

# Shell Wilden.

A ROMANCE

## CHAPTER VII.

One the following morning, as Shell is carefully folding in tissue-paper the superfluous tea-spoons brought into use on the previous evening, Ruby once more bursts in upon her solitude.

"I have brought over one of Meg's dresses as a guide, and I think this merino ought to make up prettily," she says, unfolding a parcel which she carries, and displaying with some triumph a tiny cotton frock and a piece of some light blue material.

Shell pauses in the act of rubbing an imaginary spot from one of the spoons and stares at the articles produced with wondering eyes.

"What are you talking about?" she asks, with bewildered stress on the word "are."

"Why, I am going to make a dress for poor little Meg," explains Ruby in a rather impatient and injured tone. "You must have noticed how badly the poor child's things fit her?"

Shell turns perfectly crimson. "You can't mean what you say, Ruby?" she cries in a voice of horror. "You have surely not been offering to make clothes for Robert Champley's children?"

"Why not?" demands Ruby, with a faint flush. "I consider it only a common act of charity to help the poor man when he is in such dire need of help."

"Oh, then, he asked you to see about it?" queries Shell, looking relieved. "Well, not exactly. We were talking about the children, and I remarked that the nurse seemed to have no idea how to dress them properly. Of course he objected to my taking any trouble in the matter, but I could see that he was distressed by what I told him. So this morning I went over and caught the nurse just about to cut out another monstrosity, so I just marched off her stuff, and one of Meg's dresses for a pattern."

"Wasn't the nurse a trifle surprised?" asks Shell, in dry sarcastic tone.

"She did seem a little put out," admits Ruby, with a quick flush. "I shall warn Robert Champley against that woman. I think he must be mistaken in her—she has most shocking manners."

"Do you set up as being a judge of manners?" asks Shell, still sneering.

"I set up for knowing when people are rude and disagreeable," answers Ruby shortly.

Shell, having carefully disposed of her last spoon, is turning silently from the room, when Ruby calls her back.

"Where are you going?" she asks crossly.

"I am going to lock up the silver," replies Shell, without retracing her steps.

"When you have done that I wish you would help me to cut out Meg's dress—you are so much more used to that kind of thing than I am," says Ruby, gazing dependently at the little dress, which she has been turning inside out to see how it is fashioned.

"I am really very sorry," answers Shell coldly; "but I can't possibly help you. I never cut out a child's dress in my life."

"Nonsense—don't be so cross—you must do for me!" cries Ruby, beginning to look alarmed. "Of course I quite reckoned on you, or I should never have undertaken such a task."

"I am very sorry," repeats Shell, in a hard, unfeeling voice; "but I don't in the least understand children's things. I should advise you to send for patterns or put it out—you will get no help from me." And then she hurries from the room, nearly upsetting Violet, whom she meets in the passage.

"Would you believe it, Vi?—that wretch of a Shell has turned sulky," grumbles Ruby, as her cousin enters the room. "She vows she won't help me with Meg's dress, or even cut it out. Isn't it disagreeable of her?"

"What on earth will you do? I know you can't manage it yourself," laughs Violet—instead of sympathizing she seems only amused at her cousin's dilemma.

"I am sure I don't know. Do you think you could cut one out?" asks Ruby helplessly.

Violet turns the little dress all round about, then holds it out at arm's length by both sleeves.

"Not if hanging were the alternative," she laughs; "it is quite beyond me."

But for Ruby it is no laughing matter—tears of mortification and vexation force themselves into her eyes. "Bah! Don't take it to heart," cries Violet lightly—"we'll send for some patterns, and then make an ostentatious show of cutting it out in Shell's presence. She won't be able to withstand that. I know, for she hates to see good stuff wasted."

And Violet's ruse proves successful. For when, a few days later, having obtained some patterns from London, Ruby deliberately begins to arrange them the wrong way of the stuff, Shell impatiently comes to the rescue, and, having once taken possession of the scissors, wields them to the end. Having cut out the dress, she soon decides to make it; she is a good workwoman, and never before has such a

dainty, enticing bit of work come in her way. She feels perfectly safe in her undertaking. Ruby is scarcely likely to blazon forth her own incompetence.

