

KITTY'S HUSBAND

By Author of "Hetty," Etc.

CHAPTER VII.—(Continued.)

We moved away from the window of the staircase and went downstairs together.

"You don't mind my laughing, dear?" Meg questioned, still with gentleness. "I didn't mean it. In my heart I like John very much—all except—well, all except the speckled beard. If I laugh at him sometimes, you won't mind, will you? It's my way—I laugh at everything—when one doesn't laugh one's spirits get so low! Shall I tell you what mamma is doing in the drawing-room? She is secretly whispering the good news to every one. Every one has come, and every one is duly impressed by your good fortune, Kitty. Now for the congratulations! Oh, poor dear, I pity you for the next few hours!"

But the next few hours, had as they were, were over at length. The piano was silent again; the gas in the drawing-room was turned frugally low behind the last of the departing guests. Only John Mortimer remained behind. He drew me close to him where he stood, and looked at me with a questioning, very gentle glance.

"You do not regret what you promised me this evening?" he queried.

"Do you regret what you asked me?" I said.

Neither question was answered. But we were looking eagerly at one another, and presently our eyes smiled, and that seemed all the answer we required.

"Good night, Kitty," said John.

"Good night," I answered; and he bent and kissed me.

John was gone, Aunt Jane was looking round at the disorder of the drawing-room, smoothing away the creases in an antimacassar that had sufficed in the revelry.

"So we're going to lose you, Kitty."



I KNELT BEFORE THE FIRE.

raid Uncle Richard, putting his hands kindly upon my shoulders as I stood up to bid him good night.

"Kitty is very lucky," said Aunt Jane, raising her hand to turn the gas still lower. "A home of her own at her age is more than she could reasonably have hoped for!"

"I wish you were a little older," said Uncle Richard, regretfully. "I've been talking to John—he must be patient and wait. We can't let you run away just yet."

"Let the child go to bed, Richard," interposed Aunt Jane.

"John's a good fellow, Kitty," said Uncle Richard, in a hasty but kindly way. "I hope you'll be Eppie, dear."

"Thank you," I said hurriedly, and disappeared.

Meg had left a novel in the drawing-room, and sweetly besought me to return and fetch it. I descended, therefore, after a minute, to the drawing-room again.

Aunt Jane was speaking. She did not see me; she was too busy arranging the displaced furniture.

"Waiting is nonsense, Richard, and especially in this case. There shall be no waiting in the matter. If we wait until the winter, Madame Arnaud will be in London. If we wait till then we had wait forever."

I had stood for a minute in the doorway; now I quickly retraced my steps, Meg's novel unopened, my errand, indeed, forgotten. Aunt Jane's words were enigmatical; but they left me with a headache.

CHAPTER VIII.

Aunt Jane had her way. When, indeed, was Aunt Jane ever known to renounce a plan she had set her heart on? She had determined that John and I should be married without delay, and the weightiest reasons weighed as nothing against her resolute desire.

The plan for summer holidays in Cornwall was forthwith abandoned; John's visit to Brittany was given up—some one else undertook the business

which called him there; and, before September was a fortnight old, John and I were married. Aunt Jane had got rid of me forever—got rid of my hats and gowns and gloves and shoes from all future bills, got rid of the price of my appetite at breakfasts, lunches, teas, and dinners henceforth and for evermore.

We were married very quietly. I wore a little gray bonnet and gown of Aunt Jane's choosing, a bonnet and gown so mature that they seemed to grope my 17 years. I had no cake, no cards, no wedding breakfast, no wedding favors, no rice, no satin slippers—"in every way," said the girls, "it was a hole-and-corner, mean, unromantic, perfectly dull and detestable sort of wedding!"

I never agreed with them. Except for Aunt Jane's presence, I would not have had one circumstance of my wedding different. Even the grimy, out-of-the-way little London church seemed lovely—the only fit church to be married in.

Our honeymoon was as prosaic, in the girls' eyes, as our wedding had been. We went away for two short weeks to a quiet little country place beside the sea—not a fashionable resort, but a little outlying seafaring hamlet where John and I were the only visitors.

Before September was over we were at home in London—at home for the first time in my life. The words had a sweet meaning for me. We had a small house near Hyde Park, near the larger, much finer house that John had taken for Madame Arnaud and his sister. It had a homelike look. As we drove up in the gray, misty September evening there was a bright ray of light falling across the pavement from the open door; gaslight shone through the

"No; not as happy as now, Kitty," he said; but his air was a little abstracted as he spoke, and somehow his assurance did not satisfy me.

