

A True Diamond

CHAPTER XIV.
An Arm Chair.

"Pups and I were very glad when we had earned a lot and filled our money box. There was always a case turning up. If they were deserving we soon righted them; but it's easier out there than it is here to find out about people."

"So I should imagine."

"I say, General Stone, when you go, you'll tip Jim handsomely, won't you? I've promised to keep all his tips for him and his young woman, when he marries."

"Good gracious, another marriage!"

"Yes," said Toney, laughing heartily. "I am a match-maker; but Pups said early marriages were best, and you can't think Miss Crump is too young, can you?"

"Well, no; but this missionary may have married some one else out there."

"She thinks he's faithful still; I hope he is. What do you think?"

"I have hardly sufficient data to go upon."

"But wouldn't you have been true to your early love?"

Toney little knew that under the old soldier's unromantic exterior was a heart that had always been true to a dead love.

"I expect I should, and you?"

"Yes, always, but you see I'm not in love yet with any one. I don't know whether I shall ever find any one as nice as Pups. I'm glad you say you would be true. That's real nice of you. Well, then you can feel for Miss Crump, can't you?"

This idea had certainly never entered his head before.

Suddenly Miss Crump became interesting to him, though he would not have acknowledged this for the world, to the fresh young heart whose ideas were all for others.

"I hope I can. Isn't this the best way to the vicarage?"

"No, this is my way. There's Minnie Thomas to take along. Her sister is quite afraid of me now, and gets her tidy and gives her breakfast in right time."

"What, another protégée? You have enough to do, Miss Antonia."

"Do say Toney, because you are a nice man."

"Am I? I did not know it."

"But you are. Good-bye. You would frighten my child. Thanks tenfold for coming with me."

Toney disappeared, and the old man walked home musing on the past which now, at times, became blurred and unsatisfactory. To-day, however, his eyes were a little dim with the dew of dead hopes which the fierce blaze of life had so early cut off.

"She is like Larissa, I saw it at the first glance," he said to himself.

"Poor child, left to that worldly old woman's care. Evas even doesn't stand up against her. Poor child, she isn't worldly yet, certainly, but the force of example is great. I believe she thinks as much about the happy-

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ness of that poor little companion as she were a born princess."

He walked very slowly towards the house, dreaming of past days and wondering about Toney.

As for that young lady herself, she was soon in the highest of spirits. With Trick beside her she made a dash into the Thomas' Cottage, there she dived for Minnie, and was giving her the usual ride on her back, when Lewis Waycott rode by. He drew in his horse.

"Why, Miss Whitburn, you are carrying a load. What a lucky child that is on your back."

Toney ran up to him, though she did not drop her burden, but the smiling face was not made less engaging by the two fat baby arms which were clasping her neck.

"I'm off for lessons!" said Toney, laughing. "Aren't you glad you school days are over, Mr. Waycott?"

"Uncommonly, but you will soon leave off I should think. There's going to be a ball in my honour in June or July. I hope Lady Dove will be you come."

Toney made a face.

"A ball! Oh, that's for young ladies. Silvia Halec will come and you cousins, and—"

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CHAPTER XV. A CHAIR COVER.

It was Saturday afternoon, and Toney meditated most anxiously about the new material which must be procured in order to finish Miss Crump's chair. She opened her purse and examined it minutely. It contained ten shillings in gold, a threepenny-piece, and a farthing. This was the amount of her worldly goods, and as it did not occur to her to ask Lady Dove for more pocket-money she shook her head a little over her small balance.

"It must be done, however; I've got the chair stuffed beautifully, and I can't leave it like that. It would look so very odd. Then Crummet will enjoy it so much. It must be done, that is certainly sure."

In her time-table, Saturday afternoon had been put down as a half-holiday; but Lady Dove had not troubled her head about procuring any pleasure for the girl. Miss Crump's Saturday afternoons were never a holiday for her, she was counting dozens from the wash, so she was not visible. Sir Evas had gone out with the Captain and Lady Dove was shut up with her patient dressmaker. For all these reasons Toney felt free to dispose of herself, this never being a difficult feat.

"I'll walk to Winchley," she thought. "The stuff must be of a specially pretty colour. I must choose it myself."

To put on her hat and her walking shoes was the work of a few moments, then she rushed downstairs making her way to the library, because from that window-ledge she could let herself down upon the garret walk and save a long round. Toney had a passion for short cuts.

It was no sooner thought of than done, and she was just placing her hands upon the window-sill, when she was stopped by the voice of the General issuing from the depths of an arm-chair.

