

STORY OF THE WEDDING RING.

By BERTHA M. CLAY.

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CHAPTER XII.—Continued.

"I could not bring dishonor on such a name!"

Day by day Ismay loved her new life more and more. It was so pleasant, so wonderful in those splendid grounds, under the shades of ancestral trees; it was so pleasant to live in those magnificent rooms, with their thick soft carpets, their superb furniture, their rare pictures and profusion of flowers—to have servants to attend to her every wish—to have carriages, horses, jewels, dresses, every luxury that her imagination could devise. It was pleasant always to have a purse full of money—to know that she need never trouble about ways and means—to have respect, homage, flattery, reverence shown to her; to be pleasant to be surrounded by beautiful things—to meet none but polished and refined people.

She thought with a shudder of the little cottage, the one little maid, the homely life. She contrasted her husband, in his plain working dress, with the polished gentlemen she saw around her.

She was weak of soul, weak of purpose, weak of heart, weak of will. The past, with its poverty and privations, became hateful to her. She loved the present; she dreaded the thought of returning to her humble home, of giving up her jewels, of growing accustomed again to an obscure life. How she would miss the grandeur, the luxury, the magnificence of Bralyn!

Yet she loved Paul—loved him as dearly, and deeply as her light nature would allow her to love. There were nights when her pillow was wet with tears—when she sobbed as though her heart would break—when she thought all the world well lost to her. But with the morning sunshine those better thoughts would flee. She never forgot her husband—when she saw anything especially beautiful she would long for him. She would take her little child out into the grounds, so that, unheard by others she might talk to him of his father. There was hardly an hour in which her heart did not turn to Paul; but she was vain, weak, fond of luxury, easily persuaded; and the love of self, the love of wealth and magnificence, was stronger than her love of him.

"I am in my right place now," she would say to herself; "I never felt at home in Paul's little cottage."

Then when Lord Carlswood thought the love of present surroundings had taken deep root, he spoke to her. He was calm, firm, and decided; he told her that nothing would ever induce him to recognize her husband, and he repeated his offer.

"I shall not seek to influence you," he said. "I simply lay both paths in life before you; you shall choose as you will. If you make up your mind to return and take your boy with you, so be it. I will not reproach you, but I shall never look upon your face again; nor—pardon me for speaking so plainly—shall I leave to you or Lionel one shilling of my money. Do not think I shall ever change. If, on the contrary, you decide to remain with me I will make you heiress of all my fortune, and my estate shall go to your son. You shall have every advantage that I can offer you. I shall find some lady accustomed to the usages of good society and the ways of the world to give you two or three months' instruction, and then next season you shall go to London. You shall be mistress of Bralyn House, one of the most magnificent mansions in the metropolis. You shall be a queen, a leader of fashion. You shall have wealth in abundance, and your son—a young beautiful boy—shall succeed to a large fortune."

Her face flushed as she listened, and grew deadly pale.

"And what is the condition of all this?" she asked.

"That you give up your husband, who—but I need not tell you what his is—that you consent to live apart from him and never to see him again."

"It is cruelly hard!" she murmured. "Not so hard as you think," he rejoined. "Rank always has its penalties. How many queens have married for the good of their kingdom, and have given up the man they really loved! The call of duty has married men whom they disliked? You are not required to suffer so; you have but to leave a man whose tastes, habits and manners cannot fail to be disagreeable to you."

"I love my husband," she opposed. "Certainly. Well, you must think it over, Ismay, and let me know the result."

She tried entreaties, expostulations, remonstrances, and prayers—it was all in vain. The resolve he had formed he would not break.

At first she said to herself she would be true to Paul. She would go home, and never mind the poverty, the privations, or anything else. Paul was worth any sacrifice. Paul loved her so dearly that nothing should induce her to stay away from him. Then she pictured to herself with what infinite delight he would receive her—how he would love her, bless her for her truth, thank her for the sacrifice. Her heart grew warm with love for him, her eyes grew dim with tears.

But she was vain and weak; love and vanity struggled hard for mastery, and vanity won the day. She forgot the wooing amongst the green lanes of Ashburnham; she forgot the early love of her girlhood, the bright, beautiful, fleeting romance; she forgot her wifely duty, her plighted troth, her husband's love; she was careless of his suffering, heedless of his despair, when she told Lord Carlswood that she had thought the matter well over and had decided to stay.

