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WHOLE NO.—395

Original Tale.

THE MYSTERIOUS RING.

The Broken Vow.

BY S. M. B.
CHAPTER I.
THE MYSTERIOUS RING.

What is man,
When the sweet heart on a brow of
And false appearances smile us to
And yet, what is he not, when crowned
With every social virtue?
—Mora's Dogmas.

"Will, I have often noticed that ring
you wear, what a curious setting it
is, pray, what is the story?"
"It is my wife."

The first speaker started back aghast,
—and well he might. To admire a
simple finger ring, worn by a friend,
and to be coolly informed that it was a person
whom he thought quizzing in her
tomb, with the roses blooming, the
drooping, and the birds singing above
her lowly head, was enough to startle
any firm nerve man.

The first speaker was a tall, handsome
gentleman. A splendid form; auburn
hair; a full, round face, closely shaven;
and merry blue eyes, all combined to
make a noble looking man. His
dress; simple yet elegant, proclaimed
him to be a man of wealth. That he
was so, would be yet more apparent
from the fact that many and deep were
the plots and schemes laid by designing
mammals, who, with half a dozen mar-
riageable daughters on their hands,
wished to ensure him for one of those
doctors of fashion, who draw so heavily
upon a slender purse.

The name by which we shall introduce
this gentleman to our readers is
Gerald Thorne.

The other was also tall, and very
slim. His head was graced with a profu-
sion of short, jet black curls; his eyes
were dark and glittering, and when
flushing with anger, would strike an
antagonist with a heat that in their dark
depths lurked treachery; he wore mil-
itary looking moustache and whiskers;
while on his breast suspended was a
single glittering star, the reward of
some brave deed, and on the little finger
of his right hand he wore the strange
ring which was the subject of Gerald's
question.

This personage was Major William
Alton, of the 27th Wiltshire Cavalry.—
He was a widower, and childless, death
having visited his home with a heavy
hand, carrying away his three beautiful
children, who were quickly followed by
their mother; and when she was laid
beside her three little darlings, whose
spirits had preceded her on the road
that leads to Paradise, William Alton
felt that he had "nothing to live for,"
that with all his wealth and honor, he
could never be happy again. And per-
haps he never did find again the blessing
of true happiness. If we could have
beheld his heart, we would have found
a wound that only death could heal,
a sorrow that would sometimes throbb
forth anew, whether surrounded by
many courtesies, or in the solitude of his
chamber, with no companions but his
own sad thoughts.

The ring itself was of massive gold,
with a heavy grey stone setting, unlike
any gem with which we are acquainted.
In the rays of the sun it only emitted a
faint, almost imperceptible glimmer; but
in the darkness, the twilight, or the soft
moonbeams, it flashed and gleamed with
a strange, weird brilliancy. Many had
observed the stone and its seeming
freak, and were fascinated by its spectral
gleams.

Major Alton always maintained a
strange silence when the ring was men-
tioned, and to no one would he give the
least information concerning it, and thus
it gained its name, "The Mysterious
Ring," and came to be looked upon with
mingled wonder and superstition.

"You may depend upon me, Will, I
will never breathe it to a living soul."
"Yes, I know I can trust you, and I
will begin. You know that three years
ago I lost all my children, and a few
after, my idolized wife. As she lay
upon her death bed she asked me never
to wed again, and then in the sacred
presence of death, I made a vow never
to fill my home with another bearing
the name of Wife.

"Wishing to have her I loved ever
near me, I went to the cemetery the
night of the funeral, untombed the body,
conveyed it to a noted chemist, and had
it transformed into this ring, which has
attracted so much attention from the
curious.

"There, you have the whole history."
"Which is both wonderful and inter-
esting," said Gerald, "while the ring
certainly deserves the fame it has won;
but keep your vow sacred, for if you
break it, you will never experience hap-
piness, or peace of conscience again."

CHAPTER II.
A PROMENADE IN THE AVENUE.

"A swift, cold trembling seized on every part;
My head turned round, nor could I hear
The poison that was entering there."
—Cowley.