One afternoon, as she sits at the open window smiling over her work, Robert Champley comes sauntering thoughtfully up the short avenue of the Wilderness. Suddenly Shell, all unconscious of his close proximity, breaks into song. It is a bright, cheery little ditty that bursts from her lips, and her unseen listener pauses amidst the shrubs and waits for the end. Leaning idly against a strong young lilac, he not only listens to the words with an amused smile, but watches the busy needle flashing in and out of her work. She makes a vivid picture seen between the breaks of greenery, with her brilliant hair, snow-white skin, and the patch of blue on her lap. This is the second time he has come upon Shell unawares, and somehow he takes great delight in so surprising her—her quick change of manner when she is discovered, although he cannot understand it, amuses him.

"A very good song, and very well sung! Bravo, Miss Shell—and please forgive me for listening!" he says, stepping up to the window hat in hand, when the last note has died away.

"Oh!" cries Shell, becoming furiously red; and then she throws her work upon the floor and conceals it with her dress.

The sudden disappearance of the patch of blue attracts his attention far more than if she had left it on her knee, and a somewhat contemptuous look steals into his eyes as he comes to the conclusion that Shell is ashamed of being caught dressmaking. It sets him into a teasing mood.

"Miss Shell, if you ever get an offer of jewelry, I advise you to choose turquoise," he says, with his keen eyes fixed steadily upon the girl's burning cheeks.

"Turquoise—why? I am not going to get any jewelry!" stammers Shell, too confused and surprised to find a ready answer.

"Because pale blue suits you to perfection," answers Mr. Champley with a meaning nod; and then, intensely amused at her bewildered look, he proceeds on his way.

"Could he have seen my work?" muses Shell, as she withdraws it from its hiding place and carefully shakes out the delicate lace trimming, which has become a little crushed from her summary treatment. "I don't imagine he could—and yet what made him talk about pale blue?"

In the meantime Mr. Champley has proceeded round to the hall door, and been shown by the trim housemaid into the cool and airy drawing-room, where he finds Violet Flower buried in the depths of a low, cozy chair and engrossed with a novel.

"Tell Miss Wilden that Mr. Champley is here," she says to the maid, as she half rises from her chair and stretches out a lazy white hand in greeting.

"Pray don't trouble to rise," laughs Robert, as he hastens to her side. "You looked so exquisitely happy when I came in that I should be sorry to disturb you."

"I am always happy when I am doing nothing," answers Violet naively. "This hot weather is so frightfully enervating that no one in the house has a spark of energy left excepting Shell."

"You are not altogether lazy—you were reading," says Mr. Champley politely.

"Yes—I have just life enough left to take in ideas as they are put before me," responds Vi, with a lazy little yawn, "though I find it a great exertion holding up a book."

"You should get one of those wonderful literary machines which one sees advertised," laughs Robert Champley, turning to greet Ruby, who has just entered the room. "I came over, Miss Wilden, expressly to thank you for all your kindness to my children," he begins in a formal tone as he reseats himself.

"Oh, please don't mention it!" answers Ruby, casting down her eyes. "I assure you their coming over so frequently has been a great pleasure to me."

"It is very good of you to say so," returns Robert, in a tone which does not convey any great amount of belief in her statement; "and I intend to send over the little ones tomorrow morning to thank you yourselves."

"I am sure I feel thanked more than enough already," murmurs Ruby.

"I have been fortunate enough to secure very comfortable rooms in a farm house on Oakmoor," pursues Robert Champley, with his eyes fixed persistently upon the carpet. "The air seems pure and bracing, and I hope that a couple of months spent there will benefit them wonderfully."

## CHAPTER VIII.

"Are you going with them?" asks Ruby sweetly.

"Yes—oh, yes!" assents the gentleman with gusto. He cannot conceal his feeling of delight at the coming change; indeed, of Miss Ruby's inter-

ference respecting his children has become almost unbearable—and change which takes him from her immediate neighborhood cannot fail to be greeted with enthusiasm.

"It seems such a pity to leave Champley House just when the flowers are so beautiful," sighs Ruby sentimentally.

"I will tell the gardener to send over a basketful twice a week," returns Robert quickly.