His lordship sent for Mr. Ford, and Mr. Ford received instructions to write

to Paul Waldron to inform him of Lord Carlswood's offer and of his wife's acceptance of it. He wrote, picturing to himself the handsome, haggard face as he had seen it last.

"May Heaven pardon those who deliberately break a human heart!" he said, as he finished the letter.

He had written very plainly, telling Paul what Lord Carlswood had decided to do, and that, although willing to adopt Ismay and her son, he steadfastly refused in any way to recognize his grandchild's husband.

"Your wife has had plenty of time to decide," he wrote, "and she declines to leave Bralyn."

By Lord Carlswood's wish, Ismay enclosed a note.

"It will be in confirmation of Mr. Ford's letter," he said.

She wrote:

"I cannot expect you ever to forgive me, Paul, or to think as I think. I know how much you have loved me—and I have loved and do love you; still, for my own sake and Leo's I think I ought to accept Lord Carlswood's offer. I wish that it had been different; I wish that you could share all our advantages. You may think that I ought to have refused and have returned to you; but I should never have been happy at Ashburnham again."

"The little home that contents you would not have contented me. It is better that I should tell you this frankly. I could not be happy with you again. You must not think me unkind. I always felt that I was not in my right place for all the love and care you have lavished upon me. I thank you now in bidding you farewell."

So cold, so heartlessly written, yet blurred and blotted with burning tears, without one word she placed the letter in Lord Carlswood's hand; but no one saw Ismay Waldron again that day.

CHAPTER XIII.

There came a bright, warm, sweet morning in August when Paul Waldron rose early and went out among the dew-laden flowers; he had been thinking so intently about Ismay that he could not sleep. It was a month since she had left him, and he was longing to look at her bright, beautiful face again.

"She could not be annoyed now," he said to himself, "if I wrote and asked her to come home; she has been gone so long."

He had almost forgotten his doubts. Ismay had written to him very often, telling him of her great enjoyment; but she had never given him even the slightest hint of the struggle in her mind, never told him one word of Lord Carlswood's offer.

"I will write and ask her to come back," and as he said the words the sun seemed to shine more brightly, the flowers to look more fair.

He sat enjoying the sunshine, the dew, and the flowers, the little maid took his cup of coffee out to him, and the postman, seeing him in the garden, brought the letters to him. There was one bearing the postmark of Lynn.

An hour afterward, when the little maid went in search of him she found him lying on his face on the ground cold and senseless as one dead. She tried to rouse him, and after a time he looked around him with a dazed, bewildered air.

"Have you been ill?" asked the girl, and then she looked at him in surprise, for as he walked to the house he stumbled at every step.

He went to his room, and she heard him lock the door. He was a strong man, brave to suffer and endure, but that letter had struck him down as a sudden and terrible blow would have done.

The news bewildered him; at first he could not realize it. Slowly, clearly, the terrible truth came home to him. Ismay had forsaken him for mere vanity, for wealth and luxury. She had given him up and had left him forever. When his mind had quite grasped that truth a terrible cry came from his lips—a cry to Heaven for vengeance. Then, unable to bear up, he fell with his face on the ground. When he recovered he sat for long hours in that room, that was never again to be brightened by his wife's fair face, bearing the first pain of his agony in silence that was heroic. Then hot anger, fierce indignation rose within him—anger so wild, so frantic, that he was for the time like a madman. Who had taken his darling from him? Who had tempted her and lured her away? He stood with white lips and cursed the destroyer of his domestic happiness with terrible curses. He cursed the proud lord who had robbed him of his treasure.

"My darling!" he sobbed, and his great heart seemed breaking with its burden.

"My darling—so beautiful, so tender, so loving—my wife!"

Then he remembered that it was of her own free will she had done it. She had left him that she might enjoy wealth, luxury and splendor. She had left him, had blighted his life, had broken his heart, had slighted his love, for—money.

He had loved with a passion that was almost terrible in its intensity; but as he thought of what she had done, that love seemed to him to change into hate. He did not curse her, but his lips curved with a curious smile.

