

HER SECOND LOVE

A STORY OF LOVE AND ADVENTURE

By Bertha M. Clay

There had been one of those short flirtations between them, which are chronicled only on the records kept by mothers and all elderly ladies.

A young Mr. Erskine had once very much admired Constance Gordon, and he had passed but one or two days more in her company.

Miss Gordon's aunt, however, would have declared his love for her. Miss Gordon's aunt, however, had watched the two. Mr. Erskine was, in her opinion, no desirable match for Constance and a timely departure had put a stop to the acquaintance.

Miss Gordon had soon forgot, or she had never remembered. A short time after that she had married. So much had happened since then, that this flirtation might well be classed among the first of long ago.

The evening was a short one, for they dined late. Constance appeared and both she and Mr. Erskine were very glad to see each other.

Mr. Erskine was in the library when Mrs. Lewis passed through; he decorously lit her candle, and presently his own. There was a strange confusion in his mind that night.

Constance and Georgy were most intricately blended together. He had firmly believed that to meet the former would have been to him a matter of the utmost indifference.

He had cared for her once, very much, but he had never thought that he should feel so much at seeing her again. And he looked back sadly to that once—then drew closer to the recollection of Georgy. He was in a state of mental polygamy just then; wherein many an impulsive nature may find itself.

I must promise to forgive me all my past misdemeanors, whatever they may have been, for they were not committed purposely."

He spoke carelessly, but with a deeper pain underneath than she knew of. "I am going to Edinburgh to-day."

He shook hands and was about to leave the room, when Constance started up, surprised and mortified. She was always accustomed to have her own way and act upon the impulse of the moment.

Constance threw him the letter which he ought to have received long ago, yet had not, and then sat down again in the window, leaning her head upon her hand. It was a brave thing to do, to give a six months' old letter back to be read without a word of alteration; most people would have written him another, or explained by word of mouth.

CHAPTER XVIII The next day Mr. Erskine decided that he had best go to Edinburgh immediately, meet his mother, and break his engagement to her.

He went up-stairs to Mrs. Lewis's sitting-room, hoping that he should find Georgy. Instead he found Mrs. Everett, who had not appeared that morning. She was lying on a sofa with her foot upon a cushion, and a bright, feverish color in her cheeks.

My dear Mrs. Everett, pardon me," he answered, very deferentially, but very haughtily. "It is I who was to blame, and I have long felt it. I should have asked your pardon before, and I do so now most heartily; you are very good to have forgotten and forgiven."

"No, don't go so quickly," he said, with a half sigh, as if her going involved some serious misfortune. "Don't go. What is that book you have hidden under the sofa cushion? In heaven's name, what makes you read law?" he asked, very much amused, as he took it out of its abode.

Just then Mrs. Lewis came in. Georgy was in a state of bewilderment all that day. She said over her story to herself, She could read it. And why had she not done so before? Their looks and the letter told all. They had both looked actually guilty when she entered. There were many other little things which she strung together quickly, and her fancy could fill up the rest.

She must act, though, now,—that was something. She could go away calmly, with no parade or self-satisfaction. She was not heroic in any abstract way: the days were long passed when she had nursed dreams of devotion and enthusiasm for their own sake; but for any one whom she loved, she would have died quietly, without expecting that her fate could affect them much, and without asking a word of recognition from any other human being.

He had read it through and then stood watching her from the other end of the room. This was his doing—his madness: he had loved her always; he loved her now. He could not tell why. The Frenchman's praise of the woman whom he loved, had seldom been surpassed. He did not say that she was fairer and wiser than all other women: he described her negatively first,—she was not this she was not that.

That was all,—and he must love her still. Last night it was the thought of Constance that animated his tenderly to Georgy. Is the bitter saying really true? "Toujours nous nous vengeons sur ceux qui nous aiment." Now, he had wilfully lost her. Never fear Constance that your powee is past! But it is too late now,—a man cannot break his word as a woman does: in that matter verily, is a man's law stricter than a woman's. Good-by, Constance," he said, without moving, and then the rest of his sentence failed him; he was so prostrate at the discovery of his hasty judgment; and the satisfaction of feeling that for the first she had bent to him, was now only an additional sting.