"Good heavens, child! Is this an attempt at suicide? That is much too deep a drop for you."

"Stars!" said Toney, laughing. "It might have been, for you really frightened me. I never saw you burrowing in that arm-chair," added Toney, coming towards him. "I say, it is comfortable!"

"What, the arm-chair? Uncommonly, and I was enjoying reading the Times in peace."

"You would like other people to enjoy an arm-chair, wouldn't you?"

"Certainly, Miss Toney, as many as possible."

"Well, you see, it's Miss Crump's arm-chair which I am anxious about. The wool is all right and it's put at first-rate, I think—I'll show it to you if you like—but it must have its outer skin, and I'm off to Winchley to fetch it. If Uncle Dove were here I'd take him, but he's exercising the rights of hospitality. King Arthur—in Pups' old book, you know—was very particular about hospitality."

"I'm sure of it."

"I believe you're laughing at me!" said Toney earnestly, but the next moment she too joined in the laugh.

"Well, you see, I'm in rather a fix, but if you were Ispier there would be no difficulty."

"I wish I were! What did he do?" conclude he is a gentleman?"

"Do you really wish to be like Ispier—sometimes he's called Esperir. Well, he once said, 'In adversity is the true friend known.'"

"Not a bad saying, but scarcely a very original one, is it, Miss Toney?"

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"Ah! but he meant it. He wouldn't mind obliging a friend."

"May I oblige you? Pray allow me this privilege."

"You won't mind if I ask you something?"

"Not at all," and the General got up, passing his hand over his grey beard to hide a smile.

Toney seated herself on the arm of a settee, and stretching out her feet in front of her, she leaned her cheek upon her hand.

"I want you to lend me five shillings; but I cannot pay you back in coin, you know, only in kind."

"Indeed? What kind?"

"I don't know your tastes quite, but I can cut you a lovely whistle, or I can make you several little, useful handy things. I've brought my tools with me."

"The General kept his countenance."

"I must first know what you want, five shillings for?"

"I told you, didn't I? It's for Miss Crump's chair. I've got ten shillings and a threepenny bit and a farthing. If the stuff is more, I shall be up a tree."

"Indeed you will!"

"I must keep the threepenny-bit for church to-morrow, and the farthing is a keepsake. I couldn't spend it."

"A keepsake!"

"Yes, from our old Kanaka servant. He was so fond of it. I think he said his prayers to it, but I'm not sure; anyhow he gave to me, and I couldn't part with it. I will pay you back if you choose what you most want."

Uncle Dove was here he'd understand, and I know he'd lend it to me; but I do want to buy the stuff this afternoon because Aunt Dove may climb up to our room, and then—" Toney laughed.

(To be continued.)

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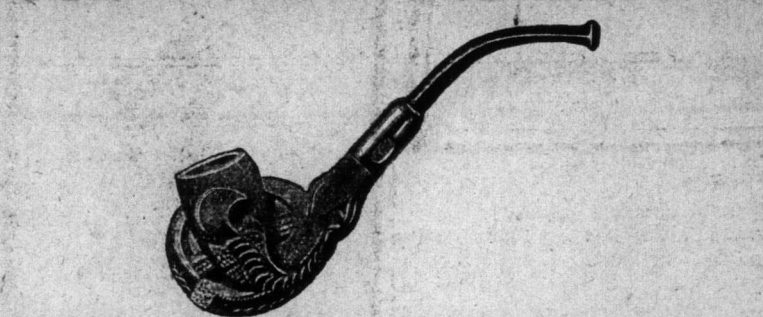
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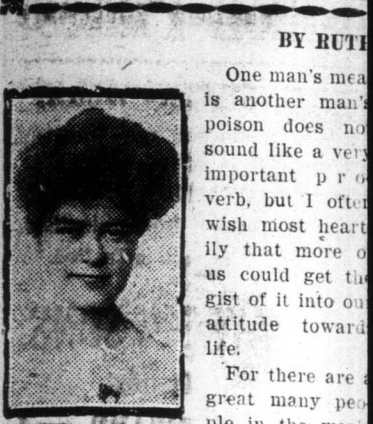
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Criticising Other



BY RUTH
One man's meat is another man's poison does not sound like a very important proverb, but I often wish most heartily that more of us could get the gist of it into our attitude towards life.

For there are a great many people in the world who continually disturb themselves because other people will not find happiness in just the way they do. Apparently such people would rather see their friends poisoned by the which is meant to themselves, than by that which happens to be their poison.

One woman in my acquaintance never fails to introduce into every talk I have with her a petulant criticism of the way in which one of her childhood friends finds happiness