grace, and Paul Waldron loved her.

Ismay Waldron was far from faultless. She was vain of her own loveliness.

She longed with the whole strength of her soul for wealth. She envied those who were rich and powerful. She was worldly in her way, ambitious, and always craving for one thing—riches. Yet she was amiable and gentle, with a sweet, caressing manner that was both irresistible and charming.

She was vain of her beauty. She would look at her face in the mirror and say to herself:

"Mrs. Schofield is not half so fair, yet she is the wife of a rich squire and wears jewels and satins. They tell me some of the greatest ladies in the land are plain of face. Yet beauty is a power. It won Paul's love for me—what would it not win for me if I went into the world where men pay such homage to it?"

The little cottage that Paul had taken such pains to make beautiful and pleasant seemed so insignificant in her eyes. She disliked the daily duties that should have been so welcome to her.

"I do wish, Paul, that I had a servant to do this for me," she would say.

And then Paul, against his better judgment found a servant to relieve her of the greater part of her work. Perhaps that was one of the most unfortunate things he could have done. No one can be really unhappy or discontented who is constantly employed. Ismay had ample time now for her dreams and fancies.

Yet, despite all, she loved Paul, and she valued his love. She appreciated his entire devotion.

"If I were to ask him to give me his life," she said to herself, with a complacent smile, "he would do it."

She had yet to learn that men of Paul Waldron's stamp held many things dearer than life.

Their child grew and thrived. The beautiful summer came round; the world was all fair and bright; the flowers were in bloom and the birds singing gayly in the trees. There were times when the young man forgot the light shadow on his home, forgot that his beautiful wife was vain and discontented, forgot everything except the heaven of beauty round him and the heaven that shone in her face; and then he wondered at his own happiness, and was lost when he tried to thank Heaven for it.

One night he came home looking so unusually pleased that Ismay asked him the cause.

"I have been working out one of my ideas," he replied. "I have said nothing to you, Ismay, but here is the result of some weeks' diligent application."

He showed her the model of a steam engine into which he had introduced an improvement so great that, if adopted, it would lead to important results, as though it were a toy.

"I will show you the improvements—I will explain it, Ismay."

She looked at him with a pretty expression of fright.

"Nay, do not explain, Paul. I am not quick to understand; things of that kind do not interest me."

His face fell; his sensitive nature always shrank from such careless words.

"Everything that interests me should interest you, Ismay," he observed, half sorrowfully; but she did not even hear the words.

"And from this may spring a fortune!" she said musingly. "Ah, Paul, Paul, make haste! Time is flying. We grow older every day, and youth is the season for enjoyment. Make haste, work hard."

He looked earnestly at her.

"Why do you so long for wealth, Ismay?" he asked.

"Because of the pleasure and luxury it will bring," she replied, promptly, yet with a smile that disarmed all anger.

"Can I not make you believe, sweet, how many things there are to be preferred to mere money—health, for instance? Of what use would all the wealth in the world be if you were ill?"

"I understand all that," she interrupted, impatiently.

"Again, money could not buy such love as mine, sweet—so true, so tender! Nor could money buy anything one-half so precious as that little darling playing there."

"I understand all that," she repeated.

"Suppose you had to choose between me and wealth, Ismay—which would you prefer?"

"What idle words!" she exclaimed, half laughingly.

"But you do not answer them, sweet. Which do you prefer?"

She looked up at him with a half-started glance.

"How could such a state of things be?" she asked. "How could wealth and you be rivals in my estimation?"

"That could never be, of course," he replied. "I am merely supposing such a case."

He never forgot the hour and the words.

bush of southernwood, and as they talked she crushed the leaves in her hands. To the last day of his life, Paul Waldron associated all his sorrows, joys, love and pains with the perfume of southernwood.

"You have not answered me," he persisted.

"I cannot," she said, laughing. "I have not your faculty for supposing cases. I have not the gift of putting myself in other people's places and trying to imagine what I should do."

"But, Ismay, the question is so plain, you cannot puzzle long over it. If you had to choose between money and me, which would you prefer?"