"Love at first sight is never sage;
It catches at a match like tinder,
And nothing can its blazing hinder,
But soon it dies without a flame,
Unless we constant fan the flame."
—From an anonymous French author.

We pass over a year from the opening
of our tale; we again meet Major
Alton and his friend Gerald Thorne.
There is no perceptible change in either,
unless it be that here and there a few
silver hairs reveal themselves in the
profusion of early locks that deck the
shaggy head of the Major, who still
keeps his vow, while Gerald remains in
blissful bachelorhood,—if blissful it may
be termed,—his heart unmoved by any
of the charms or stratagems the fair sex
can bring to bear against him.

They were walking in the "Forest
Avenue," a magnificent promenade just
outside the gates of a certain town of
"Merry Old England."

It was indeed a magnificent prome-
nade. For nearly a mile the street was
straight as an arrow, smooth and level
as a ballroom, while on each side rose
stately oaks and drooping elms, with
willow weeps, beeches, and almost every
species of beautiful shrubbery and wild
flowers mingled lovingly at their feet, in
one tangled, luxuriant mass of enchant-
ing, bewitching beauty, and far away in
the distance could be seen old oaks in
blue waves. Here met, on summer
evenings, the elite, the wealth, the
fashion, and the beauty of this little
town.

It seemed as if, on this particular
evening all the inhabitants had turned
out to swell the brilliant gathering, and
the number of equipages of all descrip-
tions, family coaches, phaetons, brough-
ams, horse-cars and forth; equestrians
and pedestrians, which lined the Avenue
from end to end, proclaimed that the
good people of this little town were not
behind in the ranks of wealth and
fashion, and furthermore, that they
meant to enjoy themselves.

And why not? Where is the use or
sense of people ever toiling and weary-
ing their brains, striving to add another
golden dollar to the already glittering
heap, or another acre to the farm that
already stretches far over hill and vale,
and yet never take any comfort in their
wealth? How many are there in this
world, who, counting their dollars by the
thousand, still work, and pinch, and
scheme, and slave, as long as they can
push one foot before the other, to gain
a few more dollars for their heirs to
quarrel over when they are in their
graves, carried thither while yet in early
years, the victims of overwork and
anxiety. Cannot such persons see the
wrong eye, the downright sin of such a
course, and reforming, take a little more
pleasure in life, than the mere amassing
of riches, which often "take to them-
selves wings and fly away."

"Gerald," said the Major, "do you
see those two ladies approaching us?
What beauties! the one on the dark
horse, especially by jove! she's lovely
as an hourglass."
"Perfectly charming."
"Who are they?" asked the Major.
"I haven't the slightest idea; but, by
George, I must get an introduction to
the dark-haired one."
"Hush! or they will overtake you."
Just then the horse on which was
seated the lady who had awakened the

Major's admiration, frightened by some-
thing in the shaggy, reared, plunged,
sprang forward and cast his beautiful
rider headlong to the hard pavement,
and had not Major Alton sprung and
caught her in his arms, she must have
been fatally injured. As she fell, a
thrilling shriek rent the air, and when
she alighted in her rescuer's arms, she
became unconscious. When she re-
vived she wildly asked, "Where am I?
what has happened?"

"Please calm yourself, my dear Miss
Alton," said the Major, "you have had a fall
from your horse."
"Oh! yes, I remember now," said
she.

"I hope you are not injured," said the
Major.
"I think not," said she, rising. "Oh!
my ankle is sprained," exclaimed she, as
unable to stand, she again sank into his
arms, while he, not unwilling to sup-
port so lovely a burden, did his best to
console his fair patient.

And fair indeed she was. With the
form of a Hebe; a shower of golden
hair, that fell in waves over her graceful
shoulders and down her swelling, snowy
neck; soft, smooth, delicate skin; full
forehead; large, liquid, blue eyes, that
melted with pity or love; dark, arched
eyebrows; median nose, inclined to the
gracian shape; a sweet mouth and coral
lips, fluted with a bewitching smile;
cheeks soft and full, like the sunny side
of a peach; pearly teeth; a plump,
round chin, bathed in dimples; and lily
white hands, with tapering fingers, and
nails of mother of pearl, she was enough
to melt the hardest heart that ever beat
within the breast of man. And then
her voice, soft, sweet and musical, was
alone enough to win her the homage of
a thousand stony hearts. What won-
der did she then, that as Major Alton held
her in his arms, and gazed entranced upon
her ravishing beauty, he should feel no
desire to release her, perhaps never
again to feel a thrill run through his
heart, as her sweet words were folded
confidingly about his neck, and her head
reclined upon his shoulder.

