

The Story of the Wedding Ring

By Bertha M. Clay.

Continued from last page. "I shall die easier, child, when my turn comes," she said. "If I have left you in the charge of a good man...

CHAPTER III

Paul Waldron had won the girl he loved; for a few weeks he was perfectly happy, and then clouds, light as the breath of the summer wind came over the sky.

CHAPTER IV

Another month passed; the beauty of the summer deepened; the corn was growing ripe in the fields, the crimson roses contrasted with the cool, white lilies, the fruit hung rich and mellow...

They had been married a year when their little child was born, and Paul thought Ismay grew more content than she loved the child very dearly, but not with the passionate devotion some mothers give to their children.

One day Ismay went to the garden with a basket on her head, and she was looking at the flowers with a wistful gaze when she saw a butterfly fluttering about her feet.

She was vain of her beauty; she would look at her face in the mirror and say to herself— "Mrs Schofield is not half so fair, yet she is the wife of a rich squire, and wears jewels and has a carriage."

There was a certain amount of admiration cast upon her; she heard one say another, "Who is that beautiful girl and her vanity was flattered. If, so plainly attired, she could produce this marked sensation, what would she not do when magnificently dressed?"

She had yet to learn that men of Paul Waldron's stamp held many things dearer than life. Their child grew and thrived, the beautiful summer came round; the world was all fair and bright, the flowers were in bloom and the birds singing gaily in the trees.

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She showed her the model of a steam engine into which he had introduced an improvement so great that, if adopted, it would lead to important results. She took up the model carefully, as though it were a toy.

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She looked at him with a pretty expression of delight. "Why do you look so long for Ismay?" he asked. "Because of the pleasure and luxury it will bring," she said simply, yet with a smile that disarmed all anger.

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"Yes," she replied; "that is my baby too." "I am very fond of children," said the stranger; "will you let me nurse him? He took the child in his arms, and looked just as intently in his face."

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