

I wrote her a letter the next day. It was filled with sarcasm and irony. I accused her of infidelity, of cold-heartedness and what not, that would make the crimson flush mount any girl's cheek. But she wrote back only a simple reply, saying that jealousy had captured my love and reason; that she would forgive me, and begged that I should not be jealous any more; that I was all to her; that she loved me with a never-fading love, and that I would see in the end that she was faithful and just, while I was unjust. I was a little comforted, for I loved her. (A sigh and a puff from his pipe.) Well, the next Christmas came on its festive tide of merriment, and I was again the Christmas guest of Colonel Wayne. Ethel was there. We were the only visitors. I only stayed three days, but they were days of sweetest paradise. We pledged eternal love beneath the friendly mistletoe, and betrothed ourselves to life's happy journey. Then came the lovers' parting, so long, so sad, so sweet; and the letters that passed after that—how very warm, fervent and full of love and hope. Summer came again. She came for a few days' visit to her aunt's at B—. It was then I gave her an hundred dollar diamond ring. We never yet had set the day, but I promised on next Christmas to visit her home and arrange for the happy event. Well, Christmas came, Claud, and here comes the sting. Our families were good friends, her's having once lived in B—, but during her childhood had moved to D—, where her father and uncle conducted a wholesale grocery business. Well, as I was about to say, our families were willing to our marriage, but

we thought it best for me to run over to D— and go through that ordeal of asking papa and having mamma-in-law weep on my shoulder because I had come to steal away her child, and to arrange for the wedding. Mind you, it had gone that far. Well, I started, and it took me about three days to reach D—. I arrived about 7 o'clock Christmas morning, and after a bath and brush up at my hotel I went to breakfast, taking the morning paper with me. I sat down to the table, opened out the paper and began reading the news. Listen, Claud. Gads, but it makes my poor heart bleed to tell it, for how I loved her. My eyes read these words."

'A PRETTY CHRISTMAS BRIDE.

'THE HAMPTON-MARIGOLD WEDDING.

'At St. James' church, Christmas eve, Miss Ethel Marigold, the beautiful and charming daughter of' * * * *

"I could read no further, Claud. My eyes dimmed with tears. I crumpled the paper in my hands; rising from the table I threw the paper in the chair. I excused myself, saying I was ill, and I was ill, indeed; my hopes crushed, my heart broken. I went to the depot to take the first train to carry me, I cared not whither, and here I am in this lonely miner's habitation, where I may forget that I ever was a lover or possessed a tender and loving heart. Like you, Claud, I want to be. I see you have grown rough and cold-hearted. Well, Claud, I am done. What must I now do?"

"Well," spoke Claud, sighing and refilling the glasses which had only been touched when the pledge was made, "you come down to my cabin and live with me.