STORY OF THE WEDDING RING.

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CHAPTER IV.

Another month passed; the beauty of the summer deepened, the corn was growing ripe in the fields, the crimson roses contrasted with the cool, white lilies, the fruit hung rich and mellow on the trees, while Ismay Waldron still looked with longing eyes toward the world which she wished to enter. She still gave every thought to the one master passion of her nature. In vain the ringdoves cooed, and the lark soared high with its triumphant song; in vain the flowers bloomed, and her pretty child stretched out his little hands to her. She was always thinking, always dreaming, of that possible future wherein Paul might grow rich and every desire of her heart be gratified.

She had ceased to wonder about her mother; all her romantic visions that she had once woven faded into obscurity; her life, seemed planned and arranged; nothing could alter it. She was Paul Waldon's wife, and she loved him. She wished no greater love than his; but if Paul could give her wealth, if he could surround her with the luxury she loved—ah, then, all would be well!

Once—and Ismay never forgot it—she went to the Manor House; there was a grand fete to be given to the tenantry, and Paul for the occasion had bought his beautiful young wife a dress of white muslin with bright ribbons. When she had put it on, with a flower in her hair, she looked so lovely that he was startled at her beauty. She read his admiration in his eyes.

"You will own," she said, "that dress makes some little difference. Ah, Paul, if I had but jewels and rich dresses, such as ladies wear!"

"You would not look more beautiful, Ismay. Now you gladden my heart, then you would gladden other eyes, and I should not be so happy, love."

Ismay never forgot that day. She looked round the magnificent rooms—on the pictures, the statues, the superb hangings, the furniture, the rare flowers—and her whole heart ached with longing. She looked on the faces of the ladies—some of them country leaders of fashion—and she saw none that could be compared with her own. She watched the hundred evidences of wealth and her very soul seemed on fire with the eagerness of her wishes.

"Why is there naught for me?" she said to herself. "Why should others have money, luxury and splendor, while I, who am fairer than they, must pass my life in a lonely cottage counting each shilling as I spend it?"

She saw the glances of admiration cast upon her, she heard one ask another: "Who is that beautiful girl?" and her vanity was flattered. If, so plainly attired, she could produce this marked sensation what would she not do when magnificently dressed?"

In the midst of her excitement and pleasure she could not refrain from noticing one thing—among all the crowd of men there was not one who surpassed in appearance her husband Paul. It was the first time she had mixed in society, or had seen what is commonly called the world. She had imagined all those who bore noble names would carry the impress of those names on face and figure. Here were lords, baronets, and squires, but she saw among them no face more noble than Paul's, no figure more manly; she heard no voice with so true a ring, she saw no smile so luminous and frank.

"He is one of nature's noblemen," said the young wife to herself, and her heart grew warm as she looked at him. She had thought that among people so greatly above him in position he would perhaps show some mauvaise honte—some shy embarrassment or confusion; but on his frank, noble face there was no trace of either.

"There's somewhat in this world amiss
Shall be unriddled by-and-by,"

said Ismay to herself, as she watched him. "If it were not so, Paul would occupy one of the grand places these men cannot fill so worthily as he."

She saw gentlemen of position talking to him, seemingly deeply interested in his conversation. She noticed another thing—his love was like a watchful presence round her; he never forgot her; he seemed to be always thinking of her comfort, of what she would like, and again the young wife said to herself:

"No one could ever love me as Paul does."

There came over her a vague kind of wonder as to what she would do without his love. She might as well be without food to eat, fresh air to breathe. Life without Paul's love! She smiled to herself at the idea, and he, watching her from a distance, came to ask her why she smiled. She looked with frank, sweet eyes into his face.

"I was thinking what the world would be like to me without you," she replied, "and I cannot realize it."

"Heaven grant that you never may, sweet! I shall never know what the world is without you, for I could not live if I lost you."

The time came when they both remembered those words.

So the struggle went on in her mind—the passionate longing, the eager wishes, the thirst for pleasure, the craving for wealth, doing battle always with the love of husband and child and the spirit of content.

She had longed for fortune, and it was coming to her; she longed for power and position, it was to be hers; but she was unconscious of it, and said to herself at times that her life would be spent in dreams.

