

Shell Wilden.

A ROMANCE

CHAPTER I.

It was a glorious spring day. The old oak hall in the spacious hall of the Wilderness has just announced slowly to all those whom it may concern that noon is past. Again the house has sunk into stillness, save for the distant echo of a fresh young voice singing, from very gladness of heart, at broken intervals.

Going down a long passage covered with frayed coconut matting and opening the thick oak door one comes upon what seems to be the only inhabited room in the house. Here again is space—ample space, and a lofty ceiling—though certainly, as regards any modern luxuries in the way of furniture, the apartment is bare enough. A faded druggist covers the center of the floor, eked out round the edge by oil-cloth which has long since failed to boast more than faint visions of pattern. An old square piano with a short yellow keyboard stands open at one end of the room littered with music; some half-dozen chairs of no particular pattern, and most of them of an uncompromising nature, are hidden under snippets of dark blue print and mysteriously-shaped pieces of lining; the shabby old sofa is also piled with various articles of feminine attire.

Both windows are thrown as high as the sashes will permit, so admitting the genial sunshine and sweet flower-scented air—before one stands a very practical-looking sewing machine, before the other is an old wicker table strewn with fashion-plates and paper patterns.

Bending over the solid table which stands in the middle of the room is Shell Wilden. She is at present making a determined onslaught with a pair of formidable scissors on a section of the blue print before mentioned. She has ceased singing for the moment; her brows are slightly puckered, whilst her keen grey-green eyes follow anxiously the line to be taken by her shears. There is a decision and energy in every curve of her girlish rounded figure as she leans over the work; the right sleeve of her dark dress is pushed up nearly to the elbow to allow of free play, so disclosing a plump, rounded arm of almost snowy whiteness.

Shell's fine pure white skin is her one personal attraction; but, as her sister Ruby often remarks, she pays for it dearly, for Shell's complexion is accompanied by a wealth of wavy shimmering red hair, faintly marked eyebrows, and a pair of eyes which are positively pale green in certain strong lights, though they deepen almost to purple under strong emotion or in the dreamy gloaming of a summer evening. She is a little below the middle height, possessing a round, childish face, with eyes that speak so often when her tongue is wisely silent that her sister Ruby many a time takes umbrage at her expressive looks.

She has just finished her critical piece of work, and is again breaking into unconscious song, when the door opens quickly, admitting a tall, graceful woman of some thirty summers, whose light spring costume sets off her dark classical beauty to advantage.

Ruby, for she it is, differs from her sister as much in temperament and disposition as in form and expression. No stranger at first sight would have taken these two young women to be related, yet such of their acquaintances who were addicted to the pursuit of psychological inquiry were fond of pointing out that behind the widely different manifestations of the personality of each there was the same original force and insistence.

"Did you get it, then?" questions Shell, pausing at her work, and looking a little blankly at her sister's empty hands.

"Get it! Get what?" asks Ruby, clearing a space upon the sofa, and sinking down upon it languidly.

"Why, the tape, of course! I haven't an inch left; and how can I get on with the killings without tape?" cries Shell, with a pathetic ring in her voice.

"Dear me, your mind never seems able to soar above dress-making!" says Ruby, slightly shrugging her shoulders. "We got the tape all right—fortunately Violet remembered it."

"Has Vi got it, then?" asks Shell, in no way affected by her sister's low opinion of her intellect.

"Got it!" sneers Ruby. "You surely don't imagine, child, that we are going to burdens ourselves with parcels on such a broiling day as this?"

"I surely did not imagine that even you would make any poor errand-boy tramp a whole mile to bring a few pieces of tape that would have fitted into your pocket if you were ashamed of carrying them openly," responds Shell with spirit.

Then there is a period of silence, during which Shell looks quite stern and even haughty, while Ruby does not appear to be altogether as self-satisfied as she would wish to be—possibly because it irritates her to see Shell more at ease than herself. Shell meanwhile sews steadily on, and conversation threatens to come to a sudden termination, when a somewhat sarcastic glance from Shell causes it to revive.

"There is no greater mistake than bringing parcels oneself," pursues Ruby in an injured tone—"parcels are

such a nuisance! and why should one do errand-boy's work—they are paid for it?"

Shell makes no answer, but, bending over the table, begins to fit a tissue paper pattern on her stuff, making a scornful and expressive grimace of contempt at her sister's affectation.

"I know you dote on carrying parcels; but then you do so many things purposely to annoy that it is no use attempting to stop you," continued Ruby, sighing gently.

Shell still keeps silent, only smiling knowingly at her pattern as she twists it from side to side.

