

The Mystery of Ashton Hall

THE ETERNAL QUESTION.

JOHN GIBSON HUME.

Two years from the day when Herman Molson and the young ladies of Ashton Hall enjoyed their picnic on Chestnut Island, so graphically described in a chapter of Mr. Molson's Diary, and just one year after the remarkable meeting of Mr. Molson and Helena Ashton in the rose arbor, they were married in Rest Cottage on the same Island. Mrs. Williams officiated.

The wedding was a private one—only the two families from "The Willows" and Ashton Hall being present, save that Mrs. Perkins and her children, in the character of friends of the family, served the wedding feast.

The cottage and the arbor were beautifully decorated for the occasion and the walk from the cottage to the arbor, along which Helena had gone to meet Herman, was festooned most artistically with flowers.

After the ceremony which was short and most impressive, the friends enjoyed a ramble exploring the beauties of the island, after which they had a delightful impromptu concert in Rest Cottage.

In the evening the island was, for the first time, open to invited guests, who came in hundreds from W—e and surrounding country, and some from a great distance, to extend their congratulations.

The guests of the evening after an ample collation and most delightful music and merry-making, departed, and an hour later the wedding party, were, in a very democratic manner, conveyed in small boats down the river to the city—Herman and Helena insisting on going in a boat by themselves.

While with idle oars their boat was drifting down the beautiful river, on which the full moon sparkled in myriad reflections of her glory, Helena again assumed a listening attitude and said:

"Herman, do you hear again that distant music?"