It was my fault; but if my evil fate had not led me away from Bruxelles so soon, I should not have fancied,—yes, it was my fault," he continued very sadly; "but you will forgive me; I shall always be your friend, and I will never doubt you again in anything. Good-by, good-by, Constance."

She looked up, startled by his strange manner, which seemed to imply a leave-taking; a tear was still upon her face, and he was standing near her with the letter in his hand when Georgy came into the room. Both started; Georgy's first impulse was to look at them fixedly, and then she turned to leave the room. Mr. Erskine did that, however, going hastily down stairs, and muttering something that was totally inaudible. Constance brushed away the tear, and leant against the window; then came back to the sofa again.

"What is the matter with him?" she asked abruptly. "With whom?" "James Erskine! Is he going to be married? or is he ruined? I know him so well. Why is he so sad?" "Sad? Mrs. Everett," "Yes, Georgy; I know him so well: I wonder what it is! If he is going to be married it rather weighs upon his heart," she went on with anxious vehemence. Georgy did not speak: she could not; but she looked at Mrs. Everett so keenly, that Constance colored.

London, March 25.—The Daily Mail publishes the following, dated March 24, from its St. Petersburg correspondent: "The police have discovered a plot against the life of the Czar. It appears that a group of students drew lots, and that the fatal choice fell to the son of a prominent general. The student told his father, and the latter informed the Czar, informing him to leave St. Petersburg."

LONDON, March 25.—The St. Petersburg correspondent of the Daily Express says: "In the last encounter at Narva Gate 100 workmen are reported to have been killed or wounded by the Cossacks."

New York, March 25.—The Journal has the following from Berlin: Russia is in a turmoil. Troops guard every important city to nip rebellion in the bud. The Czar and Zarina are at their country home at Czarskino, guarded by many thousands of Cossacks. It is reported here that they fled from St. Petersburg in an armored train.

NEW HEAD FOR JESUIT ORDER. Rome, March 25.—The Pope has had special inquiries made respecting the policy and actions of the Jesuits throughout the world. He is much disturbed at the simultaneous and apparently spontaneous popular demonstrations against the order in Spain, Portugal, France and Austria, and he expressed the opinion that there must be something radically wrong somewhere.

TOOK PRUSSIC ACID IN MISTAKE. Bowmanville, Ont., March 25.—This town was thrown into excitement Saturday night when it became known that William C. Cole, the popular young King street druggist, had taken a dose of prussic acid instead of a tonic he had prepared for stomach trouble, from which he had suffered recently. Every effort to revive him was ineffectual and he died in about 15 or 20 minutes after the doctor arrived. He was a clever druggist, a graduate of the Ontario College of Pharmacy, from which institution he had received the Ph.M.B. degree.

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 25.—From the 1st of July next international postal money orders will no longer be used in transactions with the Canadian Postal Department, but the ordinary domestic money orders, which we use in transactions between our home postoffices, will be used also in drawing on the Canadian postoffices, just as if there were no imaginary line dividing us from two closely allied countries. This is the last step needed to be taken to put the American and Canadian postal systems into virtually one system of operation.

Winnipeg, March 25.—Mayor Fraser, Brandon, Mayor Brown, Portage la Prairie, J. H. Brock and D. W. Bole, Winnipeg, left for Ottawa on Saturday to protest against Mr. Roblin's railway deal being confirmed by the Dominion Parliament. The grand jury has returned a true bill in the action of Premier Roblin for libel against The Free Press. The language of the libel complained of is "Forgery of a name in St. Paul brought home to Premier Roblin."

LEGISLATIVE.

The sweetest song has never been sung, the biggest fish is still uncaught, and the ideal tax law has yet to convince a legislative body.—New York World.

Do not pat or smooth down mashed potatoes, as it makes them heavy. A delicious cake filling is made from chopped figs mixed with crabapple or apple jelly. Scraps of plain or puff paste trimmed from patties or pies may be sprinkled with grated cheese and made into cheese straws.

FIN, FEATHER AND FUR. A kangaroo consumes as much grass as six sheep. There are but about 900,000 left in Australia. Sparrows have a strange antipathy for robins, and sometimes they become actively antagonistic to them.

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