It was perhaps an hour later. We had had our first meal in our new home—I installed in dignity at the head of my table, John facing me at the other end. We had come back into the dainty, pretty little drawing-room to find curtains drawn, the hearth well swept, and shaded lamps casting a soft-colored light around the room. I had brought John a newspaper, looking at him beseechingly even as I laid it down before him, and hoping that he would not read it. He did not see or did not rightly interpret my beseeching glance, and thanked me with a grateful smile. He was soon absorbed in the leading article, and I sat on the floor again beside him and made little efforts every now and then to distract his attention.

Suddenly, as we were so engaged, there came a smart tap at the drawing-room door and at the same moment the door was opened.

(To be continued.)

can't bear to think of my old self. I'm so sorry for her. Poor old self, she was so miserable, so very miserable; but she didn't know."

"Don't speak of that old self as dead and gone, Kitty. I won't have it. I have a very tender feeling in my heart for that old self that I fell in love with."

"So have I, because you fell in love with her; I wonder why you fell in love with me—I'm glad you did."

I was sitting on the rug now beside his chair. I looked up at him with a happy little smile. He smoothed back my hair slowly with a caressing touch.

"Are you glad I fell in love with you?" I asked, still smiling softly.

"Do you want me to answer that question, Kitty?"

"No; I ask silly questions, don't I? I'm going to ask one more question, John, a serious question: Were you happy, really happy, before you knew me?"

"When I knew you first, Kitty, I'm afraid you didn't make much difference to my happiness," he replied, banteringly, and a little evasively.

"No, I know. You knew me first so many years ago! You knew me in a high chair eating soup. Oh, John, I can't bear to think that you knew me when I was such a silly little thing! I wonder when you first began to love me. I wonder when I first began to care for you. Were you happy before I loved you—ever—ever, John?"

I scarcely knew why I spoke so earnestly. I had been speaking lightly enough a minute ago; but some passing expression on his face, some momentary embarrassment caught my attention and gave my tone a sudden earnestness.

"I suppose you were often happy?" I added, after a moment, resignedly, yet regretfully. "But it was different. You were never quite as happy, John, as you are now?"

"No; not as happy as now, Kitty," he said; but his air was a little abstracted as he spoke, and somehow his assurance did not satisfy me.

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BATTLE-SCARRED HEROINE.

Was Young and Pretty, but Lost Her Leg at Gettysburg.

There is a very handsome young woman in Washington, rather well known in art circles, who had the misfortune to fall down stairs a few years ago, so badly fracturing one of her knees that the limb had to be amputated. The young woman, of course, walks with the aid of crutches. She is not in the least sensitive about the matter, and doesn't mind informing properly introduced people of the nature of the accident which maimed her. She has set a little limit, however, and she was compelled to use it one afternoon last week. She got into an F street car, bound for the hill, and found herself in the same seat with a sharp-eyed woman who seemed to take a whole lot of interest in her and her crutches. She scrutinized the young woman's face carefully for a couple of minutes, then turned her attention to the workmanship of the crutches, which she took the liberty to handle curiously. Then she looked the young woman over again, and leaned over to her. "D'ye mind tellin' me how you lost your leg?" she asked, rasply. "Not in the least," responded the young woman. "I lost it at the battle of Gettysburg."—Washington Post.

Longest Asphalted Street in the World.

Philadelphia can boast of the longest asphalted street in the world. Broad street has that unique distinction. First, as already stated, it is the longest asphalted street in the world; secondly, it is the only street which is of even width for eleven miles, and this width is the greatest ever attained by any street for a course of eleven miles. It is also the straightest street, for from League Island to the county line it does not vary an inch, except where the great city building causes the street to turn around it. Seven miles of the street are asphalted, but the remainder is provided with a roadbed of fine macadam, which is continued by the old York road, which extends for about twenty miles farther on. A carriage can drive on this street and road and make only one turn in thirty-one miles. Broad street is 113 feet wide and measures sixty-nine feet from curb to curb, and thirty-five men can walk abreast of it.

Consistent Christian Scientist.

Hicks—Is your wife any better since she went to Dr. Nihil, the Christian scientist? Wicks—No. The fact is, he is the most consistent scientist I ever encountered. He not only denies that there are such things as pain and disease, but he declares there are no such things as cures.—Boston Transcript.

Last but not least—the one used by a St. Louis schemer.

THE MATCHMAKERS.

"Let's get Peter to take her."

Clem jumped from his chair and slapped Tom roundly on the shoulder, so elated was he over his bright idea; then both young men laughed heartily and wondered that they had not sooner thought of so easy a way out of their dilemma.

It was a difficult situation. The young men had hotly resented a scolding over some boyish escapade from their "specials," Tom's cousin Lottie and Clem's sister Mary. The girls vowed never to speak to them again and by finding it convenient to visit much away from home, and eschewing evening church and festivities had managed to adhere to their resolution.