One morning she was in the garden making a faint pretense at work, but the needle had fallen and the white hands lay listless and still. She sat under the shade of a large elm tree, and the sunbeams falling through green leaves were like a halo around her, heightening her marvelous beauty. She was engrossed in her day dream of that golden future, when the little maid servant came to tell her that a gentleman wished to see her.

She rose hastily, a crimson flush on her fair face. A gentleman to see her! Who could it be?

Before she had time to ask the question she saw a gentleman entering through the garden gate. He advanced toward her and bowed.

"Have I the pleasure of addressing Mrs. Waldon?" he asked.

He was so different from the people she had passed her life among that she blushed and hesitated. She could not help noticing that the stranger was watching her intently, and that his eyes lingered on her face with an interest that was not curiosity; he was studying every feature, and when she spoke he listened eagerly to every word.

"I must apologize," he said, for intruding, but the garden gate was open, and I saw you here. Time is very precious with me. I thought you would pardon me if I followed the maid."

She looked at him as though she would fain ask him who he was, but at that moment the stranger's gaze fell on the lovely little boy who was playing on the grass. Suddenly a change came over his face; he made a hurried step, and then stood still.

"Is that your child—your son—Mrs. Waldron?" he asked eagerly.

"Yes," she replied, "that is my baby boy."

"I am very fond of children," said the stranger, "will you let me nurse him?"

He took the child in his arms, and looked just as intently in his face.

"He is a noble boy," he said, "a princely child. What is his name, Mrs. Waldron?"

She forgot the irregularity of the interview in her delight at the gentleman's admiration.

"His name is Lionel," she replied; "we call him Leo. His father wished him to take my name, but I would not consent."

"Your name must be a peculiar one if you could give it to a boy," he said and if Mrs. Waldron had looked more intently at him she would have seen that the subject was one of great moment to him.

"My name is Ismay," she said, and at the word a strange flash of delight came over the visitor's face, and then Mrs. Waldron seemed to remember that she had not yet heard the reason of his visit.

"Do you wish to see my husband?" she asked.

"No," he replied, slowly. "My object in waiting upon you is to ask your permission to make a sketch of this charming little cottage."

Ismay looked up in delight.

"A picture of my home," she said. "I think there can be no objection. Are you an artist?"

The visitor smiled a strange, peculiar smile.

"Not by profession; but I am fond of drawing."

Then slowly, and with great art, he drew her into conversation. He told her that he had heard her history and sympathized with her. He asked her if she remembered anything of her life before she came to Ashburnham.

"I could not possibly remember," she replied—"I was but three years old. The only childish memory I have is, strange to say, of my mother's hair—beautiful, brown, waving hair—with which I used to play; her face comes dimly before me at times. I remember nothing more."

"You were three years old," he said, "how do you know that?"

"I have heard Mrs. Hope say so," she answered. "When will you begin the sketch?"

Here it suddenly struck Ismay that perhaps Paul would not be pleased if he knew how long this stranger had been in the garden.

A slow smile spread over his face. A shrewder woman would have divined at once that he had gone there for an object and that the object was attained.

"With your permission, Mrs. Waldren, I will call again and then we can arrange about the sketch."

After a few more complimentary words, the stranger, withdrew, leaving Ismay flattered, yet puzzled. What an interest he had taken in her! How engrossed he had been in her story, and how pleased he had been with Leo!

he sat dreaming under the elm tree, thinking of everything that had been said, until the maid came again to interrupt her; and then she grew ashamed of herself.

"How much thought I am giving to a stranger!" she said. "It must be because I so seldom see one."

CHAPTER V.

Bertram, Lord Carlswood, had the reputation of being the proudest man in England. He was proud of his name, of his race, of his pedigree—proud of his unstained honor, of his large fortune, of his gentle wife, of his fair children—proud of the repute in which he was held, of his high standing in the country. As a river gathers force and strength from every tributary stream, so he made every gift Heaven had bestowed upon him tributary to his pride.

People in speaking of him said he was just and generous, but very proud. This pride was not shown in patronage of his equals, but in the most rigid observances of class distinction. He never pardoned any disregard of those distinctions; he gave to all persons the honor due to them, and he expected the same in return; he addressed each one by his rightful title, and insisted on being so addressed himself. He considered the Carlswoods of Bralyn among the leading spirits of the country; they had few equals, no superiors.