Gerald, immediately upon the accident
to the fair unknown, assisted her com-
panion to alight, and it was by their
efforts that she was restored to conscious-
ness. Both horses having disappeared
during the excitement, Gerald asked the
injured lady if he should order a car-
riage.

"Oh! if you would be so kind," she
replied in a voice that fell upon the ears
of the Major like distant music.
Gerald started on his mission, and
soon returned, stating that he had
secured a carriage, which would arrive
presently.

"And to whom am I indebted for
having saved me from further injuries?"
asked the golden haired beauty.

"Major Alton, at your service," said
he, handing her his card.
"And how can I express my gratitude
for your kindness?" said she, handing
him a rose tinted card, on which was
inscribed in delicate golden characters,
"Agnes St. Clair."
"Pray, Miss St. Clair, do not men-
tion so slight a service, it is not more
than I would have performed for any
lady; but I rejoice if I have been so
fortunate as to rescue such a beautiful
being as your own fair self from greater
injury."

"I see you are perfect in flattery."
"Not flattery, I hope, but the homage
you, to which your loveliness justly entitles
you."
Miss St. Clair answered with a light,
rippling laugh, which caused his heart
to beat yet more wildly.

During this time Gerald and Miss
St. Clair's companion had made them-
selves acquainted by exchanging cards,
or one of which was inscribed "Gerald
St. Thorne," and on the other "Laura
J. Huntley," and it would be a matter
of surprise to the uninitiated in what an
incredibly short space of time they be-
came the best of friends.

Major Alton was a tall, noble look-
ing lady, with raven locks and dark
eyes; a sweet, expressive face and rosy
lips, which were ever budding into a
charming smile; a voluptuous form; and
a bird like voice, that seemed to be ever
wishing to break forth into the melody
of song.

The carriage had by this time arrived,
and with it a crowd of people, for the
tidings that Miss St. Clair had received
a fall, spread like wildfire through the
Avenue, and many came to the spot,
expecting to see her severely wounded,
but were agreeably surprised to find it
nothing more than a sprain, which of
itself was bad enough.

As the Major assisted Miss St. Clair
into the carriage, he inquired where he
should instruct the coachman to drive.
"No. 7 Esmond Place; and I should
be very happy if you would step in to-
morrow evening at half-past seven, and
receive the thanks of my parents."
"Nothing would give me greater
pleasure, although I do not ask for
thanks."
"I hope we shall see each other again,"
Miss Huntley, said Gerald, as the car-
riage door was being closed.

"You but echo my own wishes, Mr.
Thorne, and I shall look for you to-mor-
row evening, at eight o'clock, at No. 7
Esmond Place."

The Major and Gerald linked arms,
and strolled homeward, each loud in the
praise of his favorite charmer.
Major Alton paced his lonely room
for hours that night, his brain racked
and nearly crazed by conflicting thoughts
and emotions. He was thinking of the
matchless beauty, and raving in de-
fiance of his solemn vow, to win her if
possible; then in the still dim light of
the room, the ring upon his finger would
flash with a strange, unearthly gleam,
such as he had never seen before, and
the pale, sad, sweet face of his departed
wife would rise from amid the gloom,
and the blue eyes would peer into his
with a searching gaze, as if intent upon
reading all that was passing in the
depths of his inmost heart; then his
resolve would fail, and he would deter-
mine to conquer his love; and then he
would curse the vow he so solemnly
taken, and resolve to cast about for it,
and when morning dawned, it found
him still pacing the floor of his room.