"Thanks; you are too—too kind," gushes Ruby; whilst Vi, leaning back in her chair, smiles lazily at the little comedy being enacted before her.

"Oakmoor," muses Ruby aloud, after a short pause. "It sounds so rural and nice, only just a little vague. What part of Oakmoor are you going to?"

"Our farm house is about a quarter of a mile from the village of Oakford."

"Oakford—Oakford?" repeats Ruby. "I suppose it is a very healthy spot?"

"I should think so. Oakford stands nearly eight hundred feet above the sea, and there is remarkably good fishing in the neighborhood."

"Oh, how I wish I could induce mamma to go there for a time—I am sure the change would do her good!" sighs Ruby.

"I am really afraid you wouldn't like it," cries Robert, looking alarmed. "There is only the most primitive accommodations to be had, and—and ladies are not used to roughing it."

"That is just like you—always so thoughtful," says Ruby in rather an absent tone; "but I don't think we should mind roughing it a little, since the air is so invigorating."

"I know I should mind!" interposes Violet quickly. "I hate invigorating air—it gives one no excuse for being lazy; as for out-of-the-way places, I abominate them—no society, no library, perhaps even no piano!"

"I don't imagine that there is any hope of our going," says Ruby, looking blankly at her cousin.

"There is no need to regret that fact—you would be tired of the place in less than a week," laughs Robert confidentially; "as for Ted and me, it is otherwise—we shall have our fishing."

"Yes, of course. Well, I am sure I wish you may enjoy it," says Ruby, trying to look in earnest; and then, when their visitor has taken his departure, she falls into a meditative mood, from which Vi's bantering remarks are powerless to rouse her.

On the following morning Bob and Meg arrive with the nurse in their little donkey-trap, looking very important and well pleased with themselves.

"Please, Miss Wilden, we have come to wish you good-by; and please take this with our love," says Bob, striding first into the room and repeating the words that have been drilled into him with a slight frown.

"How handsome—how lovely! Oh, how kind!" she cries; then, unfolding a small scrap of paper contained in the case, she reads the somewhat stiffly-worded note enclosed:

"Dear Miss Wilden.—Please accept the watch from Bob and Meg as a small token of their regard and gratitude. Yours truly,

"ROBERT CHAMPLEY."

Whilst Mrs. Wilden and Violet are admiring the watch, and Ruby is perusing the note with a feeling of disappointment, notwithstanding the costliness of her present, Meg makes her way to Shell, and, thrusting a parcel into her lap, cries triumphantly—

"Dat is for oo, dear Sell!"

"Dear Sell! looks anything but delighted at the information.

"Nonsense, Meg—you have made a mistake!" she says, so coldly that Meg begins to pout her under lip preparatory to a cry.

"Me haven't!" she says stoutly. Dat is for oo—pa said so."

Hearing that her parcel is of no intrinsic value, Shell condescends to open it. Having done so, a handsomely bound copy of Tennyson's poems lies exposed to view.

(To be Continued.)

## MEN ARE NOT THE MOTIVE.

Women Do Not Don Their Finest Frocks to Win Masculine Smiles.

There is a fallacy—confined, though, to the masculine half of society—and that is that women dress for men. Of course all women know better than that and laugh at it in their sleeves as the most ridiculous of ideas. Most of them would like, though, to let men go on thinking so, but I don't care, so I'm going to tell, says a woman in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. I think any creature who belongs to such a stupid sex ought not to be allowed—if there is any way of enlightening him—to go on thinking that any woman would throw away time and material to dress for him. Let me tell you, please, what I heard once. It was this: A woman of my acquaintance was clothed in a new and most beautiful dinner suit, which had cost hundreds of dollars. She wore it for the first time with an air of a queen—ah, me, who couldn't have worn it so!—and looked as if she had just stepped down out of the latest Parisian fashion sheet. A man looked at her—a man who had reached an age when he ought to have had discretion and who was still not in his dotage—looked at her and said:

"That's your last winter's suit, is it not?" I don't think I need to tell you more, but I will. Another human adult of the same sex told me once that my gown was very beautiful. It was a ten-cent lawn that I myself had made. So, of course, all women save up their best clothes for people who can appreciate them, and those people are not men.

