### The Story of the Wedding Ring

By Bertha M. Clay.

took from my mother's finger for me; the would wait and rest for a few days. The last letter of all came from Ashburnham, and was dated July the ninth. Surely there was never a mcre pitiful petition presented; there was an appeal that would have touched the hardest heart, and Lord Carlswood covered his face with his hands as he listened. Katrine wrote from a small stationer's shop, and the last penny she had in the world was to pay for the postage of the letter. She besought him, for her dead mother's sake, for the love of heaven, to send her a little money—to save her from starvation and death—"ever so little," or she must take her child in her arms and lie be would wait and rest for a few days.

must take her child in her arms and lie to live?"

to live?"

to live?"

to live?"

"I am no judge of children either; but I naver saw a more beautiful child.

He looked strong and well." asked Mr. Ford, "would you have refused her help?"
"May heaven be merciful to me," he said with a deep sigh, "I believe that I should have done so." burnham, I wonder?"
Lord Carlswood's face grew white as with the pallor of death

with the pallor of death.

"Die," he said—"die of starvation?
Do not even hint at anything so terrible.
For heaven's sake, let us see about it at once! Shall we go? I shall never rest again."

The carswood rose from health seath of the mantelpiece, above which the portrait of Joeelyn, Lord Carlswood, who had fought so bravely once! Shall we go? I shall never rest again." again.
"I will go to Ashburnham myself,"
said Mr. Ford; "I will lose no time. I
will go at once; and the moment I discover anything will send a telegram to

Lord Carlswood could hardly control his impatience.
"You think it better," he said, "that

"You take it bewer, it should not go?"

"Decidedly," replied Mr. Ford. "I can act more quickly, more promptly and more energetically if I go alone."

He went that same day, and the result He went that same day, and the result of his journey was more satisfactory than he had ventured to hope it would be. He took up his residence—not at the principal hotel—that was not a likely place to obtain such information as he sought—but at an old-fashioned inn; and at night, when he had invited the landlord to join him over a glass of wine, he cleverly turned the conversation on the subject of strange and sudden deaths.

Then he heard the whole story—how a certain poor lady that had come to the town had died without telling her name, or saying to whom she belonged, or anything that could throw any light upon her history.

her history.

"She really died in that strange way?" questioned Mr. Ford, breathlessly; and the landlord all unconscious of the great interest at safee, answered, "yes—that

was how she died."
"And the child," pursued the lawyer
"what became of the child?"
"He could hardly bear the moments of

the prettiest girl in the whole country side. Ismay Hope they called her."

The lawyer started as the familiar name fell upon his ear.

"Ismay," he repeated — "that is a stronger name."

she died, and she has kept it ever since."
"She is beautiful, you say; and what age may she be?"
"That I cannot tell—she was quite young when she married."
Mr. Ford interrupted him somewhat rudely. "When she married—whom did

Squire Schofield; but if the matter interests you, sir, you can see Mrs. Hope. She is a great friend of my wife's and she is never tired of telling the story."

It so happened that on this very evening Mrs. Hope came to take tea with the landlord's wife, and Mr. Ford although a bachelor himself, understood the fair sex sufficiently to feel sure that, if a woman was more communicative at one time than another, it was during the time spent over a dish of tea.

He asked permission of the landlord to daughter will give up here. "I will go still farther. I will speak even more strongly. What you propose to do is wicked, and I will have nothing to do with it."

"That is at your own option," returned Lord Carlswood, haughtily. "If you decline to manage my affairs, there are plenty who will gladly undertake the office. My resolve is made, and I shall not depart from it. If my grand-in the strongly will give up here."

join the little party—a favor which was most willingly accorded him, although the landlady felt some slight embarrass-ment. The landlord smiled to himself, as though he would have said, "There is per motive here than appea

on the surface."

Mr. Ford was shown into the little parlor where the tea-drinking was to parior where the tea-drinking was to take place. He could not help thinking of the strange aspects of life. Who would have thought the interests of the noble house of Carlswood would bring him to the quiet, humble village inn? Who would have dreamed that the fortunes of when day daughter of that illustrious race were to be discussed there? He spent the evening in conversation; and that was how Mr. Ford came to know the history

It seemed almost incredible to Mr. Ford that such wonderful success should have attended him. True Lord Carlshave attended him. True Lord Carlswood's daughter was dead, but his
granddaughter was living. The love he
would not give to Katrine might, and
in all probability would,go to Ismay; he
would be willing to do for his grandchild
that which pride and anger would not
allow him to do for his daughter.