"Such a thing can never be," she replied; "why try to make me solve a problem that life will never offer to me? I have read somewhere that people never have the one thing they want—I shall never have a fortune."

"Is a fortune your highest ambition?" he asked impatiently.

"It is the ambition of most men," she replied. "They toil for it all day, they dream of it all night, they give up peace and love for it, they sacrifice honor, truth, and principle to obtain it; some of them are willing even to sell their souls in order to win it. If I do long for a fortune I am only like the rest."

He looked terribly disappointed.

"There is nothing in the world you would prefer to me?" he questioned.

And then she detected his anxiety and laughed again.

"You want pretty compliments, Paul. Suppose that I refuse to give them. Is there anything on earth that wives prefer to their own husbands?"

The eyes raised to his were beautiful in their love and tenderness; he could not look at that most fair face and think the heart beneath it anything but pure. He bent down and kissed it.

"Do not think I doubted you, my darling. I would as soon doubt the mercy of Heaven. It is not that, but when a man's heart lies in the hollow of a woman's hand—when his life lies at her feet—when every hope of his existence is centered in her—is it strange that he should try at times to measure her love for him?"

The passion of his words—the love in his face—the unutterable tenderness of his manner—touched her deeply. She flung away the brush and broken sprays of southernwood and clasped her hands around his neck.

"No one can ever love me as you do, Paul," she said.

And he was happy with unutterable content. Life held much that was pleasant for him, but he never forgot that evening by the brookside.

To Be Continued.

MAN'S PHYSICAL DEFECTS.

Uneven Shoulders, Arms, Legs and Hips Are Numerous.

A man can be measured to the best advantage, tailors say, away from a glass. Standing before a mirror he is almost certain to throw out his chest, if he does not habitually carry it so, and take an attitude that he would like to have, rather than the one he commonly holds; whereas the portrait painter wants his subject, in his natural pose and manner. With the man in that attitude, the tailor can bring his art to bear—if that is required—in the overcoming of any physical defect, and produce clothes that will give the best attainable effect upon the figure, as they will be actually worn.

The physical defect most common in man is unevenness of the shoulders. One shoulder is higher than the other, and this is a defect often encountered, though the difference in the height may not be so great as to be noticeable, except by one accustomed to taking note of such things. This is a defect that is easily overcome by the tailor, when it exists in a comparatively moderate degree. It is done sometimes simply by cutting the coat to fit on each shoulder, the perfect fitting coat carrying with it the idea and the appearance of symmetry. Sometimes, and this is commonly done in cases of more pronounced difference, symmetry is attained by the familiar method of building up or padding the lower shoulder. The influence of the lower shoulder extends down on that side of the body, so that sometimes it is necessary below the arm to cut that side of the coat shorter. Next to unevenness of the shoulders, round shoulders are perhaps the commonest defect.

A very common thing is unevenness of the hips. A difference of half an inch here would not be at all remarkable; it is sometimes much more. If a man finds one leg of his trousers—the legs as he knows, being alike in length—touching the ground while the other clears it, he may reasonably consider that there is a difference somewhere in his legs. It may be that one leg is longer than the other, but it is more probable that one hip is higher than the other, or one leg fuller, so that it takes up the trousers more and thus gradually raises the bottom more. It would be a common thing if men were seen with their waists off, to find suspenders set at uneven heights. The variation in the suspenders might be required, to be sure, by a difference in the shoulders, and not in the legs.

It is common to find men's arms of different lengths. The difference may be so slight as to require no special attention in the making of their clothes, but it is frequently necessary to make the coat sleeves of different lengths.

The fact appears to be that there are not many perfect men, that is, men of perfect harmony of development and perfect symmetry in like all things else in nature, like horses, for instance, and trees; but in the greater number of men these defects are with such limits that they might be described as variations rather than as substantial defects.

A Pioneer's Story.

WILLIAM HEMSTREET'S HEALTH RENEWED AT SEVENTY.

He Was Afflicted With Illness for a Long Period, and Thought His Days of Usefulness Were Past—He Is Again as Healthy and Robust as He Was Twenty Years Ago.

