

# MY FIANCEE.

I had been telegraph operator at "B Station" some six or eight months, and held communication of a purely business character only with the operator at "D," when there came a change. Death silently removed the old man who had been in charge there so long and a new operator was installed. A message spun along the line one February morning in this wise: "Good morning, B," to which I responded:

"Good morning, D."

Then came the information, "The old man died last night and I have taken his place."

"What is your name?" I asked.

"Nellie Merton. What is yours?" A spirit of mischief prompted my reply:

"Ned Clayborn."

"Thank you," was the concise response. Then a message in real earnest came along the lines and we were obliged to attend to business.

Every day I bade my unseen acquaintance "Good morning" and never closed up at night without a farewell message. A twinge of conscience racked me at times and a "still, small voice" whispered its warning, but the temptation was too great and it was not long before I was sending sly messages containing a good deal "between the lines," to the unseen Nellie. The replies to these messages were guarded but hopeful and I grew bolder. It was no end of fun.

She told me her history. She had run away from home because her parents insisted upon marrying her to a man she detested (and the last word came clicking viciously from my end of the line.) She would never marry him—never. I advised her not to and hinted at an affection deeper and truer than any the "detested fellow" could offer.

"Well, the outcome of it all was that I asked the unseen Nellie to be my wife and even described the little home that was lonesomely awaiting her coming. I was floundering in deep water and could but trust to a kind Providence to pull me out. My "fun" was becoming dead earnest. How I wished the wires stretching between us were telephonic instead of telegraphic, that I could perchance hear some exclamation or gain some token of how my message was received. But this was not to be and I had to possess my soul in patience.

That virtue was almost exhausted when the well-known call fell upon my ears. I flew to the instrument. It was concise and not very complimentary: "Rather than marry that brute I will risk it."

I was in for it now and must, perforce, founder still deeper by sending rapturous messages over the wires. I, Della Brown, was engaged to be married to a young lady I had never seen. This was forcing the question of "woman's rights."

I carried on the "fun" for over three months, and every day it grew decidedly less "funny" until I began to brood over the predicament into which I had giddily led my feet. The time was rapidly approaching when I would have to claim the bride I had won in this novel and romantic manner, and my blood ran cold at the thought of how easy it would be for her to learn of my perfidy, and from all I had seen of her temper I felt sure she would not deal lightly with any one who would dare to play tricks upon her.

At last I could bear it no longer, and one day, just three weeks before I was to travel to D—and claim my bride, I boarded the train with another bride, another motive. It was to "kiss and make up," after I had begged her with tears to forgive me, etc., etc.

I found a little house with a little sign in blue and white swinging in the breeze, similar to the little house and the little sign at B—. It was occupied at the time by a young man reading a paper. I looked at him without speaking and he returned the compliment in kind.

"I wish to see Miss Nellie Merton," I said, and as he did not speak I went on to explain. "I am the operator at B—and have an important message which must be delivered to her at once. A moment's delay means—" I paused for a word and he spoke for the first time.

"So you are the operator at B—, and desire to see Miss Merton. I am sorry to disappoint you, but you see, Miss Merton is at home at the present time, while I take her place. The fact is, she is going to be married and is preparing for the great event. She cannot be seen personally, but if you will intrust the message to me I will deliver it immediately, if you will be kind enough to take my place while I run around to her house."

His coolness nearly distracted me. "I must see her," I exclaimed excitedly.

"But you cannot," he said coldly. "I have strict orders not to let anyone know her whereabouts for a day or two, until these extensive preparations are well under way."

I was on the verge of tears and with a choke in my voice I cried out, sinking into a chair and holding up my hands deprecatingly:

"Don't say another word! You will set me wild. If you will not tell me where to find Nellie, I will go in desperation, will you please tell her this? I have been a bad, wicked girl—and—and there is no such person as Ned Clayborn. It started in fun and—and— Please let me go to her. She will understand me so much better than you can explain it."

"No such person as Ned Clayborn! My dear young lady, I must beg leave to differ with you. That is the name of the young man who in three short weeks is to marry Miss Merton. Surely he is not dead," he added in consternation.