"She was light and vain," he said. "She had my heart in her hands; she has broken it and thrown it away. She was not worth my love, for her sake I would have borne starvation; she with a few cool words gives me up for money. I will not curse her, but I cry to Heaven for vengeance."

He raised his right hand,

"I swear," he said, "by my love and my sorrow, that I will avenge my wrong—that I will take full vengeance on her for what she has made me suffer."

Paul Waldron's trouble changed and warped his whole nature; it hardened him as nothing else could have done. Yet to no man living did he make any complaint.

He said nothing of what had happened he went about his work for some days as usual, but with a grim, determined look on his face and his voice seemed to have taken quite another tone.

He knew that there was legal redress for him; he could have claimed his wife, he could have claimed his child. But he was too proud. If she had voluntarily left him, let her go. The law of the country might force his headless wife to return—might compel her to come back to him; but he disdained any such assistance—he held the law in contempt.

"If she has left me of her own free will," he said to himself, "I will not take her back because the law is in my favor. Let her do as she will."

Nor would he write to appeal to her. She shall not know what I have suffered—he shall not laugh over my pain," he said to himself, "I will never write to her. She has left me, and she shall not know what becomes of me."

What he suffered—his desolation, anguish, despair—none but Heaven knew. It changed the whole nature of the man—it hardened and embittered him—it made him unlike himself. He brooded in sullen gloom over his wrongs, and then his gloom would give way to passionate anguish and despair.

Only a few days after this death blow he received a letter giving him excellent news.

One of his inventions had been adopted by a wealthy firm, and they had written to ask him to give up his present occupation and accept an engagement with them.

"It is the first step toward fortune," he said, and then he looked round on his desolate home.

"If she had but been here!" he thought, and the news which two months' since would have seemed glorious to him did not even give him one moment of pleasure. The only bright side he saw to it was that he would soon be away from Ashburnham.

He resolved that he would tell no one, that he would send the little maid home, and then in a few days leave himself, without revealing whether he had gone.

"So all trace of me will be lost," he said, "and if she should so far remember my existence as to make any inquiries about me, no one will be able to answer her."

To Squire Schofield he said merely that he was leaving Ashburnham. Who could know the depth of pain, the anguish, the bitterness, the torture of sighted love that came to him as he looked round upon the little home he had once thought an earthly heaven? Farewell to all his hopes and dreams! Farewell, bright, beautiful face that had lured him to his doom! Farewell to the little child who had been taken from him, whose tender arms were to clasp him no more.

If the silent stars could reveal secrets, they would tell of the man who spent the whole of the long night in the woods, who wept out there the passion of grief that was consuming him—who cried aloud against the wife who had forsaken him—and the proud man who had tempted her away. They would tell of one long night spent in such sorrow as few men endure, and then of a cold morning dawn, when that same man went his way, changed, embittered, reckless with his own despair.

Fortune often showers her richest gifts on those who court her least. When Paul Waldron left Ashburnham, he was utterly indifferent as to his future. He cared no longer to win wealth. What could wealth do for him? It could not heal his wounds or give back to him what he had lost. It was perhaps for that very reason that wealth was showered upon him. He accepted the engagement offered to him, and the firm were quick to see that they had closed with no common man.

After a short time he was offered a junior partnership which he accepted indifferently enough. Later on one of the firm died, and he received one half of the business.

Everything he touched seemed to turn to gold. When he had money of his own, he speculated, utterly careless as to whether he lost or gained. Every speculation was a grand success. When his partner wished to retire he was able to purchase the whole of the business. He did so, not caring whether he prospered or failed. His genius for invention seemed inexhaustible; he made enormous sums of money by taking out patents, and in eight years from the time he left Ashburnham he was spoken of as one of the most prosperous men of the day.

Rich now almost beyond the dreams of avarice, he devoted himself to the interests of the working classes. He lectured, he made speeches; he soon became known as a popular leader of Radical opinion. If by the use of keen, passionate language he could have roused all England, he would have done so, and have led on fiery masses to the destruction of all aristocrats. He hated them with a vehement, burning hatred—he would have devoted his life to their extinction. There were times when he wished that a revolution like that of France might sweep every titled man from the face of the land.