Mir. Ford lamented, that Ismay was
marked—that was the only drawback to

married-that was the only drawback to married—that was the only drawback to his content; yet much of course, would depend on the man she had married. The lawyer sighed as he thought of the great gulf between Squire Schofield's steward and the proud Lord Carlswood—a gulf that it seemed impossible to hridge. He could form no proper estimate until he had seen Ismay. If she was hopelessly vulgar, if she had contracted such habits as could not be cured, if she was a country-bred peasant. cured, if she was a country-bred peasant, without taste or refinement, then he must leave the matter entirely to Lord Carlswood's discretion-he would not

urge him to adopt her.

He must see her, and then form his judgment; it would be more prudent to see her as a stranger, and not to give her the least idea of what errand he had come upon. He had taken a cup of tea with Mrs. Hope, who implicitly believed that he was what he represented himselt to be, a travelling artist; at the same time she thought him a very curious gentleman, he asked so many questions, and he seemed so deeply interested in what she had to say of that unfortunate

He cleverly drew from her a description of Ismay's home, and then said he should like to make a drawing of it.
"Nothing are he serving she told "Nothing can be easier," she told him. "Mrs. Waldron is very amiable and sweet-tempered; she will be pleased to give you permission." He went and was more charmed with Ismay than he could have anticipated;

Ismay than he could have anticipated; her wondrous beauty, her grace, her charming manner, all delighted him. And then, too, she had a son, the lovely laughing boy he had held in his arms, a child of whom even the proud Lord Carlswood might be proud. He was surprised as well as delighted.

She spoke with some refinement, there was no vulgarity in her accent; and yet, despite the presence of the beautiful boy.

despite the presence of the beautiful boy, he was tempted to wish again and again that she had not been married. "What a sensation she would have created! She would have made one of the best matches in England; with that face

impressed with her, he could not tell how the Master of Bralyn would receive the news of her marriage. He decided that he would trust to no letter, but would go to Bralyn himself, and then he could tell Lord Carlswood all. There was missing only one link in the evidence; he wanted to see the locket and the ring. There was no course open to him save to tell the Vicar what was his real errand, and he did so under promise of secrecy. Then Mr. Kirdell showed him the locket. Although he was prepared for it, still the sight of Lord Carlswood's well-known features did

Lord Carlswood was greatly agitated.

'You say she is beautiful—so like her mother? What were they thinking of to let her marry so young? If that could but be undone! What is her husband

His lordship paused before he replied.

"Perhaps my plans may not meet with your approbation," he said, "but I may tell you at once that I am indifferent about that. This is my fixed resolve, and nether heaven or earth shall move me from it. I will adopt my daughter's child—this bright, beautiful Ismay. I will make her a wealthy heress. She will make her a wealthy heiress. She shall have the large fortune that was to have been divided between my two younger boys. I will adopt her son. He shall be my heir. He shall be Lord Carlswood of Bralyn after me. But-listen t wood of Brayn after he. But—issen to me, Ford—I do all this solely on condi-tion that she give up this low-bred hus-band of hers and consents never to see him again. If she will not agree, the whole matter must end—she may remain where she is, and I will find another heir." There was another long silence, during which the singing of the birds and the whispering of the winds amongst the trees could be plainly heard; and then Mr. Ford's voice broke the silence. "It is not right, my lord," he said, abruptly. "Such a separation as that is against all law human and divine—it is against all hav human and divine—it is

will never receive the husband here "Yet you would receive his child."
"He is of my own race, but his father is alien to it. He has noble blood in his veins. His father has none. He has no claim on me; nor will I ever acknowledge

daughter will give up her husband, and promise never to see him again, I will receive her here; if not, we continue strangers. Nothing will induce me to

change my resolve.

The two gentlemen were now standing facing each other, each one excited and "What has the man done, my lord, that you should seek to tempt from him a wife he loves? It is not his fault that she is a Carlswood. He gave her all he had—his love, his heart, his name; he has been proud to work for her; he loves her. Why should you part them? What has he done? Why should he suffer?" "I have suffered myself," said the old

"I have sunered myself," said the old lord, tremulously—"overy one suffers." "How would you have felt, my lord, if any one had sought to tempt Lady Carlswood from you?" The Master of Bralyn held up his fine white hand with a warning gesture.
"You have the privilege of speaking plainly," he said; "do not abuse it. Do not institute comparisons; there can be none between such a man and mysel none between such a man and myself. It is absurd to suppose that he would have sensitive or refined feelings. I have no doubt that a goodly sum of money will make ample amends to him for the loss of his wife. What did you say, Mr.