As the first rays of the rising sun
glimmered through the window, he cast
himself upon his untorn bed, and fell
into a heavy sleep, which continued far
into the afternoon, and from which he
awoke, when he came to call him, failed
to rouse him, while the deep,
troubled breathing alone told that life
still held its sway.

And Gerald? He so, while the
twilight deepened into twilight, and the
twilight into darkness, med the halls
of his bachelor home. He too, resolved
to win his fair one, the pretty Laura.
There was nothing to forbid him, could
he do so; no solemn vow, which he
was to forsake before he was, as a warn-
ing not to sue for the hand of his first
and only love. He was free—free as
the breeze of morn, as it wings its
joyous way over mountain, lake, and
fell; free as the soaring eagle, as with
his wings on the breeze, and his eye on
the sun, he careers on high, to meet the
luminary of day! Freedom! what moth-
erly soul to slumber with the charm
of its silvery accents!

Was it not strange that Major Alton
and Gerald Thorne, his bosom friend,
should, at first sight, go so deeply in
love with Agnes St. Clair and Laura
Huntley, also inseparable companions?
Yet why strange, when the ladies were
so bewitchingly beautiful, and the cir-
cumstances so romantic?

CHAPTER III.
A PLEASANT EVENING.

"And to her cheek a crimson glow,
—Like sunset on the hills of snow,
—Came quick as thought, and lingered still—
'Twas virtue's watchful treadling ill."
—C. C. Burr.

ferred hand, "I believe I have the honor
of making the acquaintance of Mr. St.
Clair?"

"Yes, and I observe, by the star
upon your breast, that I am indebted
for the escape of my daughter to one
who has, while serving his native land,
encountered danger, and braved it."
"Yes, this honor was conferred upon
me for rushing, with a handful of men,
into the ranks of the enemy and spiking
their guns, during one of the prelimi-
nary encounters in the Spanish Penin-
sula."

"I have heard of your gallant feat, in
fact it is recorded in history."
"I hope the accident to Miss St.
Clair did not prove serious, and that
she is not confined to her room?"
"Oh! not at all; she is rapidly re-
covering, and will be present shortly—
I trust you will accept my sincere
thanks for your assistance last evening,
by which you no doubt saved my only
child from serious, if not fatal injuries."

"I beg of you, Mr. St. Clair, not to
allow such a slight service to weigh
upon your mind. I assure you I have
done the same for any person, and
would not have been held guiltless had
I neglected to do so."

Let us take a glance at Mr. St. Clair.
He was a well formed man of medium
height, slightly corpulent—enough so
to give him that rotundity which marks
the handsome man; hair that once had
been dark brown, but now was changing
to a silvery blue; a broad, full, jovial
face, and twinkling blue eyes that
beamed with good humour, merriment,
and joviality.

Such was the person of Horatio St.
Clair, B. A. He had inherited from
his father a large amount of property,
of which he made a good use, and at
the age of fifty, with an income of many
thousands a year, had retired from busi-
ness; and now, at the age of sixty, he
was not a happier, more jovial, or hos-
pitable man upon the shores of "Merry
England."

Miss St. Clair, her mother, and Miss
Huntley now entered the room, and
gave our hero a warm greeting.
Congratulations, thanks, and good
wishes were exchanged, and the party
sat down determined to enjoy them-
selves.

Gerald was soon announced, and was
welcomed by Miss Huntley with more
warmth than was necessary for the
ordinary purposes of friendship.
Mrs. St. Clair was well worthy of her
merry husband, whom she much resem-
bled, and she soon put her guests at
their ease. Agnes was perfectly charm-
ing, and looking, if possible, more beau-
tiful than on the preceding evening.
Laura, also a child of wealth, and a
cousin of Agnes, was brilliant; Mr. St.
Clair, "so very jolly;" Major Alton in
his glory; and Gerald in his brightest
humour; so with music and lively con-
versation, the evening passed but too
quickly.

From that date Major Alton passed
his evenings at the St. Clair mansion,
and Gerald was not often absent.
"To-night," mused the Major, as one
evening a few weeks later he prepared
to go to the St. Clair's, "I shall lay
my fate at her feet, vow or no vow. Why
was I fool enough to make it, when I
might have known I could not keep it!
Folly! Folly! I will win her. This
vow shall bind me no longer!"

