

**CLARE PEYCE'S
DIARY: AN OLD
MAID'S HISTORY**

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Clare peyce's diary: an old maid's history by A. Warner Hull

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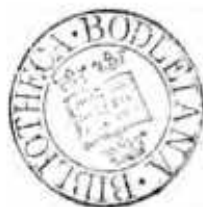
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AN OLD MAID'S HISTORY

BY

A. WARNER HULL



LONDON

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PREFACE.

FROM a firm conviction that some of the best and noblest women have never married, this little volume sprang into existence. Even in these practical times, beneath apparently commonplace lives there is often an under-current of romance outweighing the wildest efforts of fiction; and buried in the heart of many an old maid lies a history the world little dreams of. Spoken of lightly perhaps—may be, not spoken of at all—but none the less true and unselfish because it did *not* end in ‘marrying and living happily ever after.’



MY DIARY.

April 3rd.

It's awfully stupid and slow to-day !

Mamma has refused the De Guestenay's ball.

It's downright provoking ! I'm in such a way,

And long for that pet of a Harold to call.

The waltzes I'd promised and saved up for him !

I felt quite convinced that at last he'd propose ;

And now it's all done for, through some foolish whim,

And how I am fidgeting nobody knows !

To-morrow, it seems, we are going to dine

With some one or other (they're strangers to me),

To meet the Mark Smythes and a cousin of mine,

My rich merchant cousin, the Chesney M.P.

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It's years since we've seen him ; in fact, I can't say
 If I've ever seen him, 'tis so long ago ;
 I seem to remember he called here one day
 When I was about four—he twenty or so.

I daresay they'll all nearly bore me to death,
 But grumbling's no use, for go with them I must,
 And grumbling to ma is just wasting my breath.
 That I shall survive it, I fervently trust ;
 As a matter of principle, I'll look my best.
 I'll send round and see if my new dress is done—
 I'm awfully taking when really well dressed.
 Suppose he is smitten! oh gracious, what fun!

April 4th.

I just snatch a moment to sit down and write,
 That Harold has called, as I hoped for, to-day ;
 We weren't left alone, but he squeezed my hand *tight*,
 As much as to hint he had something to say.
 Young Hamilton passed, too, and gave such a bow—
 He isn't quite heartwhole I know very well.
 Good gracious, it's six ! I must go and dress now,
 And show my dear cousin the Sevenoaks belle.

Apru 5th.

We had such a glorious evening last night,
I did so enjoy it ! yet hardly know why :
There were only our hostess, her sister Miss White,
The Mark Smythes, my cousin, mamma, pa, and I.
My cousin is forty if he is a day,
As handsome a man, though, as you'd wish to see ;
He talked to mamma most, yet still, in his way,
I thought he was rather attentive to me.

He's five or six children, it seems, of his own ;
He's now been a widower nearly three years ;
He spoke of his loss—and his living alone,
And the tone of his voice almost moved me to tears.
What rubbish it is to write thus ! but it's true ;
His children no doubt are all left to run wild ;
He's asked me to stay with them—so I will too,
But I hope he don't look upon me as a child !

I talked well last night, not mere rubbish and stuff,
As I might had my cousin been likely to flirt,
But sensible talk, staid and proper enough
For the highest-dried bore, whoe'er buttoned a shirt.