"Oh, will you not understand? It was all a joke at first. I thought it would be great fun, and so I—well I am Ned Clayborn, and after a time we became engaged—all in fun, too," here I laughed hysterically. "I tried to stop, but I was so wicked I could not, and now

Unlike most men, my companion was not in the least disconcerted at sight of my tears, but simply laughed loud and long.

Presently the laughter ceased; then I heard uneasy movements in the chair occupied by my companion; then he got up and paced about restlessly. Pretty soon a light touch fell upon my arm and his voice, very gentle and kind, said: "Nellie is here to receive your confession and forgiveness." I dried my eyes and looked up, but saw no one but the tall young man who was looking at me very earnestly.

"Where is she?" I asked, ready to cry again.

"Here," he said, holding out his hand.

Instinctively I put mine into it and it closed over it firmly.

"I have also a confession to make," he said earnestly. "I thought you were another young fellow like myself, and wishing to relieve the tedium of these long, monotonous days, struck up a flirtation. I intended to meet the young man some day and have it out with him, when you came with your strange confession. In short," he added abruptly, "I am Nellie Merton. And you are Ned Clayborn? Come, dry your eyes, Ned; your Nellie is not heart broken at the turn about of affairs."

After staring at him in silent amazement the truth of the whole matter began to dawn upon my confused brain. My face grew hot with indignation. I snatched my hand from his and sprang to my feet.

"You are a contemptible fellow!" I cried.

He did not reply, but stood looking down at me from his superior height.

"It was a hundred times meaner in you because your object was a woman. I will never forgive you if I live to be a thousand."

"Isn't that rather paradoxical, considering the fact that you thought I was a woman and you were enacting the role of the sterner sex?" he asked.

"You might have known," I answered severely.

"But I did not," he replied.

"Here is my train," I said shortly.

"Good bye," he replied, assisting me on to the train, despite my independence, and lifting his hat as it pulled out.

I travelled back to B—a sadder but a wiser woman.

"You are a fool," said I to my reflection in the little mirror as I removed my hat.

A year rolled by. I had entirely recovered from my chagrin, and buried in the darkest chamber of my memory was every thought of the tall, young operator at D—Station.

One morning I was arranging and copying some light messages, when a long shadow fell across my papers. A glance upward told me who it was. The door of that secret and darkened chamber of my memory flew open and I knew that the tall young man at D—Station was not as yet quite consigned to oblivion. Standing with hat in hand, and without any preface of any kind, he said:

"Over a year ago you asked me to marry you and I consented. I have come to-day to ask you will you come or shall I enter a suit for breach of promise?"

"What could I do? And, after all, perhaps he would not have made me a better husband had I met him in the old conventional way and waited for him to propose to me."

"That whole dreadful voyage was like an awful nightmare!" said a devoted daughter, who had been cabled that her mother was dangerously ill. "I felt sure that I should never see her again, and when I saw the tug coming out to meet us, and I knew that one of my brothers would be on board to bring me news, either good or bad, I felt that I could not bear to know the truth; that if I was bereft even of the hope that had been with me since leaving Liverpool I could not stand it. I stood shivering with apprehension while a friend steadied his glass and gazed at the approaching tug."

"I see," he said slowly, as they came within the compass of his strong field-glass. "I see your brother and,—still more slowly, as if to be perfectly sure—'I think, yes, I am sure, he has on a bright red necktie.' At that I collapsed entirely. The relief was so unexpected, for I tried to prepare myself for the worst. Then I sank down in a steamer chair, half-fainting, and suddenly, the words 'bright red necktie' recurring to my mind, and the absolute incongruity of such a startling accessory to the toilet of my decorous and dignified brother, who never by any chance wears anything that is in the least loud, I went off into a fit of weak laughter, ending in tears. But wasn't it dear and thoughtful of him to put on that flaming red tie to convey the good tidings from afar off?"