In the meantime the Kings had moved into the place, and just to show the girls that they were not the only ones in town, both young men had taken to calling on Kittle. She was a lively, pretty girl, and it was a pleasant place to visit, and so it had gone on until they had established quite an intimacy, and without either actually inviting her, they had committed themselves to taking her to the approaching county fair, by talking to her of getting up a party, in which she was included, to go in a large wagon. Then came the reconciliation and row they wanted to go as usual in their buggies with Mame and Lottie, and they had to face the problem of what to do about Kittle.

"I suppose you'll let Pete and get him to take Kittle off our hands," said Tom.

"Well, maybe that would do, and then again maybe it wouldn't," said Clem, scornfully. "I'm not anxious for any one to know I've made a goose of myself or the girl either for that matter."

"How are you going to manage, then?"

"Introduce him and get him interested and make him think he thought of it himself."

"I promised Mame I'd never go there again," said Tom, ruefully.

"I know you did," was Clem's reply; "she told me and I gave her a talking to and told her it wouldn't do. We can't drop Kittle like a hot potato after all the good times we've had down there, just because they have chosen to make up. It's their fault we went there in the first place, and since we did, we intended to treat her decently and get her acquainted with the young folks round here, and I added that the nicer the girls were to her, the less nice we'd have to be. That settled it. We're all going down there some night soon and after that game is to ask Kittle to spend the evening at our house. We'll have to get Pete round then."

They met Peter that afternoon, and Clem took the opportunity to talk much of Kittle and the good times they had with her. "And that reminds me," he said, carelessly, "she thinks you're very handsome." Clem did not think

he had not ventured to talk with her since, it had been left to Clem or Tom to see her home from church, and as she was usually with Mame or Lottie it was easy for them to walk in that direction, thus politely escorting her without special attention from either young man.

Clem was thinking it over moodily one Sunday afternoon while Mame sat writing at the table.

"Here, Clem," she said, handing him an envelope, "this is for Kittle. If you'll put it in your pocket now we'll be sure to take it with us tonight."

Clem did as requested, but a half-hour later, when he saw Peter driving past, it flashed upon him that here was an excellent opportunity to make that young man call on Kittle, and rushing out he hailed him.

Peter was going home, but would call on the way at Miss King's and leave the letter to oblige Clem. He looked at it wonderingly as he drove on.

"Must have something mighty important to say," he thought. "Saw her this morning, and expects to see her again tonight, but has to write a letter in the meantime and send it by another fellow. What's he up to, anyway? One girl doesn't seem to be enough for him. He doesn't give any one else a chance to talk to either Lottie or Miss King."

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, aloud, as a new idea came to him. "I'll get ahead of him this time. I'll speak for myself before I hand in his letter. It's fair enough. How did he know but I was going right there? Perhaps that's what hurried him so."

Peter never doubted that he was carrying an invitation from Clem for the pleasure of Miss King's company home from church that evening, and Kittle rinde no explanation, supposing that Peter knew the contents of the envelope and was on his way to her when Clem met him.

Clem and Tom chuckled with glee to see Kittle and Peter appear at church together, but would not ask her to the fair, now only a few days off? That was still undecided, and the boys drove down to Peter's the next evening, determined, if possible, to find out.

"See here, Pete," said Clem, "what do you say to joining teams and getting up a load of young folks to go to the fair?"

Peter looked surprised. "Thought you two were so dreadfully fond of going in buggies," he said, suspiciously.

"Well, buggies are nicer for some reasons," admitted Tom, "but we can't be so unsocial always. Clem will have his team, and with my horse and yours we could take a jolly party."

"We thought it would be pleasanter for fellows like you with no special girl to take," hazarded Clem.

Peter coughed significantly. He remembered a special girl he had taken the night before. "Well, I don't know," he said, slowly; "it's a big pull with a heavy wagon. Whom are you going to ask?"

"Oh, our set, you know, and Miss King—"

Now Peter thought he understood. The boys were anxious to have Miss King go with them, and his horse was being invited to help it along. Clem's reference to fellows with no special girls to take rankled and he grew momentarily more anxious to prevent them taking the girl, yet he dared not refuse outright, for if Kittle had already promised them he would wish to make one of the party.

"Let us know first thing in the morning, old fellow," said Clem, and they drove off, leaving Peter to do just as they hoped and expected he would, make a hasty toilet and call on Miss King.

He gave his refusal to the boys in the morning with the air of a man who had come out ahead.

Even after the fair it was fun to urge Peter along, and so they kept it up, talking continually in praise of Kittle, and by way of hints taking him into their confidence about little attentions they intended to bestow on Mame and Lottie, suggestions that the young man was not slow in acting upon. They even included him and Kittle in the special good times which they were clever in planning and carrying out, and of which Peter would never have thought, and before they realized it he was madly in love.