Why isn't a wedding in the drawing-room a parlor match?

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A ROMANCE

## CHAPTER VIII.—(Continued.)

Shell flushes crimson; the one wish of her girlhood has been to possess a volume of Tennyson all her own. Yet, now that she stands with the treasure in her hand, a strange perversity makes her feel more than half inclined to thrust it back upon the donor.

"It is very kind of you, Bob and Meg," she says, in a tone of angry impatience; "but I cannot think of accepting your present. Take it home and keep it until you are grown up—then you will be able to understand it!"

"Don't you like it, then?" queries Bob, looking anxious and distressed. "Pa thought you would rather have a book; but I'll tell him to send you a watch instead."

This threatened alternative sounds so very alarming that Shell hastens to explain to the children her detestation of watches in general and her unbounded admiration of poets.

"What are you making such a chatter and fuss about, Shell?" interposes Ruby, crossing to her sister's side and taking up the volume in dispute. "Oh, only a copy of Tennyson!" with a contemptuous curl of her lip at the plain though handsome binding. "I wonder what induced Robert Champley to send you that? You have not been devoting yourself to his children."

"No, I should hope not," answers Shell, with emphasis. "Neither do I want any present—I shall return it."

"Return it? What conceited nonsense!" scoffs Ruby. "I suppose he thought some slight acknowledgment was due to you for playing with the children occasionally. If you want to make yourself absurd and conspicuous, of course you will return it."

On the next morning the Champley household take their departure for the moor. Ruby chances to be near the deserted lodge of the Wilderness when the wagonette—containing the two brothers, the children and the nurse—drives by.

She makes a dainty picture, standing in the shade of the chestnut tree in her pale-blue morning dress, and waving her handkerchief in token of adieu. The gentlemen raise their hats and smile, the children shout, the nurse gives a defiant snort, and the next moment they are out of sight.

"Two months of freedom!" thinks Robert Champley to himself. "On my return home I must make other arrangements."

## CHAPTER IX.

"Mamma, there is a most enticing cottage to be let at Oakford," cries Ruby, glancing up excitedly from the paper in her hand. "Listen! Oakford. To be let, furnished, charming cottage residence—five rooms, large garden, every convenience, rent moderate, air bracing, close to moor."

"Yes, my dear," responds Mrs. Wilden in mild surprise. "Well, what about it? Do you know of any one wanting a cottage?"

"I thought it might suit us," replies Ruby, a little crestfallen.

"It certainly might if we wanted to go there," asserts Mrs. Wilden with a good-tempered laugh; "but, as you know, Ruby, I have a great dislike to leaving home."

"But, mamma, I think you require change of air," persists Ruby with unwonted affection. "You have been suffering so frightfully from neuralgia all spring. I am sure your nerves want bracing. Why not take this cottage for a month or so? Change is good for everybody."

Mrs. Wilden shakes her head, but not after a very determined fashion. "What do you say, Vi?" she asks, turning to her niece.

"Well, I really don't think I care two straws either way," answers Miss Flower lazily. "If somebody will pack my things I am willing to go, but I couldn't undertake to pack them myself."

"Now that just shows how much you need change," cries Ruby eagerly. "Your whole system wants stirring up—before we had been a week on the moor you would be as brisk as a bee."

"Should I?" says Violet, with a dubious laugh. "I very much doubt it; but I am willing to try the experiment."

Truth to tell, if Violet Flower consulted her own feelings, she would far rather remain in her present comfortable quarters; but Ruby having confided to her a scheme for visiting the moor if possible, she has promised not to oppose the plan.

There is a fair amount of resistance on Mrs. Wilden's part, but her energetic daughter overrules each and every obstacle as it is presented to her. Her eloquence is so great in advocating a change that one would wonder, to hear her talk, how they have managed to exist so many summers through at the Wilderness without acquiring all the maladies to which flesh is heir.

Shell is not present when the discussion takes place, but her indignation when the plan is unfolded to her is unbounded.

"You don't mean to say, Ruby, that you are actually thinking of following the Champleys to the moor?" she says,

in a voice of such infinite scorn that Ruby flushes uneasily.