People who listened to him wondered at his vehement utterances—at his passionate class hatred. They wondered at the fierce, fiery eloquence with which he lashed the vices of the rich, their pride, their indifference to the feelings of those beneath them. All this was because one among them

had tempted his beautiful young wife from him.

He became famous as the leader of a certain class—as the earnest, sincere, thoughtful advocate of the workman—as the warm supporter of his rights and privileges.

All this time he had heard no word of Ismay. He would never read the chronicles of fashionable life lest he should see her name and it should bring back his pain. Year after year, as his riches accumulated, his bitter desire for vengeance grew with them. He was never known to laugh, never seen to smile.

The estate and mansion of Ravensdale was for sale, and he purchased them. Then he smiled and said to himself:

"I am Squire Ravensdale. I will take legal steps to change my name. I will try for the next election, and then I can advocate the Radical measures which I have at heart."

To be Continued.

WHY PUSSY HISSES AND SPITS.

It is supposed to be done to imitate, the snake.

Hissing and spitting by young kittens, even before they see, was in the first place probably an attempt to intimidate enemies by making them think that the hole where the helpless wild kittens resided contained a venomous snake. It is a very curious and remarkable fact that many different kinds of creatures which have their homes in shallow holes have a similar habit of spitting when an enemy approaches. Furthermore, it is probable that the expression of a cat at bay is part of the same instinctive strategem. We know how general is the horror of the serpent tribe throughout all nature, and hence it seems likely that the serpentine aspect of the head of an enraged cat, together with its threatening hiss, might disconcert an enemy sufficiently to give an advantage to the cat.

Curiously enough, cats of all species have their tails marked transversely in a way which resembles the marking of serpents, and several naturalists have remarked how similar are the sinuous, waving movements of the tail of an angry cat to the movements of the tail of a snake in a state of excitement. The true tabby cat, when it is curled up asleep has curious resemblance to a coiled serpent, and the same is true of many wild cats of different varieties and coming from different parts of the world.

If this really is an instance of protective mimicry, it is possible that the chief foe guarded against was the eagle. Eagles are very fond of cats' flesh, and it has been remarked by naturalists in various parts of the world that these formidable birds habitually make war upon the smaller creatures of this kind.

A DOCTOR'S "CALL" IN INDIA.

A Young Medical Man Tells of a Visit He Made in That Country.

Probably every doctor has sometimes found it hard to reach his patients, but few doctors, let us hope, have to travel several hundred miles to make a "call." The "record" in this respect, seems to have been established by a young medical man in India.

I have just returned from a three-hundred-mile walk into the very heart of the Himalayas. I had to set off at a day's notice to look after a Mr. Blank of the India civil service, who was said to be lying dangerously ill at a place called Skardu. He had gone there this year to settle the revenue, and in the winter was the only white man in the country.

I had sixteen days' march to get there, most of the way through snow, and all the way over the most impassable road I have yet seen. The road, or rather pass, lies along the Indus, and so bad is it that it is quite impossible to ride any of the way, which is saying much in this country, where we ride almost anywhere a great deal. But on every march to Skardu there are obstacles.

The path winds up and down the rocky mountains on either side of the Indus; in places along narrow ledges of rock, galleries of very rickety stone and wood built out from the face of cliffs, and even up and down ladders and notched poles. One march is over a snow mountain, a climb of forty-five hundred feet, up one side and down the other.

Several of my coolies got frost-bitten, as the cold was extreme. My water-bottle, which I carried with me, froze solid as I walked along. I had to sleep on the ground with lots of blankets, all my clothes on, two thick overcoats, fur-lined stockings and gloves.

THE LAST DITCH.

You'll have to give up drinking on account of your liver, said the doctor. And I would advise that you stop smoking because of your eyes and heart.

Doctor, groaned the patient, don't you think I'd better give up eating because of my stomach?

OBJECTED TO THE "COON SONG."

What's dat you wah singin'?' asked the old man.

Dat's de latest coon song, answered Mr. Erastus Pinkley.

Well, you cughter go on 'bout yoh work, 's'ud o' makin' yohself laughable tryin' to imitate white folks' ways.

A Veteran's Trials.

