

# KITTY'S HUSBAND

By Author of "Hetty," Etc.

### CHAPTER XIII.—(Continued.)

After much opposition on my part and quiet, steady determination on John's, Meg was sent for. She was not a very attentive, but she was a very cheery nurse. She forgot my medicine one hour, and gave me a double dose cheerfully the next, and laughed gaily at her own mistakes. And in spite of her mistakes, I got well quickly.

But, long after I was well, Meg continued to stay on with me.

"You have nicer dinners than we have at home," she would confess with sweetest candor, "and your chairs are softer. And I feel that I am doing an act of benevolence in staying. I save you and John from eternal tete-a-tete. Now confess, Kitty, that you are duly grateful."

I was silent.

"Silence means confession," Meg declared.

She stayed through almost all November with us. Whenever she spoke of going John gravely interposed and begged her to remain; and she remained willingly. Sometimes I wished ungratefully that she would go and leave me alone; but John seemed to have more fear than I of those tete-a-tete talks from which she saved us.

Yet, one day, it struck me that John, too, was growing tired of her long visit. Meg was late in coming down stairs; he and I were alone for a minute at breakfast. He held his paper, but he was not reading it; presently he put it down. Glancing across at him, I was pained to see how worried and anxious he was looking.

"Meg is staying all this week, Kitty?" he asked me suddenly as he caught my questioning glance.

"You asked her to stay, John."

"Yes, I know," he said; and he took up his paper again with a little sigh,

before her into the fire with a far-away gaze, and started when I entered the room; she looked round at me, her eyes laughing, and yet with something of mingled melancholy in their depths.

"Why, what are you doing, Meg?" I asked.

"Thinking, dear—an uncommon thing," answered she; and she shook back her hair, rippling, pretty hair, and seemed as though she would shake away her thoughts with the same impatient gesture. "I've seen a ghost," she said. "The vision has been haunting me all day. Don't I look like it? I've seen the ghost of an old love, Kitty."

She spoke lightly, scoffingly, and yet there was an undercurrent of deeper meaning in her tone. I knelt down upon the rug beside her chair, and she put her elbows once more upon her knees and her chin upon her hands, and again looked musingly into the fire before her.

"You didn't know I had an old love?" she said, still in a scoffing tone. "You didn't know that I went about the world with the smallest possible fraction of a heart, did you, Kitty? On the whole, I got on very well. One enjoys the world better without a heart than with one, I think. Pretty bonnets are more satisfactory than lovers."

"Meg," I said, looking closely and curiously at her, "I don't understand you—I don't understand a bit what you are meaning."

"Nor I," said Meg, with an odd little laugh that was half a sigh. "A person who has seen a ghost may be allowed to be half-witted for half a day. I saw a ghost at breakfast-time this morning. I took it in from the postman at the door. It is roosting now in John's study, I suppose. And, if it were not for an old-fashioned idea of honor, I



I DON'T SEE WHY I SHOULDN'T TELL YOU.

and it again struck me that he did not read it.

Meg came down stairs, gaily humming as she came. As she passed through the hall the postman arrived, and she brought in the letters, looking carefully in a perfectly open way at each one. Suddenly the smile faded from her face; she glanced quickly at John with a half-questioning, half-startled look.

John rose and put out his hand to take the letters. He was more eager than usual to obtain them. Meg gave them to him slowly, one by one.

"Only three," she said. "One from Madame Arnaud. One from a person who ought to go back to copy-books—"

John took the letters she held out to him. She still retained the third.

"Let me have the other, Meg," he said in a tone of tired forbearance.

She put the letter down upon the table, but she was still holding it.

"Whose writing is that?" she asked.

John's face puzzled me. He was evidently striving against a sharp, impatient answer. He was anxious to obtain possession of the letter, and anxious that Meg should not any longer examine it. Meg, too, was graver than her wont as she stood looking doubtfully, first at him, then again at the handwriting on the envelope.

"I know that writing," she said half-defiantly.

"I think not," said John.

"Tell me whose it is."

"I am very sorry. I cannot tell you. It is a private correspondent."

Meg said no more. She relinquished the letter meekly, and John took it unopened into his study and did not appear again.

would go and rifle John's study and try to find it."

"Are you talking about the letters, Meg, that you took this morning?"

"Oh, wise Kitty! About one of those letters. Yes."

I looked at her in perplexity. For many minutes she did not speak again.

"I have a score of love-letters all in that same handwriting," she said at last, turning her head to smile at me—"the only love letters I ever had, or ever shall have. Preserve me from having any more."

She clasped her hands behind her head and laughed.

"It was such a foolish affair, so childish, so silly," she added, with a lingering regret in her scornful tone. "I thought I had forgotten all about it."

"Tell me about it, Meg."

"Tell you about it, Kitty? Thank you, dear, I would rather not."

I did not urge her any further. With her hands clasped behind her head, she sat looking before her. Presently she turned and looked musingly at me.

"I don't see why I shouldn't tell you," she said. "It may amuse you. Poor little Kitty! Life is dull enough for you; you want a glimpse of comedy now and then to make you smile. Well, smile at this. When I was sixteen, Kitty, I lost my heart. I had a lover—my only lover—laugh, dear."

"I don't want to laugh, Meg."

"Don't you? Is the story so tragic? I assure you it's comic, too. I used to play truant from school in order to go for walks with him. Was that comic or tragic or only improper?"

"Who was he, Meg?"

"His name doesn't matter, dear. He, at all events, thought that it didn't matter. He called himself Arthur Leslie. I found out afterwards that the rest of the world called him Arthur St. John."