"Agnes!" said he, as he sat with her
that night beneath a noble elm, while
the rays of the setting sun lighted up
her beautiful face and glimmered among
her golden locks, "Agnes, darling, I
must speak the thoughts that come from
the depths of my heart; I love you,
will you be mine? Oh! do not say no."
Her lips moved not, but her soft eyes
"spoke volumes, and she laid her warm
hand in his, and reclined her fair head
upon his shoulder. He drew her to his
heart and whispered—
But, gentle reader, we have an aver-
sion to such scenes, unless we participate
in them, so we moved away, and did not
hear what was said, but left the lovers
alone in their joy, as we leave you to
imagine their words.
Gerald must have caught encourage-
ment from the beaming face of the
Major, for the next evening he laid his
heart at the feet of the lovely Laura,
and it was not in vain.
"Will," said he, as they tended their
way homewards that night, "you must
congratulate me, I have won my Laura."
"I give you my best wishes, my dear

boy," said the Major, clasping his hand,
"and will accept yours in return; the
beautiful Agnes is mine."
"And so is the broken vow," said
Gerald, "I sincerely hope and pray that
you may be happy, but I fear you will
not."

Miscellany.

Mystery.
Wonder if oak and maple,
Will ever die and all,
Are stirred at least by the coming
Of the day their leaves must fall,
Do they think of the yellow whitewind,
Or know of the crimson spray?
That shall be when chill November
Bears all their leaves away?
Perhaps—beneath the water
The slow beads, serene,
As when her young leaves glinted
To a mid of golden green,
But the leaves old oak is fading
To a wine red, dark and deep,
And maple and elm are blushing
The blush of a child's adieu.
"If I die must," the leaflet
Says one by one to say,
I will wear the colors of gladness
We will wear the colors of gladness
Unless we pass away.
We'll wear, in the sight of all the earth,
The year's most kindly crown."
So, trees of the stately forest,
And trees by trodden way,
You are kindling into glory
This soft autumn day,
And we who gaze remember
More than all they lost,
To laugh and love together,
May come through the ripening frost.

Hasting to be Rich—Jay Cooke & Co

"He that hasteth to be rich hath an
evil eye, and considereth not that poverty
shall come upon him."
The eternal principles of things have
not changed during the thousands of
years which have elapsed since the
wisest of men wrote down that proverb.
Bulls and bears have always walked
the earth on four legs, and the disposi-
tions of which human bulls and bears
are the representatives, have always had
sway in the heart of a certain class
of men.

There were no railroad stocks
syndicates in the days of Solomon, but
there was gold and silver and precious
stones, and the rich stocks of the Orient,
and houses and lands, and flocks and
herds, out of which vast fortunes were
accumulated, and by speculating in
which those who hastened to be rich came
to poverty and grief.

Keep out of debt, pay as you go, don't
sell what you haven't got, be faithful to
your trusts, keep the commandments,
were the maxims on which solid business
success was founded in those far off
days when Solomon's ships came every
three years "bringing gold, and silver,
and ivory, and apes, and peacocks," and
it is the same to-day.

There can be no enduring success
which is not founded on downright old-
fashioned honesty. He who takes wild
risks with other people's money and
ignores Bible principles in his specula-
tions, may triumph for a time, and gain
a great name, and seem to be covering
the earth with his glory, but the day
of reckoning surely comes, and then the
unstable foundations upon which his
pretentious fortune has been reared
give way, and under his seeming pros-
perity yawns a gulf of ruin. And into
this gulf he goes down, dragging hun-
dreds of confiding victims into the abyss
with him, whence few ever emerge to
prosperity again.

Handling the Reins.