"What nonsense you talk, Shell!" she returns angrily. "You seem to have the Champleys on the brain. We are going to the moor because mamma is in need of bracing air. Is there anything so very extraordinary in that?"

"There is something extraordinary in your having selected the same village," answers Shell decidedly. "If mamma wants bracing air why not take her to the North of Devon?"

"Because rooms there would be frightfully expensive; whereas the cottage on the moor is a mere trifle," responds Ruby loftily.

This argument is unanswerable, for no one knows better than Shell that their income is not equal to any great additional strain. Feeling that any resistance she can offer will be futile, Shell shrugs her shoulders and leaves the room. Nothing remains to her now but to strike out a separate line of action for herself. She is fully determined about one thing—wild horses shall not drag her to Oakford.

When everything is fully arranged and packing is at its height, Shell startles the household.

"It will be very awkward having only three bed-rooms," Vi remarks in a grumbling tone, for the more she contemplates six weeks spent away from civilization the less she likes the prospect. "Of course the servants must have one; and then we must all cram into the two others."

"Not at all, dear," Ruby hastens to explain. "Mamma and Shell can have the big room, and you and I a little one each; as for Mary, she can do quite well with a chair-bedstead in the kitchen."

"How delightful for Mary!" laughs Shell. "It is to be hoped she has a strong liking for cockroaches and crickets."

"Now, please, Shell, don't go setting Mary against the arrangement," says Ruby imploringly. "Mamma, do ask her not!"

"Don't be alarmed," answers Shell, with a curious little laugh. "I have not the slightest intention of interfering with any of the arrangements at the cottage. They don't concern me in the least, since I shan't be there."

"Not be there—what do you mean? Of course you will be there!" declares Ruby, looking very much astonished.

"Not unless mamma insists upon it; and I am sure she won't," laughs Shell. "As you know, I have been set against the idea from the commencement, so I mean to remain here—"

"monarch of all I survey"—and have a right down jolly time of it all to myself.

"What rubbish!" cries Ruby impatiently. "Susan is going to be put on board-wages; and she is to give the house a thorough cleaning during our absence."

"Well, I can be put on board-wages too; and I certainly won't prevent Susan from cleaning the house. I shall be out all day long," responds Shell.

"Mamma, please make her go. It would seem so odd her not going," urges Ruby.

But Mrs. Wilden is too easy-going to oppose actively any of her children. Truth to tell, she rather envies Shell her coming solitude, and even expresses it as her opinion that it is a pity that dreadful cottage was ever taken. This rebellion on her indulgent mother's part is quickly talked down by Ruby, whose constant fear from the beginning has been that her scheme will ultimately fall through. She knows that her mother would rather stay at home; she is fully aware that Violet is groaning in spirit over what she is pleased to term her "coming exile;" so she thinks it wiser on the whole to leave Shell to her own devices, lest enlarging on the theme should stir up revolt in other and more important quarters.

Then there comes a triumphant morning when, backed up by a vast amount of unnecessary luggage, Ruby carries off her three victims—for Mary can truthfully be reckoned in that category—to enjoy the bracing air and scant accommodation of Oakmoor.

Shell, as she stands on the doorstep and waves them a smiling adieu, looks the impersonation of mischievous contentment.

"Be sure to change the library books the moment you get them, and don't delay a single post in sending them off," entreats Violet earnestly.

"And any groceries we can't get there you must send by Parcels Post," adds Ruby.

"How the Oakmoor postman will bless you!" laughs Shell as she nods assent; and then, springing on to the step of the cab, she imprudently dashes hasty kisses on her mother's troubled cheek.

Why does she heave a sigh, notwithstanding the brightness of the morning, as she turns to re-enter the house?

## CHAPTER X.

A week has passed. Shell has grown tired of her self-imposed solitude; the big, bare, echoing rooms have become hateful to her. Even the grounds seem changed and unfamiliar. The certainty that there is no chance of interruption to her lonely musings, at

first so delightful, now seems to fill her usually cheerful spirit with a sense of depression. Until robbed of all companionship she never guessed what a sociable creature she was. Happy would she be if even the most inane and common-place caller would come to break the monotony of her endless days! But it is understood in the neighborhood that the family at the Wilderness are away; so from morn till night Shell wanders aimlessly about, with only the gray cat to bear her company.