ATTACKED WITH KIDNEY TROUBLE IN AN AGGRAVATED FORM.

His Digestion Became Impaired and His Case Was Looked Upon as Hopeless—Dr. Williams' Pink Pills Restored Him When Other Medicines Failed.

From the Telegraph, Welland, Ont.

Among the residents of Port Robinson there are few better known than Mr. Samuel Richards, who has resided in that vicinity for some twenty-seven years. Mr. Richards came to Canada from Illinois, and is one of the veterans of the American civil war, having been a member of the 7th Illinois regiment.

Mr. Richards is also one of the vast army who bear willing and cheerful testimony to the value of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. To a reporter who recently interviewed him he said: "I very gladly testify to the great merit of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. A few years ago I fell a victim to one of the worst forms of kidney trouble. I was tortured with terrible pains across the back. I could neither sit up or lie down with any degree of ease. I consulted a doctor, and he gave me medicine which I took from time to time, but instead of helping me I was growing worse. My digestion became impaired and I suffered from additional pains in the stomach. I would feel cold along the spine and in the region of the kidneys; sparks would apparently float before my eyes, and I would have frequent headaches. I then began using a medicine advertised to cure kidney trouble, but to no avail; it left me poorer in pocket, while I grew worse in health. I fell away in flesh until my neighbors scarcely knew me. In my day I have undergone many hardships and a great deal of pain having been through the American war; but in all this I never experienced the dread that I now have when I recall this sickness; not even the hour when I was captured and dragged within two miles of Libby's prison. My sufferings were intensified by the stomach trouble. I could not eat and was bent almost double from pain, in fact I deemed myself a wreck. One day R. A. Abbey, general merchant, advised me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and as he highly recommended them I purchased three boxes, and before they were used I could feel improvement. I kept on taking them until I used twelve boxes and am now so well and strong that I can do two days' work in one and weigh 220 pounds. My cure was a surprise to everyone in the community, as all thought me hopeless. I feel so gratified that I consider this testimony compensates only poorly for what this medicine has done for me, and I believe I would have been dead if I had not taken Dr. Williams' Pink Pills."

The experience of years has proved that there is absolutely no disease due to a vitiated condition of the blood or shattered nerves, that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills will not promptly cure, and those who are suffering from such troubles would do well to consult and save money by promptly resorting to this treatment. Get the genuine Pink Pills every time and do not be persuaded to take an imitation or some other remedy from a dealer, who for the sake of the extra profit to himself, may say "just as good." Dr. Williams' Pink Pills cure when other medicines fail.

THE WHIPPING SCHOOL MASTER.

An Incident of Life at the Great English College, Eton.

John Hawtrey is still remembered as one of the famous whipping schoolmasters of England. He achieved his reputation at Eton, where he early made the birch his sovereign remedy for moral ills, and where his doses were never homoeopathic.

It was autumn, says Alfred Lubbock, who has a vivid remembrance of Hawtrey's methods, and we small boys used to buy chestnuts and roast them over the fire in a shovel. One day a boy named F., who was a great favorite of Hawtrey's, had a lot of chestnuts, and as a special favor, was allowed to make use of the pupil-room fire, while pupil-room was still going on.

Hawtrey was going in and out of the room while we were working, and on one occasion, coming in rather quietly, he caught sight of F. kneeling over the fire arranging his chestnuts. The boy's position was irresistible to any lover of the art of chastisement. Not seeing his face, and supposing it was one of the other boys stealing the chestnuts, John Hawtrey quietly took his cane from his desk, and creeping forward on tiptoe, gave the wretched F. a most tremendous whack.

The boy jumped up with a yell, his hands clasped behind him. Then the tutor saw who he was, and said, embracing him:

"Oh, my poor boy! I am so sorry! I thought it was another boy stealing your chestnuts."

We, of course, were all delighted, and roared with laughter.

COFFEE FOR BREAKFAST.

Doctor—Dyspepsia, ed. You want to drink a cup of hot water first thing every morning.

Patient—I always do. My boarding mistress invariably serves coffee for breakfast.

CRUSHED HIM.

The Shoe Clerk—Beg your pardon, madam, but it is a number five shoe you want, instead of a number three.

She—Number five! You must be thinking of the size of your hat.