"I said, may heaven pardon you my lord?"
"Thank you," was the sarcastic return. "The honor of my name is dearer to me than anything on earth, besides—how dear, even you could not tell. I should sully it if I offered that man a home here."

home here."
"You sully it far more by seeking to
part those whom God has joined. My
lord," continued the lawyer, with passionate eloquence, "I no longer wonder
at the French Revolution—I shall wonat the French Revolution—I shall wonder no more at the revolt of the poor against the rich—if these be the ways in which the great men of the world treat the humbler ones. If you had two doves—two tender birds—you would hesitate before you parted them; but this man, with a man's soul, keen to suffer, with a man's heart, full of deep affections, you will torture, and not even own that the torture is pain."

Lord Carlswood smiled and no great anger darkened his face.

"I like you none the less, Ford, for your frank speaking; there are few who dare say so much to me. My opinion is still unchanged. I shall receive my grandchild Ismay and her son only on those conditions. I will leave you to consider the matter. If you decline the further management of my affairs, so 'vit—if not, I will authorize you to n ke all arrangements."

Left by himself, the lawyer thought "if I refuse, some one clse will do it," he said—"some one who has no influence over him, and who never can do anything for their good; I have some little influence, and I will use it for their

influence, and I will use it for their benefit. Let him have Ismay and her son; his heart will soften in time, and then I shall be able to persuade him to receive the husband too."

When, afterwards, Lord Carlswood came for his answer, Mr. Ford said—"I will undertake the affair, my lord; but let me tell you first that I do so undeprotest. In my opinion the whole thing is cruel and wicked."

That same day he returned to Ashis cruel and wicked."

That same day he returned to Ashburnham. He tried to comfort himselby saying that it would all come right time; but his heart was heavy within

breast.

"You are not well, Ismay," he ed, "You are not well, Ismay," he repeatable to think it over alone."

Once more at Ashburnham he watched Paul Waldron leave his home, and then he went to the cottage and asked for his wife. She was looking more beautiful than ever, he thought. She had been out in the garden tying up the roses; the perfume of the crimson blosses; the to linger about the country of the crimson blosses. in the garden tying up the roses; the perfume of the crimson blossoms seemed to linger about her, her face was exquisite in its dainty bloom. She stalled quisite in its dainty bloom. She stalled graciously when she saw her visitor.
"You have returned to make the sketch," she said; but there was no answering smile on his face.
"I have returned," he replied, "because I want to speak to you, Mrs. Waldron. I have something most important to say to you. Can you spare me a little time, now, at once?"

Her beautiful face grew pale with ap-

evidence, dwelling on her mother's folly as lightly as possible yet making it quite apparent. As she listened, the dainty wild-rose bloom faded from her face, her eyes dilated with wonder that was almost fear. Her whole figure trembled as a leaf sways in the wind. He finished, and his last words sounded to her as though they came from the clouds. A red mist swam before her eyes, and then she recovered herself with a great gasping sigh.

swam before her eyes, and then she recovered herself with a great gasping sigh.

"You must be brave," he said; "you have worse to hear."

"And I," she said, "am really the great lord's grandchild?"

"There is not a legal doubt of it," he replied. "Listen yet, Mrs. Waldron. You are undoubtedly the daughter of Katrine Ismay Carlswood, who ran away from home with Thornton Cameron. You are Ismay Carlswood, who ran away from home with Thornton Cameron. You are the grandchild of Lord Carlswood, the Master of Bralyn and its rich dependencies. The child playing there may one day be Lionel, Lord Carlswood; you yourself may be a wealthy heiress. But there is one condition attaching to all this—a condition I am ashamed to lay before you, and one that I cannot advise you to accept. The option rests entirely

before you, and one that I cannot advise you to accept. The option rests entirely with yourself."

"A condition!" she repeated, her face recovering its color, her eyes fiashing with light. "You do not know how I have always longed to be rich. I cannot believe that my longing is gratified; there will be no condition too difficult for me to accept."

"I am not so sure of that," said the man of law. "Lord Carlswood is a very proud man—I should say no man living is prouder; he has the greatest reverence for what he calls the honor of his house; he would, I believe, rather die any death than tarnish it. Think how he values it when he treated his only daughter as one dead because she married beneath her. I will be brief, for the subject pains me. Lord Carlswood will receive you as his grandchild—will give you a large text." I must go," she oried again. "Paul his grandchild—will give you a large fortune—will make your little son his heir—all upon condition that you leave your husband, whom he considers lowoorn, and promise never to see hin

flashed into her face, the indignant gleam of her eyes, the scorn of the proud

gleam of her eyes, the scorn of the proud lips.

