

KITTY'S HUSBAND

By Author of "Hetty," Etc.

CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)
"Kitty," he said, "I want you to listen to me for a little while, will you?"

I cast one quick, scared, deprecating little glance at him, and let my eyes fall. My heart was beating in such a wild and foolish way that I could not speak, could not prevent him from speaking, could not think.

"I did not mean to say this to you just yet," he went on gently, in his quiet, steady, earnest tone. "It seemed scarcely fair to you to say it yet. You are so young—life is all before you—you have seen so few people, seen so little of the world, that I feel I may be taking an unfair advantage of you—an unfair advantage of your youth. I meant to be patient, Kitty; I meant to be patient and wait. But a week or two ago I confided to Mrs. Corfield what I meant one day to ask you; and it has struck me since then that she must have told you something of what I said to her. That is why I am speaking to you, dear, so soon."

There was a moment's pause. Though I never raised my eyes, I was conscious of his gaze, fixed earnestly, intently on my face all the while he spoke.

"Kitty, I think you know what I want to tell you," he continued. "I love you, Kitty. I want to ask you, dear, if you will be my wife."

He had spoken very quietly, in a very grave and steady way, not as though he were conferring a boon upon me, yet not with excessive humility. My hands, which he held in his, were trembling, my heart was beating fast. I looked across at him, and his eyes seemed to hold mine; I could not look away again. He was so strong, so tender, so good, so true! And I loved him—oh, I loved him! He read my love in my eyes; I let him read it, I could not help it.

"Kitty, tell me," he pleaded, gently. "Don't let us blunder—either of us. I love you, dear, dearly—most dearly."



MEG'S PRETTY FIGURE STOOD IN THE DOORWAY.

But don't be afraid of hurting me, Kitty. If you tell me I have no hope, I shall bear it as one bears most things. What I could not bear, dear, is that you should sacrifice yourself—perhaps regret it. If you feel that you have no love to give me, not enough love, tell me, Kitty; tell me now."

"I can't tell you," I cried—"I can't tell you; it is not true." My voice was unlike my own, tense, suppressed. The words came quickly, yet in a labored way; and each word seemed to hurt me sharply. "I love you," I said. "I can't help it; it's true."

Holding my hands firmly in his, he drew me to the sofa beside him; he put his arm round me and drew me nearer to him and kissed me. For a minute all doubts had disappeared; I was supremely, blissfully content. Then the good minute passed. I drew myself away, looked at him doubtfully, and felt my heart sink.

"It's not—not for kindness' sake?" I questioned eagerly.

"For kindness' sake, dear?" he repeated, in a puzzled tone.

"You don't think I'm unhappy, do you? I'm not. I'm happy enough. I don't mind Aunt Jane, and things are not so horrid as they seem—the girls are nice, and Uncle Richard's kind. Don't be sorry for me; I couldn't bear it, I should hate it! It's not that you're sorry, is it?"

He was looking at me with the same perplexed expression.

"I'm afraid, dear, I don't understand," he said.

I found it hard to explain. I could not speak with that self-contained calmness that was necessary to make my meaning plain.

"Are you sure?" I asked him, eagerly. "Tell me again, I want you to say it again, that you're sure, quite sure."

"Sure of what, dear?"

"Of what you said. You said you wanted me."

His gray eyes looked at me with a gleam of merry yet tender laughter.

"I am quite sure of that," he answered. "There is nothing else in the world, Kitty, of which I am so sure."

A minute later an interruption came. Uncle Richard, paper in hand, strolled into the drawing-room.

"What's the matter, Kitty—what's the matter?" he said, as I rose precipitately to retreat.

"Nothing is the matter, sir," John Mortimer replied, quietly. "Kitty has been promising to be my wife. We hope you will not disapprove."

But I fled without hearing Uncle Richard's answer. I fled away to the top of the house to a little dusty garret where not even the girls would think of searching for me; and there, with my new muslin, costly to the extent of two golden guineas, gathered around me, I sat beneath the skylight of an old dusty leather portmanteau of Aunt Jane's, and tried to think calmly of the ordeal that lay before me when I should venture forth from my hiding place. I could not face Aunt Jane, Uncle Richard, the keen, merry eyes of Meg and Dora, until I had thought about things a little, grown more sedately happy, until my cheeks had cooled, my heart had begun to beat more quietly, and my mind had grown less bewildered with happiness.

CHAPTER VII.

Perhaps a minute, perhaps an hour, had passed—I do not know how time went by—but long before my cheeks had cooled an interruption came. I had thought myself secure; but the garret door opened, and Meg's pretty, graceful, alert figure stood in the doorway in the twilight.

