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Unbroken Fetters.

By P. H.



DON'T, Mamma, don't. I simply cannot marry him!" and a well-grown girl of twenty summers turned a pair of beseeching blue eyes upon the rather sad-faced matron who sat calmly sewing beside the front window of a roomy dwelling in Toronto.

"Please do not speak quite so hastily, Ethel dear," enjoined the elder lady, in gentle remonstrance. "You admit that you like Mr. Finch, and you know that he is very fond of you, and in a position to make you very happy. Besides," she added, persuasively, "it is the dearest wish of both your father and myself that you consider favorably Mr. Finch's very excellent proposal."

"But, Mamma, how can I break with Jack?" exclaimed the girl in passionate reply.

"I am under the impression, my dear," said Mrs. Carsby, a trifle severely, "that there is nothing to break, except it be the bubble of a school-girl notion that you are in love with him. You are not engaged to Mr. Chadwick, and, although I allowed him to visit you, you know that you seldom went out together. As for this understanding that you say

wick for the first time were nearly always made to think in this fashion, and wonder what forcible attraction the Church could have for such a man as he. But they had not to know him long before their wonder was answered; for beneath that happy, boyish exterior, there beat a heart as stout as his rugged hand—a heart, moreover, surcharged with a great human passion—the passion for the saving of souls. The full, firm lips were ever ready with an encouraging smile, and the blue, sympathetic eyes seemed ever able to seek for and find truth where all else seemed untrue. This was the Jack Chadwick that Ethel knew and loved, but to her mother he was different. To Mrs. Carsby he was good and honest enough a soul, but poor, and with but a slight chance of preferment in a poor profession. Had he been a good, shrewd business man, as was Mr. Finch, Mrs. Carsby would have considered him a very eligible young man indeed. But as a clergyman in a cattle country, with its scattered missions and attendant hardships—how could she deem him an eligible suitor for the hand of her only daughter? Moreover, Mr. Carsby was none too strong, and very shortly might be compelled to retire from business. Already future financial troubles were threatening the Carsbys, and the only



Park Scenes, Winnipeg.

exists between you, it has no binding force whatever. Mr. Chadwick may have a dozen such understandings for all you know to the contrary."

"How can you say such a thing, Mother?" exclaimed Ethel Carsby, with a little stamp of indignation. "You know Mr. Chadwick better than that!"

"I know, my dear," responded Mrs. Carsby, "that a clergyman is still a man, and is quite as susceptible to feminine charms as other men."

Ethel did not answer. She thought that this might be true of clergymen, generally; but it would not apply in this particular case. Her mother did not understand Jack. And yet, she remembered, it was over a year since Jack had left Toronto for the mission-fields of Alberta, and how could she be sure that he had not met with someone who would make him a more suitable companion than she, poor Ethel Carsby? The thought was painful. She remembered his parting words: "Ethel, you will not forget me, will you?" She remembered, too, her answer, and how his strong, athletic frame trembled as he endeavored to suppress his feeling. No, she could not doubt Jack—it was not his nature to be fickle.

Now, although Jack Chadwick was a clergyman, no one would have suspected it but for his orthodoxy in matters of dress. It seemed almost a perversion of principle that so fine a specimen of physical manhood should follow a profession that made so little demand for physical strength. Those who met Jack Chadwick

possibility of averting them seemed to lie in the much desired alliance of Ethel with the kindly and prosperous Mr. Finch.

These were the thoughts that were vaguely written in the respective minds of the ladies during the short silence that followed Mrs. Carsby's last utterance. Ethel understood dimly the reason of Mr. Finch's preferment, and would have done almost anything but this to help the parents she loved so dearly. Was there no other way out of the difficulty but that she should be called upon to make this sacrifice? Why wasn't Jack rich? she wondered. Never before had she wished Jack Chadwick rich—but now it seemed necessary to their happiness. "Why doesn't he get rich?" she asked herself, and remembered in answer that he knew nothing of the conditions that made riches desirable. Tell him, she could not. Every fibre in her being shrank from so shameful a confession.

"I'm sure I don't know what to do, Mamma!" was the expression with which Ethel at length broke the silence. "It would be wrong for me to marry Mr. Finch, when I do not love him, and I don't know what Jack would think, I'm sure."

"You could learn to love, Ethel," her mother reminded. "The true love seldom comes before marriage—but let us say no more at present," suggested Mrs. Carsby; for she thought she could detect traces of weakening in Ethel's tone, and she judged that her daughter would soon come to view the matter in a more prac-