"You were very wise not to go down into the town this morning," Ruby goes on after a short pause. "Not that there was much sense in the excuse that you hadn't time, for I see you have been wasting it in the grounds"—pointing with her sunshade to a large vase full of lilac which stands in the center of the chimney piece. "It is so absurd to put flowers in this horrid old room."

Shell turns her head sharply and smiles at the mauve and white plumes behind her.

"I just couldn't resist them," she says softly. "I took a rush round the grounds before setting to work, and I felt I must bring a bit of sweetness back with me."

Ruby is not listening to the explanation; her eyes are gazing absently through one of the open windows.

"We heard some news in the town," she observes with a deliberate suddenness.

"Did you?" returns Shell carelessly, as she continues to adjust her pins.

"Yes—Robert Champley is expected home next week."

"Is he?" says Shell, pausing suddenly in her work and opening her green eyes to their fullest extent. Then she continues musingly—"Poor fellow!"

"Your pity seems rather ridiculous," observes Ruby impatiently. "A man with over two thousand a year is not to be pitied."

"Not even when he has lost the only person who could make that two thousand a year worth having?" queries Shell, with a curl of her lip.

"Absurd! He must have got over his wife's death by this time," says Ruby, tapping her sunshade restlessly on the carpet; "besides, he has his children."

"Poor little things!" muses Shell, with a short sigh.

"Why poor? Of course he will marry again; and they will be well looked after."

"Will they?" says Shell dubiously. "I am sure I hope so; besides, it remains to be proved that Robert Champley will marry again—I think it very doubtful myself."

"As if you, a child of nineteen, could possibly form an opinion!" exclaims Ruby. "Why, you were a perfect baby when his wife died—I wonder that you can even remember her."

"Let me see—I must have been sixteen," remarks Shell, with provoking accuracy, "because I know it happened four years since; and I shall be twenty the day after to-morrow."

"Of course you would remember him—I didn't exactly mean that," owns Ruby—"only at that age you could not possibly understand much of his character. Now poor Clara used to say that I comprehended him so thoroughly—nearly as well as she did. You know Clara and I were close friends."

"I always thought Mrs. Champley was Garnet's great friend," observes Shell, with just a shade of unbelief in her tone.

"At one time," admits Ruby in some confusion; "only after Garnet married and went to India I took her place."

"No one person can take another's place," says Shell decidedly. "I know Garnet corresponded with Mrs. Champley up to the time of her death—I have often heard mamma say so."

"I am very glad that he is coming home," pursues Ruby, ignoring this last allusion of her sister's intimacy with Mrs. Champley. "I have often felt it a weight on my mind that I have not been able to carry out dear Clara's wish, and look after her children."

Shell has straightened her back, and now stands staring full at Ruby with such a quizzical glance that her sister says with an impatient flush—

"Well—have I said anything so very extraordinary? You look as if you were going to eat me."

"Well, it certainly sounded odd, to say the least of it," replies Shell, resuming her work, "to hear that you were going to look after Robert Champley's children. I should imagine that he is pretty well able to look after them himself."

"As if a man could possibly know anything about the training of children!" answers Ruby contemptuously. "Of course he can't. I promised their poor mother that I would do my best to look after them, and I shall allow no conventional scruples to prevent my fulfilling that promise."

"I am quite sure you won't," says Shell in a low tone to her work. Then suddenly a happy thought strikes her. "Perhaps he won't have the children home," she says, with a hopeful laugh—"he can't do better than leave them where they are, at his sister's."

"Ah, but she is going abroad for her health; and it is solely because he must now take charge of the children himself that he is coming home!" rejoins Ruby, with a triumphant gleam in her fine brown eyes.

"Well, I suppose it is easy enough to get competent nurses when one has plenty of money," says Shell; and then, dismissing the subject with an impatient shrug of her shoulders, she asks, holding up a long narrow piece of tissue paper, "Will you have your back cut in four parts or six?"

Ruby's mind soon descends to the practical, advancing to the table, she at once enters into the most minute instructions for the cutting out of her dress.

"I think this pale sateen such a sweet shade," she says, holding up a bit of the material admiringly. "I have half a mind to get a pale pink too."

"If so, please look sharp!" remarks Shell, in a tone of anything but keener delight. "I like to get all the summer dresses over in one hatch and not keep on at it for months."

"But, my dear Shell," expostulates Ruby, "I thought you liked cuttings and fitting. I am sure you always tell mamma so; besides, you are so clever at it."