It is evening. Shell is even more desolate than her wont. Susan has asked permission to go into Mudford to make a few purchases, and already she has been absent over three hours. It is now seven o'clock, and the empty house seems to Shell's excited imagination like a haunted place. She fancies she hears hurrying through the passages. A door slams, and her heart stands still with fear. Shell however is not one to give way to morbid feelings, and, rousing herself from her book, she starts on a tour of inspection through the house, shutting all windows and securely barring all doors on her way; then, with a renewed sense of security, she returns to the drawing-room and determines to while away the time with music.

Shell is one of those sensitive folk who never play so well as when alone—she cannot pour her whole heart into her music when she has listeners. Now, with the house to herself, she soon becomes lost to her surroundings, and the room echoes to such heart-stirring strains as it rarely falls to her lot to hear.

Suddenly however her music comes to an end, and her heart throbs with terror, for through the empty hall echoes the sonorous thunder of the big iron knocker.

Shell's first impulse is to take no notice—to hide herself or to make her escape by some back window; then her natural good sense returns, and she laughs in a nervous manner at her fears and with fast-beating heart advances into the hall.

"Is that you, Susan?" she asks, but without unfastening the heavy chain.

There comes no answer save a vigorous ring at the bell.

"Who is there?" demands Shell, this time in a firmer tone and one more likely to penetrate the thick oak panels.

"A messenger from Mrs. Wilden," answers a voice which is somehow familiar to Shell's ears.

With trembling hands she shoots back the heavy bolts, and, taking down the chain, opens the door. There she stands—pale, big-eyed, and scared-looking, before—Robert Champley.

"Oh, what a fright you gave me!" is her first involuntary exclamation.

"A fright! How so? What have I done?" queries her visitor, looking much surprised.

"Oh, nothing!" answers Shell, whilst the ghost of a smile flickers round her still colorless lips. "It was my own foolishness; but I was not expecting any one excepting Susan, and your knock frightened me. I suppose I must be getting nervous—with a self-deprecating little laugh.

"Nervous? I should think so!" cries Robert wonderingly. He has taken her hand in greeting, and feels it cold and trembling in his warm grasp. "But surely you are not alone in the house?"

"Only for a short time; I am expecting Susan back every minute," explains Shell, who feels heartily ashamed of her late weakness.

Her visitor looks grave.

"You ought not to be left alone in a house like this," he says very decidedly. "Why, you are trembling still!"

His words remind Shell that she still has possession of her hand—with a little impatient movement she withdraws it.

(To be Continued.)

## INDIANS AS RUNNERS.

Instances of Their Remarkable Powers of Endurance.

General Cook is quoted by Edward S. Ellis as having seen an Apache lope for 1,500 feet up the side of a mountain without showing the first signs of fatigue, there being no perceptible sign of increase of respiration. Captain H. L. Scott, of the Seventh Cavalry, has related some astonishing feats performed by the Chiricahua Apaches forming Troop L of his regiment. He tells how nine of these Indians, after a hard day's work, by way of recreation pursued a coyote for two hours, captured the nimble brute and brought it into camp; how, on another occasion, the scouts gave chase to a deer, ran it down some nine miles from camp and fetched it in alive. Hence I see no good reason for doubting the word of an old-timer I met in the Rocky mountains, who told me that, in the days before the Atlantic and Pacific railroad was built, the Pima Indians of Arizona would recover settlers' stray horses, along the overland trail, by walking them down in the course of two or three days. After this one may begin to believe that "Lying Jim" Beckworth, whose remarkable adventures early in this century are preserved in book form, was a much-maligned man and that he spoke no more than the truth when he said he had known instances of Indian runners accomplishing upward of 110 miles in one day.—Lippincott's Magazine.

## He Knew the Lady.

Wife (with a determined air)—"I want to see that letter." Husband—"What letter?" Wife—"The one you just opened. I know by the handwriting it is from a woman, and you turned pale when you read it. I will see it! Give it to me, sir!" Husband—"Here it is. It's your milliner's bill." —Tit-Bits.