"Had the Carlswoods been kings they would have known how to reign," he was wont to say.

Another of his most frequent sayings was:

"The Carlswoods were an old family when William the Norman took possession of our fair Saxon lands; but study their records, and you will see that no Carlswood was ever dishonored. There has never been a fortune hunter, or traitor, or renegade among us; and—thank Heaven!—no Carlswood ever made a low marriage."

There was those who said that pride of such a kind must have a fall—that it could not remain so arrogant; but the stately head had not yet been bent in humility or sorrow—there was no stooping of the erect figure, no softening of the haughty face.

Lord Carlswood married the daughter of the Duchess of Middleham, a gentle, high-bred, elegant woman. They had four children—three sons and one daughter. The father's face would glow with pride as he looked round on the young faces.

"There is no fear of the old race dying out yet," he would say.

He loved his wife, he was proud of his sons; but the great delight of his heart—the very light and brightness of his home—was his daughter Katrine, a beautiful, gay, high-spirited girl, who had all the Carlswood spirit, with its attendant pride. Her father literally worshipped her. He watched her beauty as it developed day by day; he pleased himself by imaging what her future would be. What position could be too exalted for his daughter?

When Katrine reached her tenth year, Lady Carlswood died. Her husband did not marry again.

"The Carlswoods never marry twice," he said, grandly, and he was true to the traditions of his race.

It was not a matter of great moment to the boys. Little of their time was spent at Bralyn; they went to Eton, and thence to Oxford; they were left principally in the charge of tutors. Lord Carlswood was careful to impress upon them the nobility of their race and the obligation they were under to keep the glory of their name unsullied and their honor unstained; he left the rest to their teachers.

But for Katrine Carlswood, her mother's death was a far more serious matter. Her father was unwilling to send her to school; he did not wish her out of his sight. He had governesses and masters for her; he did his best for her, but it was lamentably done. He drew up a code of rules and regulations which were to be rigidly adhered to; he made no allowance for girlish gayety or exuberance of spirits, and the result was that Katrine grew to look upon home as a prison. She loved her father because she had sufficient intelligence to appreciate his higher qualities, but she considered him to be something like a jailer, and gloried in evading his rules. The method of his training was bad; yet he would never receive advice on the subject. Experienced matrons would tell him that change and relaxation were needful for the girl; he would draw himself up proudly and say:

"The ladies of the house of Carlswood are not to be treated after the fashion of ordinary school girls."

When the catastrophe came, no one was surprised.

Lord Carlswood had decided that his daughter should make her debut when she had reached her nineteenth year; until then she was to study hard and perfect herself in all needful accomplishments by the help of masters. He frowned contemptuously when his friends told him that it was unfair to treat a girl of eighteen like a child; None knew how in the after years he repented of not having followed that advice.

There was a church at Lynn, and before her death Lady Carlswood had presented the rector with a very fine organ; moreover, she had asked her husband to set aside a certain sum to pay for an organist, which he had cheerfully consented to do. The first organist employed was an elderly man who had a wife and family to support. A more remunerative engagement presented itself, and he threw up his post. He was succeeded by a young and very handsome man—Thornton Cameron, a musician of no mean skill.

Lord Carlswood never saw him; he considered that his interest in the matter ended when the yearly stipend was paid. He was in London when Katrine wrote to ask him if he would allow her to learn the organ—to take some lessons from the organist at St. Luke's—Mr. Cameron.

"He is considered very clever," she wrote, "and it would be a great pleasure to me to learn upon an organ that was the gift of my dear mother."

Lord Carlswood had no dream of danger; to his haughty mind then it would have seemed as probable that his daughter would fall in love with one of his grooms as with her teacher; not even the faintest suspicion occurred to him, and Miss Carlswood's governess, who did feel some scruples, was silenced by being told that "Lord Carlswood wished it."

The handsome young organist thought he was making a grand future for himself when he saw a chance of wooing Miss Carlswood. He was very handsome, light of heart, and pleasant of speech, gay with the gayety of youth, gifted with a fatal, specious eloquence, and Katrine thought the world had never seen his peer. They could not converse freely in the quiet seclusion of the old church, when the light streamed through the stained windows and the governess stood by; but before long Katrine's kindness had encouraged him to write little notes, and she had replied to them. He grew bolder, and asked her to steal from beneath her father's roof to meet him. She foolishly consented; and when the infatuated young man told her how dearly he loved her she owned that she loved him.