"Oh, I don't mind!" admits Shell, rather crossly. "Of course one of us must play at being fond of it, since we can't afford a maid. Only it does rather annoy me for any one to be so insane as really to imagine that I prefer working on a morning like this to being out of doors;" and she heaves a sharp little sigh as she glances out at the waving tender-green boughs of the newly-budded trees.

"Why that heart-rendering sigh, my sweet sea-Shell?" asks a tall, willow girl with blue eyes, who has just entered the room. As she speaks she lays her arm caressingly around the girl's firm shoulders.

"She is quite overcome at the prospect of cutting me out a second washing dress," answers Ruby, in a tone which implies, "Hasn't she an unfortunate temper?"

"Oh, dear—and I was just going to ask her to fix my buff print, because she is so clever at that sort of thing!" says Violet, in a tone of consternation.

"All right, Vi dear—I adore cutting out," laughs Shell. "Bring your buff print by all means—and any other material that you can lay your hands on 'in for a penny, in for a pound.' It is a pity that we are not all three the same figure—in that case I could cut out half-a-dozen at the same time."

"Do you seriously mean you would be kind enough to do more than one—because there is my new flannel tennis frock to arrange?" asks Violet coaxingly.

"I'll do it," answers Shell rather shortly—"only, if I do all the cutting and fixing and trimming, I must bargain that you and Ruby help with the machine work."

"Yes, dear, of course—only that stupid old machine will never work for me," responds Ruby, with a vicious look at that useful but inartistic piece of furniture.

"I'll make it work for me, or I'll know the reason why!" laughs Vi seating herself before the machine and commencing to arrange her cottons.

"Now, Shell, toss me over your skirt, child!"

"How can you be so energetic, Vi, after our long walk?" says Ruby, rising from the sofa with a slight yawn. "I have quite a headache with the heat and must rest till lunch, or I shall be fit for nothing during the remainder of the day;" and then she leaves the room with a languid step, and the "click click" of the old sewing machine echoing pleasantly in her ears.

(To be Continued.)

SAGASTA TALKS OF HEDGING.

A Madrid Paper Credits the Premier With Surprising Views.

MADRID, Aug. 22.—The government will instruct the Cuban commissioners to present a strong case for the recognition of Spanish claims for compensation for the cessation of public works in Cuba, the compensation to take the form of saddling upon Cuba the bulk of the Cuban debt existing in 1895.

The public is still anxious for an explanation of Governor General Augustin's mysterious departure from Manila, but its curiosity is not likely to be satisfied for some time, the government declining to say anything.

El Liberal publishes remarks made by Senator Sagasta on the diplomatic and political situation, quoting the premier as follows: "From a legal standpoint of view the present state of things is neither peace nor war, but merely a suspension of hostilities. The armistice would have allowed us to dispel better the obscurity of the situation; but the United States declined to agree to our making a step further in advance.

"According to international law, a suspension of hostilities has been signed and the surrender of Manila ought to have no legal efficacy. How will that principle be understood by the United States? This causes us much anxiety and we give it great attention, but we are still awaiting the information demanded from General Judenes, which has not yet reached us, on account of the difficulties of communication between Manila and Hong Kong.

"In Cuba, besides evacuation there are many other problems. Spain may abandon her sovereignty over the greater Antilles; but there will remain the question of edifices and all our property. There are lawsuits before the tribunals affecting the interests of the Spaniards. Where and when will these be decided? In Havana, where a large number of criminals have been condemned by the Spanish tribunals, what is to be done with them?

"Then there are other questions for which we have to fix a basis of discussion and agreement regarding the Philippines. Besides these and other problems of greater importance there is a preliminary question to be discussed."

TO IGNORE MANILA'S FALL.

Spain Will Insist That Surrender Shall Not Affect Peace Treaty.

MANILA ONLY SURRENDERED.

Madrid Holds That the Capitulation Was Signed by the Commander of the Town and Not the Governor General—An Officer Says There Was No Fight.

MADRID, Aug. 20.—The government has resolved to insist that the capitulation of Manila after the signing of the protocol shall have no effect in the peace negotiations unfavorable to Spain. In any event, the government holds that the capitulation, having been signed by the commander of the town, does not entail the surrender of the whole of the Philippines.

SAYS THERE WAS NO FIGHT.

The Engagement at Manila Called a Sham by an American Officer.