"Kitty, my dear, John is disconsolate," she said.

If my cheeks had been cooling, they grew brilliantly red again. My heart beat faster than ever as Meg's merry

voice pronounced my lover's name—the name by which I had never called him, by which it seemed to me I should never dare to call him. She stood in the doorway looking in, her blue eyes sparkling with laughter, her pretty lips pretending to be grave, but not carrying the pretense so far that it should deceive me. I was discovered; I rose from my dusty portmanteau, let down my dress about me, and followed Meg out upon the landing.

"Come here, under the window, and let me look at you," she said, taking possession of me. "Kitty!"

"Yes."

"Do you know what a—a peony is like, dear?"

"Oh, Meg, don't tease me, don't laugh at me; let me go!"

"Kitty, mamma left off blushing when she left off bibe and pinafores. With the disappearance of your pinafores, the habit seems to have grown upon you. Now, come, Kitty, I'm your earliest confidante; come, confide in me."

"I don't want to confide in you—I don't want to confide in you at all."

"Did he go down upon one knee, Kitty—and—and did the windows rattle very much? Oh, Kitty, my dearest Kitty, I'm dying to know what he said."

"I shall never tell you."

"Oh, yes, you will!" said Meg with sweet assurance, putting her arm coaxingly around my shoulders, and bending forward to look into my face and laugh at me. "You accepted him; and after your solemn profession to Dora only this evening that nothing on earth would ever make you. His arguments must have been weighty, Kitty; but they were sure to be weighty—John is nothing if not profound."

I shook off the arm that was embracing me. But Meg would not be

persuaded; she put her pretty little hand beneath my chin, looked at me with mock reproach, then, laughing again, bent forward and kissed me.

"One might fancy, Kitty, if one did not know the circumstances of the case, one might fancy—Do you know what one might fancy?"

"No."

"That you were in love with John." "And I am," I declared, my eager tone sounding unconvincing somehow as I caught the amused, incredulous little twinkles in Meg's clear blue eyes. "I am, Meg. You don't believe me—but it's true."

"Poor Kitty," said Meg in a tragic tone, still unconvinced. "When did it happen, dear?"

I turned away. Meg tripped after me down the dusty garret stairs; and, as we reached the floor below, twined her arm caressingly about my waist again.

"What does it feel like to fall in love, dear? Is the fall a shock? And what does it feel like when you're there?"

"Where?"

"In the land of love, the land of lime-light. In the lime-light I suppose even John would look romantic? But a romantic figure with a short beard! Oh, bear with me, Kitty! Imagination fails me, I can't picture it! Now, a long beard—a long, big, yellow, Teutonic beard, or a long, thin, tapering, pathetic beard—I could put up with under protest. But a short beard, speckled brown and gray, with a serviceable suit of clothes—Kitty, I'm so sorry; I'm afraid I can't fall in love with John."

"I don't think he will mind," I said, with a touch of malice in my tone.

Meg sighed profoundly, her eyes still dancing with merry laughter.

"Is his heart all yours? Poor me, poor world, poor rest of us."

"Oh, Meg, don't be such a goose!"

"I'm trying to be serious, like you. An engagement, Kitty, is a most serious thing. And the first serious consideration is the ring—diamonds, of course—refuse, dear, to have anything to say to anything but diamonds. Now, Kitty, let me offer you a piece of advice. Be exacting; a lover is nothing unless he brings daily gifts of flowers and fruit and chocolate creams. Keep that well before his mind. Heliotrope and maiden-hair fern and chocolate creams daily! My spirits are rising. Now and then you can suggest that chocolate almonds will be welcome to me for a change."

"But he isn't engaged to you," I said, laughing.

"No. Preserve me! But let's be fair—let's divide things equally—you're welcome to John, but let me have the flowers and sweets. And Dora—well, Dora shall wear the flowers when I wear mine with them. Flowers that I wear always live for a second day. Do you know that that's unlucky? If you're to be lucky in life, and in love, the flowers you wear should wither quickly. Did you ever hear of that superstition?"

"Never."

"Be more sympathetic, Kitty. Don't say 'never' in that flat tone. Please to realize my tragedy. No one is coming to woo me—no one is coming to wed. No John will ever say he loves me. By the by, Kitty, did John say he loved you?"

I flashed one quick glance at her, and caught the thought in her mind.

"Yes," I said in a voice that would not be steady in spite of all my efforts; "and I wanted to tell you—you were all wrong, you and Dora and Aunt Jane. He does care for me. He cares for me for my own sake—for his own sake—not for duty in the least."

Meg looked at me doubtfully for a moment, a little graver than her wont.