When the affair had reached that crisis it was simply their duty, so Clem said, to see that it came out all right; so gently, tactfully, the urging went on, and by the next fair Peter and Miss King were engaged. "He came to tell me the day was set," Clem reported, "and he wonders if you and I will assist at his marriage."

"Will we? Well, I should say so," said Clem. "We haven't assisted all along to go back on him now. We'll be there, swallow-tails and all."

And they were.

The Prime Minister Was.

A former governor of the Australian colonies tells of a curious experience he once had with a long-headed prime minister. The latter brought in a certain measure, calculated to make the government popular with the working classes, although it affected a foreign power so much that representations were made to the imperial authorities on the subject. A dispatch was accordingly sent out to the governor to veto the bill. He sent for the premier, "I'm sorry, old man," said his excellency, "but I've just got orders from home, and I shall have to block that bill." The premier replied, "Look here, governor, I don't care a hang about the imperial gov'm't or about the queens, as far as the thing is concerned, and what's more, I don't care a hang about you. I've made up my mind to get that bill through, and I'll bring it through." The governor, who was polite, asked the "old man" to have a drink, and dropped the subject. The measure in question became a law in due course.

HENS AND THEIR GOOD FRUIT.

They Are an Important Factor in the Commercial Life of the Country.

From the Richmond Dispatch: The hen of the present day is a most important factor in the commercial world not only on account of her vernal offspring, but because civilized people are daily growing fonder of her eggs. Statisticians say it is practically impossible to gain an idea as to the exact number of eggs consumed, though the export and import figures give a partial conception of its enormity. Indeed, the statistics indicate that our feathered friend has all she can attend to and barely can spare the time to assume the responsibilities of rearing a family. During the year ending July 30, 1899, the United States exported 3,693,611 dozen eggs, valued at \$61,355. During this period they imported 225,180 dozen, valued at \$21,300, the increased duty on this food supply having checked their importation. Of course, these figures are but fragments of the almost inconceivable large total which indicates the actual consumption of eggs in America. In 1898 Chicago alone handled 2,147,950 cases of thirty dozen each, of which only 1,223,356 were shipped out. The commission houses are generally the distributing points for eggs in the large cities, but in the country almost every local store deals in them. Many merchants accept them in exchange for goods, while a few receive orders from the towns and dispose of the eggs to hotels or other large concerns. The egg enters into our domestic life not only as a substantial food staple, but as an ingredient of almost every conceivable article of diet. There is practically no limit to its usefulness in this line and when one reflects it seems almost impossible that the land could hold enough hens to meet the public demand. The secret, perhaps, lies in the fact that poultry can be found in every rural barnyard and on the premises of scores of urban and suburban habitations. Every hen knows her duty and does it. While some of them apparently rejoice in their labors accomplished, as a whole they are modest and never "let on" that they realize the world could not comfortably move without them. The probabilities are that as civilization increases and the facilities for transportation become faster and better, our feathered friend with the crimson trimmings will have more and more to do. Her output in decades to come will be the grandest statistical puzzle of the age, and no mathematician will be able to make calculations as to the exact amount of her "fruit." When our neighbor's hens get in our flower beds we should recall these facts and permit only our wives and daughters to throw stones at them.

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Rothschild Among Kings.

Among the anecdotes related by the Hon. John Bigelow in the October Century, in a series of extracts from his conversations with Von Bunsen, is this about the famous banker Rothschild: During the famous Congress of Vienna, already referred to, each of the several monarchs present was the guest of some nobleman. On one festive occasion Baron Rothschild was invited par exception. He modestly went to take his place, not among the more exalted guests. When they discovered Rothschild, however, they all rose, one after the other, and saluted him, except the King of Prussia. Some one asked the king why he did not salute the great European banker. "Did I not?" he replied. "Well, I suppose it was because I was the only one who did not owe him anything." This reminds one of a line in one of Pope's satires:

I never answered; I was not in debt.

Ohio Exposition for Her Centennial.

Director General Ryan of the Ohio centennial estimates that \$5,000,000 will be placed in the enterprise. Congress appropriated \$500,000 on the condition that Toledo, where the exposition is to be held, would give a like amount. This has been done, and the city is also preparing a beautiful site on the bay shore which will cost \$300,000 more. The legal title of the centennial is "The Ohio Centennial and Northwest Territory Exposition" and it will be held in 1902. Ohio was the first of the six important states to be carved out of the Northwest territory, the others being Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. All of these states have appointed commissioners to see that they are represented in the exposition, and they will have their state buildings and exhibits. Ohio was really admitted to the union in 1803.