NEW YORK, Aug. 20.—A dispatch to the New York Journal from Hong Kong says: An American naval officer arrived from Manila on the dispatch boat Zafiro and gives the following story of the capture of Manila:

"The Americans practically walked into Manila Saturday. The story of the Spaniards making a desperate resistance is untrue. Their defense was a mere sham and a formality. All the operations were confined to the south side of the city. Here the Spaniards had two lines of defenses, the first trench running parallel with the Malate river. Behind this was Malate fort, with another trench running from one side of it down to the beach. There was a sandbag intrenchment extending from the other side into the shrubbery.

The American trenches were on the other side of the river, parallel with the Spanish ditches.

"After the ships shelled the trenches and forts for half an hour, almost knocking them to pieces, Anderson signalled to cease firing. The troops then waded across the river and walked up the beach, as though going to dinner, meeting practically no opposition. They took the first trench and the Spaniards retired to the second line.

"The ships then shelled this for a quarter of an hour or more. The Spaniards did little shooting and then retired into the walled city, while the Americans walked on into the fort and second trench. A few minutes later the white flag was raised and the fleet moved over towards the city.

"The American troops marched on, leaving squads here and there along the route. When the ships reached the city they found the launch waiting for them with the white flag. It was all over."

SENATOR COCKRELL'S PLAN.

Civil War and Missionaries to Settle the Philippine Question.

St. Louis, Mo., Aug. 20.—Senator Cockrell came to St. Louis from Washington last night. In the St. Louis Globe-Democrat he is quoted as saying that he is in favor of taking Porto Rico, but in regard to the Philippines the senator said:

"As to the Philippines, my idea is to allow the people there to form an independent government and this country to afford them protection from foreign invasion. The United States could say to all foreign nations, 'Keep hands off the Philippines.' Of course some people may say that the Philippines are incapable of self government and that there would be constant revolutions. Well, just let them fight it out among themselves. That is what this country has done. We fought one another in the civil war and settled our own troubles without any interference from foreign nations, and it made us a great nation. So I am in favor of an independent government in the Philippines, and while the people are fighting there the United States government can keep other nations from interfering. At the same time we would have to keep a few soldiers in the Philippines to protect the property of foreign nations there, and we could teach the natives the art of self government by sending missionaries among them with the gospel of Christianity and also teach them how to establish public schools."

MARION BUTLER GIVES UP.

National Populist Chairman to Surrender to Middle-of-the-Roaders.

HOTSPRING, Texas, Aug. 22.—In a speech at the big Populist encampment at Greenville yesterday, Senator Marion Butler of North Carolina, national chairman of the Populist party, surrendered to the middle-of-the-roaders or anti-fusionists. He declared that, as national chairman, he would promise that there would be no trades or combines with either of the old parties before the next national convention and that he would call that convention at least a month earlier than the Democratic or Republican conventions convened, and thus prevent any opportunity of fusion. He referred to the "Omaha agreement," which is an agreement between himself and Milton Park of Dallas, the leader of the middle-of-the-road element.

ENGLAND BUYING COAL.

American Firm Has a Contract for Stocking Her Coasting Stations.

NORFOLK, Va., Aug. 22.—There have been shipped from Norfolk in British bottoms, seventeen cargoes of Pocahontas coal, aggregating 70,123 tons. They have gone to eleven different coasting stations belonging to England, and it has been believed that England was stocking stations in the event of possible war. To-day it leaked out that this view is undoubtedly correct, as the Pocahontas Coal Company is asserted by one of its employees to have practically admitted that an unlimited contract from the British government for coaling her stations all over the world had been secured, and has just fairly commenced.

RETURN OF THE FLEET.

Seventy Warships Will Be Mobilized at Fort Monroe.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 22.—The largest fleet of warships ever assembled in an American port, will be brought together in the next few days at Fort Monroe. Already fifty-seven warships are under orders to rendezvous there, and the orders still to be issued will raise the total to the neighborhood of seventy. Naval officials say it is difficult to realize the extent of such a marine aggregation in one harbor.

WOULD CUT SANTIAGO PRICES.

A Dollar a Pound for Meat the General Decided Was Exorbitant.

SANTIAGO, Cuba, Aug. 22.—The last week in Santiago de Cuba has seen the furtherance of reforms and improvements already under way. There has been a slow and steady increase in the death rate. One abuse that has been rectified was the exorbitant prices asked for meat—\$1 a pound for mutton, \$3 for a bag of charcoal that once sold for eighty cents and a general continuation of blockade prices long after their justification had been removed. This matter the palace has ably taken in hand, and after careful consideration and a discussion of the subject with leading wholesalers and retailers, a tariff in gold money on provisions has been arranged. Retailers have been notified that infringements of this tariff, or schedule, will be severely punished, and the community at large is requested to report any over charge. The prices given out are a great reduction from those prevailing hitherto, but even in the new arrangement there is ample opportunity for good profits, even to 50 per cent in some instances.