"Leave my husband—promise never to see him again! I would not do it to be a queen! Paul loves me—I will not break his heart."

"You have answered just as I thought you would. I shall not attempt to influence you. I am bound to tell you that, if you refuse, Lord Carlswood will find another heir, and you will hear no more of the matter. Perhaps you had better take time before you decide."

"Leave my husband!" she repeated, with a burst of passionate tears. "He must be wicked to think I would do so. I could not. Paul loves me so."

He sat in silence while the burst of passionate tears lasted. Presently she turned angrily to him.

"You should not have presented such an offer to me," she cried. "How dare you tempt me so?"

"Madam," he replied, gravely, "I have but followed my instructions—neither more or less."

Judge. You will have to ask permission."

She sat for some minutes in thought-tal selence, and then with a grave, pale face looked at the lawyer.

"I should like to so to Bralyn," she swalt do "I should like to so go to Bralyn," she seat sorifice I have to make, I think I may allow myself this pleasure, but I am afraid, if Paul knew what my grand-father has proposed, he would not sold in the story—inform him who my mother was, and of Lord Carlswood's invitation without saying anything about his conditions for adopting my boy and myelf."

As she spoke her lips grew white. Yes, she was sure to come back, she repeated to herself. She wanted only one glimpse of the great world, and then she would come back.

"You think, if Mr. Waldron knew what Lord Carlswood has proposed, he would not come back."

"You think, if Mr. Waldron knew what Lord Carlswood has proposed, he would not come back was come back."

"I should like to so to Bralyn," she face looked at the lawyer.

"I should like to so to see just once what the grand world is like. Of course I shall come back again. Considering the face looked at the lawyer.

"I should like to so to brale, "I should like to so to you tempt me so?"

"Madam," he replied, gravely, "I have but followed my instructions—neither more or less."

"Tell him, this proud lord, from me," "cried Mrs. Waldron, "that I will never leave my husband—that I would not break his true, tender, loving heart for all the wealth in the world. Tell him that from me. You have made me ill. My brain seems turning. Go—leave me.

My brain seems turning. Go—leave me. Let me forget how you have tempted me, if I can." Mr. Ford rose. She turned away with a low passionate cry, and then looked at him again, and spoke with a ring of passionate grief in her voice.

"I was trying to be happy," she said, learning to be content; and now you come to spoil it all."

She looked so lovely in her pride, her anger, and her tears, that the lawyer wished his employer could have seen her.

"Bear witness," he said, "that I have not tempted you. I have slumply done as

not tempted you. I have simply done as I was told to ado. I will bid you farewell."
She looked as though inclined to de-He hesiitated.

CHAPTER X.

There came an evening when Rull Waldron sat in the beautiful flower garden, a prey to most anxious thoughts. The sun was setting, the birds were singing in the green depths of the shady trees. He had returned home early that evening and had found his wife with a sad pale face standing lightesely at the

"You are not looking well to-day, Ismay," he said gently.

He was almost startled when she flung her arms round his neck with a low, passionate cry, and hid her face on his

all the world will be dark to me!"

As they walked along he said to her:—

"I cannot understand you Ismay. You are so changed, you are so variable, my darling, so unlike your sweet, bright self. One moment you are here, and with your arms clasped round my neck—loving, tender all that my heart desires; the next moment you are cool and haughty as though you were a princess and I your slave. At times you seem to love me. slave. At times you seem to love me, and then again you seem to hate me. One day I think you are perfectly happy—you smile and sing and your face is more beautiful than ever in its sweet o say to you. Can you spare me a little inne, now, at once?"

Her beautiful face grew pale with apprehension.

"It is nothing that need frighten you,"

She clasped her arms round his neck

ming, strong, with a first face and as many flagues—inturitients and very clear, they are, it all litted of mechanism. His manis is invention. He is a complete radical in politics, believing in a complete radical in politics, believing in a complete radical in politics, believing in the way to the pretty east under the same after a grand, rugged fashion of his own—for he makes speeches, and is low way to the pretty east under the way to the present after a grand, rugged fashion of his own—for he makes speeches, and is low way to the pretty east under the second of the He little dreamed of the Levi little of the way to the pretty east under the way to the pretty east under the second to hold both offices.