"That's very nice," she said, gently; but there was a note of unreality in her tone; and I knew I had not convinced her.

(To be continued.)

Encouraging the Witness.

The bullying lawyer is unhappily still to be met with, and his confusion is always the signal for rejoicing among the spectators. A distinguished colonial judge recalls how he once tried a case in the supreme court of one of the British possessions. The learned barrister who appeared for the defendant had an unfortunate habit of bullying his own witnesses. If they did not answer him precisely as he wished he would attack them with, "My dear man, do attend to me," or with, "If you can't speak up like a man, I must abandon your case." In this instance the defendant, whose name was Jonas, was rather obscure in his answers. Counsel questioned him more severely, but poor Jonas only grew more confused. At length the barrister became exasperated and shouted: "My good man Jonas, do come out of that whale's belly of yours and answer my questions properly." This was too much for the judge, who could not restrain his amusement, while the witness was so confused that he refused to answer, and the case was lost.

The Parrot Gave Him Away.

Victor Chevalier, a clever criminal in Paris, was run down in a shrewd way. He was known to be exceedingly fond of a pet parrot, and the police were instructed to look for a loquacious bird of this kind. After a few weeks' search the talkative parrot was discovered in the Montmartre district. The police kept a close watch on the house, and in time the criminal appeared to have an affectionate chat with the bird.

True to the Family Traditions.

Jane—I understand she comes of a very old family. Lily—Yes; you can see the family trait in her very clearly. Jane—What trait? Lily—Age.—Stray Stories.

THEIR TRUE GENESIS

TRUSTS ARE NOT CHILDREN OF THE TARIFF.

Quaint Allegory Illustrating the Deplorable Consequences Attending Miss Industry's Departure from Conjugal Rectitude.

(From advance sheets of "The Philosophy of Trusts," by Prof. Ernest Mas.)

Grandmother Independence had two beautiful daughters, both American to the core. The elder's name was Agriculture. She was a handsome girl of pure unadorned stock, calm, very laborious and of buxom inclinations. The younger daughter had a little foreign blood in her veins. Her name was Industry; a very pretty girl, indeed, full of life, not averse to flirtation, and of extremely vivacious temperament. Seldom indeed have two sisters presented a more striking contrast.

To complete her education, the younger daughter, the more promising, went abroad. She visited Lancashire and spent some time in the old ancestral manor. While there she made a lot of desirable and undesirable acquaintances, which were subsequently to exert a most disastrous influence on her happiness. This phase of her history would fill a good-sized volume.

The wayward girl came back home in cosmopolitan attire, affecting a London accent, a free thinker in matters of economy. As she exhibited all the outward signs of unrestrained prodigality, old Sister Agriculture could never get along with her. The original chasm had developed into an abyss.

It was not long before Mother Independence's keen eye could detect the dangerous propensities of her prodigal daughter; so she deemed it wise to apply a strong corrective at once, in the shape of a healthy, vigorous husband. Young American Industry needed it very badly.

Her mother had beforehand selected a virile companion of athletic frame, and equally well built morally. His name was The Tariff. He was not of noble extraction, had not been educated for diplomacy; but in place of a university diploma or a heraldic coat of arms could on almost every occasion show a lot of hard American common sense, character and individuality. He had been raised at the school of strictest economy, and was sure to be a model of domestic virtues. A marriage took place on a good day early in November, and the mother at last felt relieved of all anxious cares and responsibilities.

The young wife was at first very fond of her husband, whose kind attentions anticipated her smallest wants and most capricious desires. She had more pin money than any wife of a successful business man ever dreamed of. This was the beginning of the trouble, as Industry was too versatile to stand, like Sister Agriculture, uninterrupted prosperity and domestic felicity.

A most happy event of providential timeliness prevented, or, better said, postponed a family cataclysm. Two lusty sons, twins, were the legitimate fruit of this union.

Father and mother decided to call the first one Labor and the second one Enterprise. As they had in their veins the virile blood of the father and the healthy constitution of the mother, both boys were very strong, full of health and appetite, but—and very likely owing to the widely different characteristics of the father and mother—they were far from being physically and morally alike. Baby Labor was fond of the milk bottle, but, for some reason or other, Baby Enterprise ever managed to have it most of the time in his little mouth.

"What a big glutton!" used to say the mother. "Each baby should have his turn. This is not fair." "Never mind," rejoined the father; "I shall make one boy a lawyer and the other a mechanic. With such blood in their veins as that of Father Tariff and Mother Industry, both will succeed in their respective callings." And this was to happen some day; but we must not anticipate.