**Impetuous Youth.**

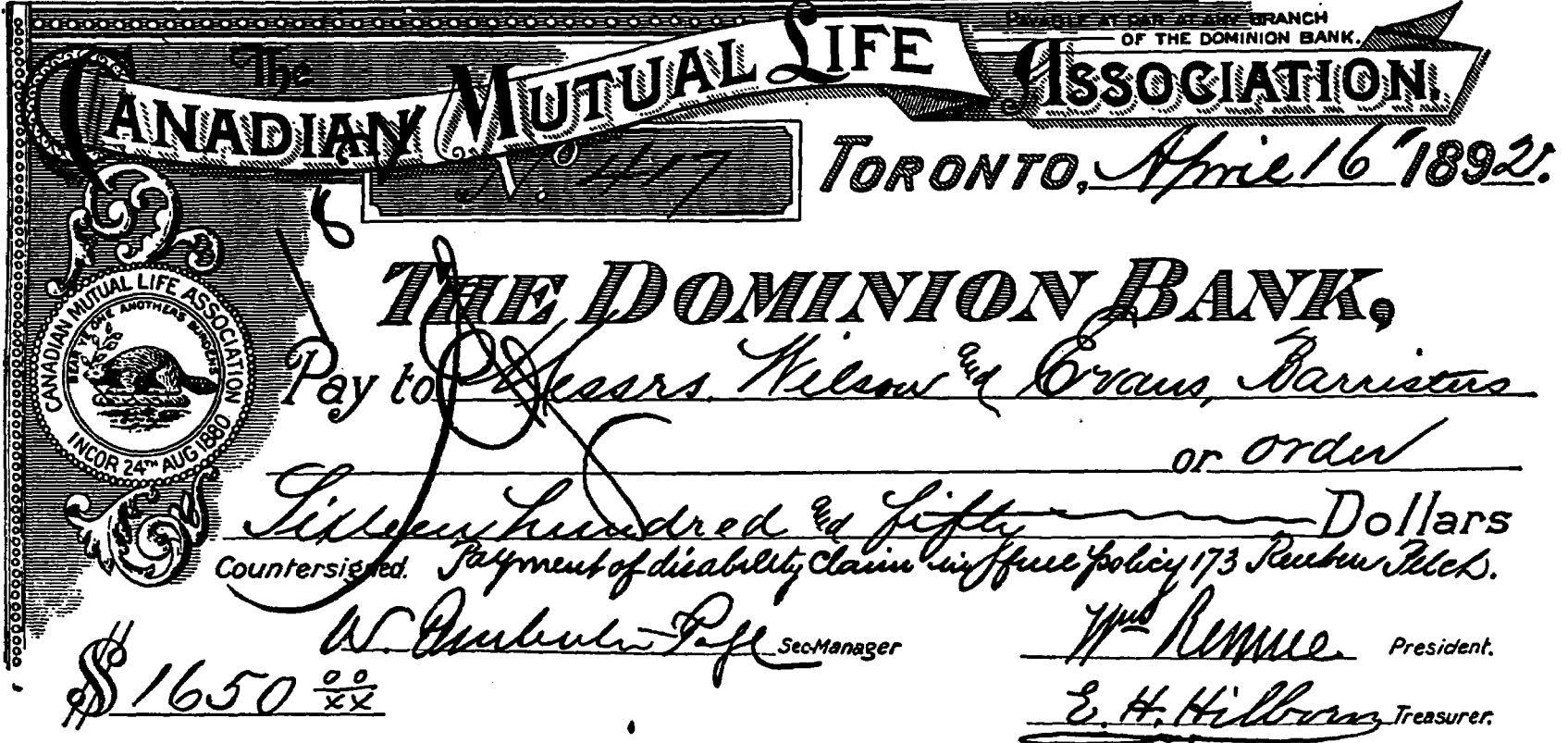
If youth and experience could only go together what an all-conquering conjunction they would make! It is one of the saddest contradictions of this misty world that the power to discriminate and to appreciate is apt to come too late. It is a curious trait in human nature that, although in science, and, for that matter, all other impersonal matter connected with our lives, we are willing to accept the knowledge that has been acquired before our time and draw our deductions from premises that others have evolved, in everything that concerns

# THE CURE WAS PERMANENT.

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**WHAT DR. WILLIAMS' PINK PILLS have done for others they will do for you, if given a fair trial.**

From the Meaford, Ont., Monitor.