Was it love, or was it an ambitious desire to raise himself far above his station, which actuated him? No one ever knew, and Thornton Cameron kept his secret. It was a base betrayal of trust, a cruel fraud—it was an unpardonable deception, a most dishonorable deed—but he succeeded in winning what the poor girl thought was her love, and, after great persuasion, she consented to elope with him.

She had been so badly trained, was so young, so wild in the flush of girlish spirits, that she thought little of the consequences. The sensation that must follow amused her. She enjoyed thinking of the fright, the search, and the emotion of her stately father when he should hear that she was married.

"It will be stealing a march upon papa," she said, with a gay, ringing laugh that should have smote her companion like a sharp sword. "He was so particular that I should not make my debut until I was nineteen; what will he say when he hears that I am married."

There was no excuse to be made for her save that she was charmed with her lover's handsome face, with his musical voice, his eloquent words, his passionate pleading and prayers. She was charmed to be the heroine of quasi-romance; it would be so amusing to appear in London as Mrs. Cameron, instead of Miss Carlswood. The whole matter seemed to her simply a delightful adventure; she never dreamed but that her father, after perhaps reproaching her in a stately fashion, would again receive her with open arms.

"No Carlswood ever made a low marriage"—she had heard that expression often enough, but it never entered her mind that hers was what would be called a "low marriage." Thornton Cameron was handsomer than, and quite as polished in manner as, the gentlemen who had visited Bralyn. There was nothing about him that could be called vulgar, much less low, and Katrine, although clever beyond her years, did not know much of the world. She would have considered herself making a low marriage if she had promised to run away with a footman or groom; but an artist was to her a gentleman. How could a man who created such grand harmonies, who gave his whole time and attention to the cultivation of the purest taste—how could such a man be low? She considered him a genius, and genius she said to herself, levels all ranks. She had read somewhere of a king who stooped to pick up the brush of a painter. Was a painter better than a musician? She had read of such great honors being paid to them—of kings and queens who had done homage to their genius, and reverenced their names.

Still, it seemed strange that a girl, reared in the very atmosphere of pride, should have forgotten the lessons of her life; but such was the case when one fine autumn evening she stole from the time-honored walls of Bralyn and eloped with the handsome young organist of Lynn.

To Be Continued.

BETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE.

A Japanese courtship and wedding are both very curious ceremonies, and still somewhat savor of barbarism.

When a young man has fixed his affections upon a maiden of suitable standing he declares his love by fastening a branch of a certain shrub to the house of the damsel's parents. If the branch be neglected the suit is rejected; if it be accepted, so is the suitor.

At the time of the marriage the bridegroom sends presents to his bride as costly as his means will allow, which she immediately offers to her parents in acknowledgment of their kindness in infancy and of the pains bestowed upon her education.

The wedding takes place in the evening. The bride is dressed in a long, white silk "kimono" and white veil, and she and her future husband sit facing each other on the floor.

Two tables are placed close by; on the one is a kettle with two spouts, a bottle of sake and sups; on the other table a miniature fir tree—signifying the strength of the bridegroom; a plum tree—signifying the beauty of the bride; and, lastly, a stork standing on a tortoise,—representing long life and happiness, desired by both of them.

At the marriage feast, each guest in turn drinks three cups of the sake, and the two-spouted kettle, also containing sake, is put to the mouths of the bride and bridegroom, alternately by two attendants, signifying that they are to share together joys and sorrows. The bride keeps her veil all her life, and at her death it is buried with her as her shroud.

The chief duty of a Japanese woman all her life is obedience—while unmarried to her parents; when married, to her husband and his parents; when widowed, to her son.

SHE DIDN'T NEED TO.

Do you dance on your toes, Miss Quickwit?

Nover, Mr Clumsey. Other people do it for me.

And he didn't know just what she meant until he tried to get another dance with her.

NOT A HAND-ME-DOWN.

Grubbs—Perkins seems to be a self-made man.

Stubbs—Well, if you ever saw him when his wife was around you would think he was made to order.

NOT THE RIGHT SORT.