Four years after marriage the temperament of Industry, for some time under restraint, asserted itself more violently than ever before. All was not harmony under the conjugal roof. To make matters still worse, the two children, Labor and Enterprise, had to be separated, as they were fighting all the time over the milk bottle. Baby Labor, like Aunt Agriculture, was of

ILLEGITIMATE OFFSPRING.



"Mr. Tariff, being of kind and generous nature, forgave and welcomed Industry under the conjugal roof. * * * Father Tariff went so far as to adopt the 'little Trusts' and to look after them, but never consented to legitimize them nor allowed them to bear his name."—From Advance Sheets of "The Philosophy of Trusts," by Prof. Ernest Mas.

The Masses in Two Hemispheres.

Archbishop Ireland, who but a short time since returned from a prolonged trip abroad, has said a few most significant words in respect to the contrast between conditions abroad and those in this country. His statement is that:

"The contrast between the masses in this country and the masses in the old world in and out of the church is more remarkable than ever. The American poor are happier and a hundred per cent more intelligent. Their surroundings are better, their chances are better. Where there is one case of misery here there are hundreds abroad, and by abroad I mean England as well as the continent."

The one thing which more than all else is responsible for the advantage which Americans have over the citizens of other countries is the protective tariff. That it is which keeps wages in this country high; that it is which makes employment sure for the laborers of this country! that it is which prevents the foreign manufacturers who employ the pauper laborers of other countries from sending their products to the United States to enter into free and unrestricted competition with the products of the well-paid labor of this country. Archbishop Ireland is a man whose word can be relied upon, and the contrast which he draws between the situation in this country and that abroad is worthy of most careful attention.

Will Not Be Doubtful.

A short time since twenty-five buyers, representing the same number of departments in one of Chicago's department stores, arrived in New York city at the same time. It was stated that not only was this the largest number of department buyers ever sent to the New York market at one time by this concern, but that it was the largest number of buyers ever sent to New York for the purchase of goods at the same time by a single firm during the entire history of American retail merchandising. Apropos of this event, the son of one of the members of the firm represented by these buyers said in conversation with a reporter:

"Every trade condition in Chicago and throughout the West is indicative of a more prosperous fall season than has been experienced for many years. These evidences of prosperity are not confined to any single branch of commercial industry, but seem to cover the entire field. We have enjoyed a period of unprecedented activity this summer in every department of our establishment, and the statements of business associates in Chicago indicate that these conditions are well-nigh universal."

It is safe to say that the West will not be "doubtful" territory in the next campaign if the maintenance of the protective tariff is put in the balance.

Tin Plate Prices.

Every one knows that tin plate has advanced considerably in price within the present year. The Democratic theorists claim that the advance in the United States is due incidentally to the tin plate trust and primarily to the tariff, it being their theory that a protective tariff is a promoter of trusts.

Now let us look at the prices which the Welsh tin plate manufacturers receive. They now obtain \$1.45 a box more than they did in January last. This is a greater advance than has been made in the United States.

We respectfully ask our Democratic friends to explain this. If the protective tariff and the trust caused the advance in the prices of tin plate in the United States, what caused a greater advance in price in Wales, where there is no tariff at all? We pause for reply.—Toledo Blade.

Will Not See.

Senator Vest of Missouri will not see or believe that any prosperity has come to the farmer in the past two years. He said in an interview at Toronto, Canada, on Monday: "Republicans claim prosperity as due to the tariff policy, but farmers have received no particular benefit from the prosperity, and are as dissatisfied as ever." Facts from all sections of the country, especially the great farming west, disprove the sentence above uttered by Mr. Vest. Millions of mortgages in Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa and the Dakotas were in 1898 paid off by the increased sale of their products, and millions more will be paid and canceled before Christmas chimes are rung from the gold 1899 crops will bring them.—Fremont (Ohio) Journal.

Reason to Celebrate.

Labor day this year should have had an extra big celebration. It stands for more than it has stood for for a number of years past; for more, at least, than it has stood for since the free traders got in their knock-down blow at American industries in 1892. It is the year's holiday which is especially dedicated to the wage earners, and the wage earners of the country have plenty of reason to celebrate this year. They have had more work for which to celebrate and more money with which to pay for their celebration.

A Mighty Nation.

Oswald Ottendorfer says that this country is no longer the ideal America to Europeans that it was. It must be confessed that it has changed in some of its features. At one time it was the Mecca of the poor of Europe, who migrated hither because it offered a welcome to the home seekers. Then it was also the market for European products. Now we are a mighty nation, invading the markets of Europe and growing prosperous at the expense of older countries.—Seattle (Wash.) Post-Intelligencer.