About two years ago the Monitor procured an interview with Mr. Reuben Petch, of Griersville, in order to ascertain from his own lips if the reports were well founded that he attributed his most astounding return to health to the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. The result of the interview was published in the Monitor under the date of Jan. 17th, 1898. Mr. Petch's case was certainly one of the most extraordinary in the annals of medicine in Canada—if not in the world. He had been ill for five years, and in that time he consulted no less than six of the best physicians he could find, but none could give him the least relief. His limbs and body were puffed and bloated to such an extent that he could not get his clothes on, and for two years he had not dressed. He had lost the use of his limbs entirely. His flesh seemed to be dead, and pins could be stuck into various parts of his body without being felt or creating the slightest sensation. He could not move about, and if he attempted to get up would fall and would have to be lifted up. He was unable to open his mouth sufficiently to take solid food, and had to be fed with a spoon like a child. The doctors said his trouble was spinal sclerosis, and that he could not possibly get better. He was in fact nothing more or less than an animated corpse, so helpless was he. He was a member of the Canadian Mutual Life Association, and was under their rules entitled to disability insurance and made a claim for it. Two doctors, on behalf of the association, were sent to examine him, and they pronounced him incurable and permanently disabled, and in accordance with their report he was paid a disability insurance of \$1,650.00. This was about two years after his sickness began

For three years more he lingered in the condition above noted, utterly helpless, and a burden to himself and friends. He was then advised to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. He did not hope that they would help him, but in his sad condition he was prepared to grasp at anything that afforded the prospect of even a slight relief. The first change noted in his condition after he began the use of the pills was a disposition to sweat freely. Then life began to return to his hitherto dead body, and from that time on his progress towards recovery and activity was steady and certain.

The publication of the interview, containing the facts above noted, created unusual interest, not only in this section, but throughout Canada. That a man, whose limbs and body were all but dead, who had been examined by medical experts and pronounced incurable, and on the strength of their report was paid a large disability claim, should afterwards be cured by Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, was looked upon as a marvel. Many were sceptical, not as to the cure,—for the fact that he was actively going about proved this—but they did not believe it would prove permanent. In view of the doubts then expressed, the Monitor determined to watch the case closely, and now, nearly two years after the cure was first published, has again interviewed Mr. Petch with the result that we are in a position to say most emphatically that this remarkable cure has proved permanent.

On being again questioned, Mr. Petch said:—"You see these hands—the skin is now natural and elastic. Once they were hard and without sensation. You could pierce them with a pin and I would not feel it, and what is true of my hands is true of the rest of my body. Perhaps you have observed that I have

now even ceased to use a cane, and can get about my business perfectly well. You may say there is absolutely no doubt as to my cure being permanent. Indeed I am in even better health than when I gave you the first interview."

"Do you still attribute your cure to the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills?" asked the Monitor.

"Unquestionably I do," was the reply. "Doctors had failed, as had also the numerous remedies recommended by my friends. Nothing I took had the slightest effect upon me until I began the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. To this wonderful medicine I owe my release from a living death. I have since recommended Dr. Williams' Pink Pills to many of my friends, and the verdict is in their favor. I shall always bless the day I was induced to take them."

The above are the chief statements made by Mr. Petch in this latest interview, and the Monitor may remark, from a long acquaintance with him, that we consider his statements absolutely true and reliable. He has no interest to serve other than a desire to recommend the medicine that has done so much for him, and we feel sure that if any sufferer will write Mr. Petch, enclosing a stamp for reply, he will endorse all the statements made above. We may further add that Mr. Petch's remarkable recovery leaves no doubt of the wonderful curative power of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and that it seems reasonable to infer that they will do for others what they have done for him—restore health and vitality.