Visitor — How do you like your new minister?

Mrs. Muggs—He won't last very long. His wife is too worldly minded. Really?

Yes. It's perfectly scandalous. All her dresses fit her.

A FARMER'S VICTORY.

Rheumatism Had Fastened Its Fangs Upon Him for Years and Caused Him Endless Misery—Tells How He Found a Cure.

From the Acadian, Wolfville, N. S.

Among the many in this vicinity who firmly believe in the efficacy of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills as a cure for rheumatism is Mr. John Stewart, of Hortonville. To a representative of the Acadian who recently interviewed him, Mr. Stewart said he had been a victim to the pangs of rheumatism for upwards of twenty years. Two years ago Mr. Stewart was thrown from a load of hay and was injured so severely that he was obliged to take to his bed. While in this condition his old enemy—rheumatism—again fastened itself upon him, the pains radiating to almost every joint in his body, making life almost a burden. He had read frequently in the Acadian of the cures effected through the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and decided to give them a trial. After the use of a few boxes the pains began to diminish, and his general health began to improve. Mr. Stewart continued taking the pills until he had used eight boxes, when the pains had entirely disappeared and another victory over disease had been won by this peerless medicine.

The Acadian can add that Mr. Stewart is worthy of every credence, as he is a man of intelligence and sterling qualities, whose word is unhesitatingly accepted by all who know him.

The public is cautioned against numerous pink colored imitations of these famous pills. The genuine are sold only in boxes, the wrapper around which bears the words "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People." If your dealer does not have them they will be sent postpaid at 50 cents a box, or six boxes for $2.50, by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

ABOUT TABLE LINENS.

The woman who takes a genuine pride and interest in her home always takes special delight in her linen closet. The "closet" may be merely a couple of drawers in the sideboard or in a cupboard, but if they are well supplied with napkins and tablecloths, with a fair sprinkling of the dainty centerpieces and doyleys that are her special treasures she is conscious of the "pride of possession," and will be alert to increase her store at every opportunity.

It is true economy to have plenty of napkins and tablecloths, so that they are not in the tub constantly. Too frequent washings wear them thin. Neither should be allowed to get badly soiled, so that hard rubbing is required.

So too, it is economy to buy a good article. Cheap linen is not all linen and neither looks or wears as well as the pure linen, nor will it keep white. It is not essential to purchase the finest, but a good quality is a better investment than that offered at a temptingly low figure. A dollar or a dollar and a quarter a yard buys a cloth that wears and washes well, and does up nicely, not requiring starch to give it body. What is called the half-bleach linen is really superior to the full bleach, if economy is a consideration. It has at first a yellowish tint, but within a few washings bleaches out perfectly white and stays white, not going yellow with lying by as the full bleach will, no matter how good it is.

Tablecloths and napkins should have body enough not to require starching. A starched napkin is an abomination and a starched cloth is only a bigger one. Sometimes a very thin old cloth is the better for a little starch, but it should never be made stiff at all. Linen, to be lustrous and to bring out the pattern, and also to make it sufficiently stiff, should be ironed while very damp, with irons as hot as can be used without scorching. It will then be just right as to stiffness. It must be ironed till perfectly dry. Otherwise it is neither lustrous or stiff, nor is the pattern brought out. The same is, of course, true of napkins.

If borax is used in the water in which linen is washed it aids greatly in cleansing and saves the rubbing that wears it out faster than use.

Save the ravelings when making up new linen to use in darning the old. And whenever you find a break or a thin place, darn it neatly, over and under. It will show very little after it is done up, and will postpone the coming of rents, One of the "old-fashioned girl's accomplishments was mending linen and lace "so as not to show," but in this age of cheap things soon worn out, I fear, it is a lost art.

The new patterns in table linen have no determinate borders. The pattern merges by insensible gradations from the edge to the plainer part in the center. They are very pretty.

CARMEN SYLVA.

When the Queen of Roumania makes a stay at the seaside she delights to sit on a campstool in the middle of the sand, gather around her Qall the children and tell them fairy tales of her own composition. Most of the fairy tales of Carmen Sylva have received the approbation of a large circle of children before publication.

AGREED.

She — He's such a quiet and unobtrusive person that no one would take him to be an actor.

The Critic — That is just what I have always pointed out.