MILES' SICK BROUGHT HOME.

The Relief Reaches New York With 248 Men From Porto Rico.

NEW YORK, Aug. 20.—The hospital ship Relief arrived here this morning. The Relief left Ponce August 14 and Mayaguez the next day. She carried 248 sick and wounded soldiers from General Miles' army. Ten deaths from typhoid fever occurred upon the voyage. Nine of the victims were buried at sea. The body of Major Lawrence Smith of Philadelphia, a surgeon, who died at sea August 15, was enclosed in a metallic coffin and brought here.

CONKLING GETS THE PLACE.

St. Louis, Mo., Aug. 20.—Virgil Conkling of Carroll county was unanimously elected secretary of the state Democratic committee to-day. James E. Hereford of St. Louis county was elected treasurer. By a decisive vote the proposition to remove the committee's headquarters from St. Louis to Jefferson City was defeated.

Cuban Commission's Lawyer.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 20.—Charles W. Gould of New York has accepted the appointment of special representative of the Department of Justice on the Cuban military commission. Mr. Gould is a lawyer of prominence and is said to have special qualifications for this important service.

Nearly 200 Sick From Santiago Arrive.

FORT MONROE, Va., Aug. 20.—The United States transport Oliveette, from Santiago with about 200 sick and wounded soldiers aboard, arrived here to-day.

TO MUSTER OUT THE CUBANS.

The Insurgents to Be Honorably Discharged and Issued Service Certificates.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 20.—As there is no longer a Spanish army in the field in Cuba there is no longer any reason for the existence of the Cuban army, and it is therefore to be regularly mustered out of service. The administration has no idea, however, of adopting the Quixotic idea of paying the Cuban soldiers for their services during the war or of assuming the responsibility for their payment.

The President has, however, a plan in mind by which the insurgent army can be disbanded without the necessity of turning the soldiers adrift with no sort of recognition of their services. The plan contemplates the granting of an honorable discharge to each soldier, accompanied by a certificate of service and a promissory obligation signed by the Cuban general in command, to be made good out of the public resources when the Cubans shall have established the stable government which the United States has pledged itself to help bring into existence.

In addition to thus providing for the soldiers of the Cuban army, the plan under consideration by the President contemplates the mustering into the United States volunteer army of a large number of Cuban soldiers who are American citizens.

MORE FAVORABLE FOR CLARK.

The Condition of the Oregon's Captain Less Alarming Than Reported.

St. Joseph, Mich., Aug. 20.—Captain Charles E. Clark of the battleship Oregon is coming to St. Joseph to meet his wife and daughters and son. He will be the guest of his brother, Lloyd Clark, custodian of the United States light house station at this port. Mrs. Clark and her daughters arrived here from California a month ago and have been anxiously awaiting the close of the war and the captain's return.

Lloyd Clark says: "The captain's illness is not at all so serious as might be supposed on account of the medical board's report. He was worn out by his long cruise from 'Frisco, his arduous blockade duty, and the supreme excitement of the battle. The strain caused a recurrence of an intestinal trouble which he had contracted while engaged in a survey along the South American coast some years ago, and the doctors recommended it timely and wise that he be released from duty for a period which would enable him to recover completely. He was given six months' leave of absence."

Mrs. Clark's daughters are the wives of Naval Lieutenants Robison and Hughes, at present on duty with Admiral Dewey's fleet at Manila.

IRELAND AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 20.—Archbishop Ireland had a conference with President McKinley this morning. He preserved his usual reticence as to his mission. It is understood that the archbishop is looking to the protection of the interests of the church of Rome in our new territorial acquisitions, particularly in Porto Rico.

TO PHOTOGRAPH THE SIGNERS.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 20.—Secretary Day will return to Washington to-morrow morning. At 11 o'clock the secretary will accompany Ambassador Cambon and M. Thiebaut of the French embassy to the White House, where all the principal figures in the signing of the peace protocol will be photographed together.

Husband and Wife Insane.

St. Joseph, Mo., Aug. 20.—Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hartman, residing near Seneca, Kan., disappeared from their home nearly a week ago, leaving a boy of 3 years and an infant daughter locked inside without food. The children were found alive, but dangerously ill, yesterday. Several head of horses were tied up in the barn, almost starved. A search for Hartman and his wife was begun by the whole county. Mrs. Hartman was found in the timber, insane and almost dead. There is no trace of Hartman. Both are supposed to have lost their minds through religion.