The check at the head of this article is a fac simile of the one by which Mr. Petch's disability claim was paid, and is given in further corroboration of his statements.

ourselves, and is therefore to us the most important, we refuse to be guided or to take warning from the experiences of others. It is one of the many trials of a fond parent that their children think as they know they ought to think, and to see them rush blindly into trouble that might so easily have been avoided if youth would only listen and consult with age. Every mother prophesies to unwilling ears what she knows to be true, but what she cannot get her young people to believe, until through experience—which is often unpleasant—they return to the creeds of the nursery, the unquestioning faith of early childhood, that "mother is always right."—Exchange.

### Hard on the American Woman.

(Grace Atherton in The Contemporary Review.)

The fact that 80 per cent of the actions for divorce are brought by women would appear to tell heavily against the men of the country, but, as a matter of fact, a large percentage of these divorces go by default, which implies either collusion or indifference on the part of the delinquent. Many men, it is estimated, permit the offending wife to bring the suit rather than to disgrace her and her children. Nevertheless, the divorce resolution has been brought about and is maintained by women.

The typical woman of the United States to-day is a mental anarchist. The reasons for this are several. She is a composite of all the races of earth, if not in blood in point of view. She is a product of experimental democracy, and, like her country, blindly but fiercely striving for an ideal. She has been thrown largely on her own resources; unlike the women of the Old World, she has done her own thinking. She lives in an electrical atmosphere. She is a spoiled child. She finds herself a component

part of a life that is ever changing, and changes with it. She has come to regard herself as far the most important element in that life. She is a child of the hour of the minute; she does not strike roots. Her independence has begot an abnormal amount of individuality.

It is a matter for wonder that, finding the man she has married unsatisfactory, she tosses him aside and begins life anew? It might be argued that many of the conditions enumerated apply equally to the men; but it must be remembered that the latter have less time to reason and analyze. They are essentially a race of nervous, incessant workers; they seem to be possessed by the idea that if they pause to take breath the imperfect structure of their Republic will fall to pieces. Even the rich men die in harness.

### SICK CALLS.

**TIMELY ADVICE IN REGARD TO SECURING THE SERVICE OF A PRIEST.**

Priests may justly complain, and do, at the unnecessary summoning of them in the long hours of the night to a sick call. Cases of emergency arise, of sudden danger, and the priest readily responds and would censure the interested who do not call upon him, no matter the hour or the inclemency of the season or his state of feeling, so that he was able to go. There are too many among us who never think of the priest but only as an automaton, to be moved about at their own sweet wills, especially in the sick call. Well instructed Catholics, and there is no excuse for there being ignorant ones, should call in the priest at a reasonable hour when sickness of a serious nature manifests itself. Don't wait until the doctor gives his patient up. Most oftentimes then it is too late for the priest to do the good the Church

desires, expects and demands. The clouded mind does not respond. A sick person, reconciled to God through the reception of the sacraments, has a calm mind, and the priest's ministrations go far to effect a cure. Have reason and common sense, and attend to the religious duties promptly and in reasonable hours as far as possible.—Catholic Citizen.

### A DUMAS ANECDOTE.

Dumas the elder was not in the habit of counting his money, but did once, leaving it on the chimney-piece while he left the room for a few minutes. When he returned and was giving some instructions to a servant, he mechanically counted the pieces over again, and found a franc missing. "Well," he said, with a sigh, "considering that I never counted my money before, I can't say it pays."—London Figaro.

### AN AGREEABLE ARRANGEMENT.

When a certain General was camping on the lower Mississippi, his negro boy, Harry, was one day asked by a friend whether the General was not terribly annoyed by mosquitoes. "No, sah," said Harry; "in the evening Mars' George is so 'toxicated he don't mind the skeeters, and in the mornin' the skeeters is so 'toxicated they don't mind Mars' George."—Argonaut.

### INCONSISTENT.

Hammersley—"What's come between you and Pundemon?"

Osgood—"Oh, it was this way. He said to me: 'What's the use talking? Every man has his price, and you know it.' Then I asked him what his was, and he wanted to fight."—Chicago News.

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