"It is may drawing-room," she said while a could be the second to hold both offices, attended to the pretty of the second to hold both offices, above the husbands—do they not yet the pretty way to the pretty way to the pretty way to the pretty have been been also as the pretty of the pretty have been been also as the pretty of the pretty have been been also as the pretty have bee ered the message word for word. Lord Carlswood smiled grimly. "I like that," he said; "it is the true Carlswood spirit. But she will give in. She seemed to waver at the last, you say? She will give in. I have thought of a plan," he added. "You shall wait a month, so as to give her time to think over all she has lost, and then you shall

over all she has lost, and then you shall go again, and this time you shall invite her to Bralyn, and escort her here. You shall bring the boy too for a month's visit—not her husband, mind. He cannot refuse my grandchild permission to visit me; and, if she comes, I will undertake to say that she will never go back. Let her once taste such a life as she will lead nere, and she is mine."

Sorely against his will Mr. Ford consented. He went once more to Ashburndham, and found his way to the pretty cottage in the wood. Ismay's face flushed deepest crimson when she saw him. She leepest crimson when she saw him. She held out her hand, with a gesture almost

sublime in its despair.

"You must not come to tempt me again!" she cried. "I am not strong.

"I must go," she cried again. "Paul will not object to my going there when uestioned Mr. Ford.
"Not one word," she replied. "Do you think he will be unwilling for me to go?"
"I cannot tell. You must be the better
judge. You will have to ask permission."
She sat for some minutes in thought-

what Lord Carlswood has proposed, he would not consent for you to pay even this visit?" said Mr. Ford.
"I am quite sure of it he would pre-

vent my going."
"Why?" asked the lawyer, briefly. "Why?" asked the lawyer, briefly.

"He would be afraid that I should
never come back," she replied.

"But you do not intend to return—
you have no idea of accepting Lord
Oarlswood's offer?"

"Not in the least," she said; "I told
you I would never break my husband's
beart." heart."
But it struck him there were no

longer the same fire and animation in her words. "You will come this evening," she said, "and tell my husband all." "Paul," said Ismay, as they sat together watching the sunset, "do you see that stranger at the garden gate? He is coming to tell you the strangest story you ever hearl in all your life.

Paul Waldron heard Mr. Ford in He hesiitated.

"Will you take time to think it over?" he asked. "Shall I go away, and return in one month from now?"

"Yes," she replied, almost inaudibly.

"And will you take my advice?" he concluded. "Do not say one word of this to your husband until I have seen you again."

Paul Waldron heard Mr. Ford in the provided with provided with provided with provided with provided with pity. When the story was finished, Paul forgot the stranger's presence; he turned to his wife with love and tenderness unutterable.

"So my darling," he said, "my hear-

"So, my darling," he said, "my beau-tiful love, you are a great lady after all."
"I am your wife, Paul," she rejoined, her lovely face softening at the sight of his great greation. and our boy-to visit him-you withou

trees. He had returned home early that evening and had found his wife with a sad, pale face, standing listlessly at the cottage window. No tea was prepared for him, and the smile that usually greeted him was absent from her beautiful lips. He loved her too dearly to offer any remonstrance—he went up to her and kissed her.

"Perhaps he wants to see me first," she returned. "It may be that he will she returned. "It may be that he will have too next."

"You without me!" he repeated. "Oh, my darling, do not think I feel it because he is rich and great! That would make no difference to me. I value no rank—I value you, my darling. If he should take you from me!" "He cannot," she whispered. "Who can take me from you? Am I not your wife—your own wife?"

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FOR CHATHAM FOR FREDERICTON (read (np) (read (np) EXPRESS EXPRE-S MIXE) Connecting with I. C. R. GOING NORTH GOING SOUTE. 2 50 ar 8 55 ... Loggicville Lv 6 00 am 6 50 am 8 50 c. m 4.20

FOR IND'TOM INDIANTOWN BRANCH, FOR BUR'VL. Lv. (hatham Junction, 4, 65 c. loggicville 2 c. m 4, 20 c. loggicville 2 c. m 500 p.m loggicville 2 c. m 10 4.15 c. c. onatham 5,00 c. m 4,40 ar 8 50 c. onatham 5,00 c. The above Table is made up on Eastern standard time.

The trains between Chatham and Fredericton will discator when signalled at the following flag stations—Deroy Siding, Upper Nelson Boom, Chelmstord, Frey Rapids, Upper Blackville, Blissfleid Zarrol's, McKamee's, Ludiow, Asie Cressing Clearwater, Portage Rand, Forbes' Sliting, Upper Cross Creek, Covered Bridge, Zionville, Durham, Nashwaak, Manzer's Siding, Penniac.

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