From the Free Press, Acton Ont.

No man is better known to the people of the counties of Halton and Wellington than William Hemstreet, a pioneer and much esteemed resident of Acton. Mr. Hemstreet is a native of this country, having been born in Trafalgar township in 1817. In his younger days Mr. Hemstreet conducted a tanning business. He subsequently engaged in the droving and butchering business, and some twenty-five years ago, owing to his superior knowledge of the value of live stock, he took out a license as an auctioneer. In this calling he became at once popular and he was constantly on the road, driving in all kinds of weather, holding auction sales several days a week. Although possessing a strong, healthy constitution, the continued exposure and hard work of selling some days for six or eight hours at a stretch, he gradually lost his strength and vigor, and about three years ago found himself a collapsed and worn-out man. In conversation with a reporter of the Free Press he said: "I felt that my days of usefulness were over. My strength had departed, my voice was gone, I was too weak to do work of any kind and I was undeniably useless to myself or anyone else. My symptoms were peculiar and baffled several of the best local physicians, who differed very much in their diagnosis. I took their medicines faithfully but no improvement resulted. I did not suffer much pain but was a very sick man. Had no appetite, no strength, could not sleep, and both myself and my friends concluded that my days on earth were numbered and that my worn-out system would in a very short time lie down in eternal rest. I had to give up all my business interests." When Mr. Hemstreet's condition was most serious his attention was attracted by the published testimonial of Rev. Mr. Freeman, a minister with whom he was personally acquainted, relating to his restoration to health after using Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. He was particularly impressed with this testimonial and concluded that these pills must possess singular merit and healing power or Rev. Mr. Freeman would not lend his name to their approbation. Mr. Hemstreet then decided to give them a trial; he first got one box, then three, then half a dozen, and took them regularly. No very marked effects, he says, were noticeable but with characteristic persistence he purchased a further supply. By the time twelve or thirteen boxes had been taken, he felt that new blood was coursing through his veins; that he possessed renewed vigor and was able to perform all the duties his business calls demanded. "For a year I continued to take the pills," he said. "I knew I was regaining my old time strength and good health and I was determined the course should be complete and permanent, and I gave them the credit for making me the new man I feel myself to be to-day. As evidenced that my recovery is complete I have only to state that this spring I have conducted a number of auction sales in the open air with perfect ease and with entire satisfaction to my clients."

"I am as much averse to making personal matters public as any one could possibly be, but my long continued illness was so widely known and my recovery has been so marked and satisfactory that I feel that I owe a debt of gratitude to the simple but effective remedy which cured me, and this is why I thus acknowledge it, as well as to show to those who are up in years and in ill-health what Dr. Williams' Pink Pills did for me."

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills cure by going to the root of the disease. They renew and build up the blood, and strengthen the nerves, thus driving disease from the system. Avoid imitations by insisting that every box you purchase is enclosed in a wrapper bearing the full trade mark, Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People.

NO OTHER TALK NEEDED.

She—I wonder why young Suddenrich never thinks about getting himself a wife; he's got lots of cash.

He—Perhaps he doesn't think one necessary; money talks, you know.

A BAD NAME.

I see that a man named Przbowski is accused in Berlin of being a spy.

Oh, well, he can console himself in his hour of disgrace by the thought that he never did bear a good name.

HEADING HIM OFF.

Cleverton—By Jove, it seems to me as if I didn't do anything else but borrow money.

Dashaway—Keep with me for a little while, and you may be cured of the habit.

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS.

Is she his third or his fourth wife? Must be his third, I guess. Anyway, I heard her declare yesterday that she had no faith in the old saying that there's luck in odd numbers.

RULE THAT WORKS BOTH WAYS.

I have frequently observed, said the vegetarian, that when a man lives on beef he becomes something like an ox, if he eats mutton he looks sheepish, and if he eats pork the chances are he will grow swinish.

Perhaps you are right, said the turtle-fed Alderman. I have also observed that when a man lives on nothing but vegetables he is apt to be pretty small potatoes.