Most drivers overdrive, says Mr.
Murray, in his book called "The Per-
fect Horse." They attempt too much,
and in so doing distract or hamper the
horse. Now and then you find a horse
with such a vicious gait that his speed
is got from him by the most artificial
process; but such horses are fortunately
rare, and hence the style of management
required cannot become general. The
true way is to let the horse drive him-
self, the driver doing little but directing
him, and giving him that confidence
which a horse alone gets in himself when
he feels that a guide and friend is back
of him. The most vicious and inexor-
able style of driving is that which so
many drivers adopt, viz.: wrapping the
lines around either hand, and pulling
the horse backwards with all their might
and main, so that the horse, in point
of fact, pulls the weight back of him
with his mouth, and not with his breast
and shoulders. This they do under the
impression that such a dead pull is
needed in order to "steady" the horse.
This method of driving I regard as radi-

cally and superlatively wrong. It would
tax the ingenuity of a hundred fools to
invent a worse one. The fact is, with
rare exceptions, there should never be
any pull upon the horse at all. A
steady pressure is allowable, probably
advisable; but anything beyond this has
no justification in nature or reason; for
nature suggests the utmost possible
freedom of action and head, body and
limbs, in order that the animal may
attain the highest rate of speed; and
reason certainly forbids the supposition
that by bits, and not by the breast
collar, the horse is to draw the weight
attached to it. In speding my horse, I
very seldom grasp the lines with both
hands when the road is straight and
free from obstructions. The lines are
rarely steadily taut, but held in easy
pliancy, and used chiefly to shift the bit
in the animal's mouth, and by this mo-
tion communicate courage and confi-
dence to him. I find that, by this
method, my horses break less, and go
much faster, than when driven by men
who put the old-fashioned steady pull

Beecher on Interest.

No blister draws sharper than does
the interest. Of all industries, none is
comparable to that of interest. It works
all day and night; in fair weather, and
foul. It has no sound in its footsteps,
but travels fast. It gnaws at a man's
substance with invisible teeth. It binds
industry with its film, as a fly is bound
in a spider's web. Debts roll in a man
over and over, binding hand and foot,
and letting him hang upon the fatal
mesh until the long-legged interest de-
vours him. There is but one thing on
a farm like it, and that is the Canada
thistle, which swarms new plants every
time you break its roots, whose blossoms
are prolific, and every flower the father
of a million seeds. Every leaf is an
awl, every branch a spear, and every
plant like a platoon of bayonets, and
a field of them like an armed host. The
whole plant is a torment and vegetable
curse. And yet a farmer had better
make his bed of Canada thistles than to
be at ease upon interest.

No. 1—Cross-Word Enigma.

My first is in dine, but not in eat;
My second is in yards, but not in feet;
My third is in ten, but not in nine;
My fourth is in yours, but not in mine;
My fifth is in bear, but not in cub;
My sixth is in pall, but not in tub;
My seventh is in low, but not in high;
My eighth is in bird, but not in fly;
My ninth is in river, but not in lake;
My tenth is in pie, but not in cake;
My eleventh is in road, but not in tear;
My twelfth is in gross, but not in pair;
My thirteenth is in beauty, but not in
near;
My whole is a natural wonder of
Virginia.—Gardner Home Journal.

No. 2—Decapitations.

1. Behead clean and leave to devour;
behead again and leave a proposition.
2. Behead an animal and leave a kind
of grain. 3. Behead a personal pro-
noun and leave an exclamation. 4. Be-
head a conflagration and leave anger.
5. Behead a grain and leave wrath.
6. Behead an article of furniture and leave
an animal fibre; behead again and leave
a gaseous substance. 7. Behead timi-
dity and leave a part of the head. 8.
Behead anything draw out in line and
leave water falling in drops.—J.B.

RATHER COOL.—A young nobleman
in a frightful railroad accident, missed
his valet. One of the guards came up
to him and said, "My lord, we have
found your servant, but he is cut in
two." "Aw, is he?" said the young
man, with a Dauderdyon shawl, but still
with anxiety depicted on his counte-
nance. "Will you be good enough to
see in which half he has got the key
to my carpet bag?"

Profanity never did any man the least
good. No man is the richer, or happier,
or wiser for it. It commends no one to
any society. It is disgusting to the re-
fined; abominable to the good; insulting
to those with whom we associate; de-
grading to the mind; unprofitable and
injurious to society.