"That was Madame Arnaud's name," I said vaguely.

"He was related in some way, I think, to Madame Arnaud. It was from

him that I first heard of her; we were talking about the theater, and he told me her story, though not quite as I have heard it since. I don't know why I am telling you all this. I don't know why I am thinking of it. I ought to be ashamed to remember such a silly episode. I used to write letters on pages of my exercise-books and leave them for him at the pastry cook's. He used to leave his letters for me every day at the same place, and a young lady with golden ringlets would hand them to me with an acridulated smile. The same young lady is at the same pastry cook's still. I never go through that street—"

Meg's lips were trembling a little, though her eyes were laughing at me.

"How long is this ago?" I asked.

"Oh, a century ago! When I was sixteen, nearly four years ago."

"And no one knew?"

"No one. Only the golden haired lady who sold us jam-puffs and lemonade and ices."

"And was he as young as you?"

Meg smiled.

"No. Not as young as I," she said drily. He must have left school ten years before. He had left college. He had left the bar—I think perhaps he had left half a dozen other professions which he never mentioned. Oh, yes, Kitty, he was in every way a hero, old enough, tall enough, dark enough, wicked enough, I dare say!"

"You were in love with him, Meg?"

"I thought I was, dear. One can imagine most things when one is sixteen, or a little over."

"How did it end, Meg?"

"It didn't end. He left a note one day with the golden haired lady, asking me to go for a walk with him by the Serpentine. I left a note in answer to say that I would come. I went; but he forgot the appointment. He never wrote to me any more. I have not seen him or heard of him from that time to this. I have often been very glad."

"It was hard to know what to say. I sat looking at her thoughtfully."

"The letter that came for John this morning was from him?" I asked.

"Yes—I am sure of it," said Meg. She rose from her seat, humming a scrap of a song.

"I shall go and dress now," she said. "When one tells one's love stories one should always tell them in picturesque dishabille. Did I look sufficiently love-lorn? Did I amuse you, Kitty? Well, I am tired of looking ugly; I shall go and dress."

She went away, still humming, up the stairs, and I sat reflecting on all that she had said. Was Meg laughing, or was she in earnest. I did not know. So deep was I in thought that I did not hear the door open, did not hear John enter.

"Kitty," he said in a quick tone, less calm and steady than was his wont, "I want to speak to you. Come into the study with me; I want to speak to you alone."

"Meg has gone upstairs," I observed, rising obediently, however to follow him.

He closed the study door behind us, and drew forward a chair toward the fire for me. It was weeks since I had sat alone thus in John's study with him. I looked around the room. It somehow looked more dreary than it had been wont to look. The dust lay thickly on the chimney piece and writing table; there were no flowers anywhere; the hearth looked dirty; the fire burnt dull and low, and John himself had changed since I had sat there with him last. He looked sadder, older.

"Kitty," he said, standing before me, one elbow on the chimney-piece, and looking down at me. "I am going to entrust you with an important secret."

He waited. I looked gravely at him, and did not answer.

"I feel sure that I can trust you."

"Yes," I replied simply, "you can trust me."

(To be continued.)

### RECENT INVENTIONS.

A handy gate has been designed which can be opened without exertion, a pivot pin being set in the side of a post, on which the gate is hung, with weights suspended on an arm at the rear of the gate to counterbalance it in any position.

A summer street car has been designed which has windows on the sides for use in stormy weather, the window frame being pivoted on the roof supports and fitting tightly between them when lowered, with a curtain at the lower edge which completes the closure.

Playing cards can be rapidly and evenly shuffled by a Boston man's device, which is formed of a circular box, fitted with a central stem, on which it revolves, with a detent arranged in the top of the box to intermittently hold back a portion of the cards as they revolve.

Street-car conductors will appreciate a new fare register designed for their use, and the cost to the company is lessened by its use, the new apparatus being held in the hand, with a sliding yoke to be gripped by the thumb and depressed, registering the fare on a dial and ringing a bell.

Ether and chloroform can be easily administered to a patient by a German apparatus, having an absorbent diaphragm fitted across one end of a metallic tube, with the opposite end shaped to fit the face, a pneumatic ring on the edge affording an air-tight seal and causing the inhalations to be taken from the diaphragm.

### PROGRESS AND REFORM.

The Presbyterian Church of England has increased by 1,805 communicants in the last year.

The United Brethren church has recently opened a kindergarten and primary school at Ponce, Porto Rico.

## THOUGHTS FOR THANKSGIVING

**UNCLE EZRA'S THANKSGIVING.**

Yep, Thanksgiving Day is playin' out, er so it seems to me.

Fer it don't make no comparison to what it use to be;

Though the turkey and the mince pies is the same we've always known.

An' I'm here, an' Sary Ellen, but we're eatin' 'em alone.

It's the buildin' of the railroads that hee made it that-a-way—

Thet hee tuck our children from us an' hee spilt our holiday—

Holdin' out their wild shameeries about lan's that can't be beat

(But whar cyclones digs the taters, an' whar chinch bugs mows the wheat).

Why, it use' to be thet youngsters didn' seem to want to go

From the homestead of the ol' folks



**BUT WE'RE EATING 'EM ALONE.**

any more'n a mile er so;

They 'ud take things 'twas given 'm, an' they'd settle thar an' stay.

An' they'd fill the homestid table when it come Thanksgivin' Day.

Law me! yes, them times is ended!

Little Sary married fust,

An' Jim Medders 'lowed he'd take her out to Idyho er bust,

An' he bustid, an' I've ben a-sendin' money ever sence,

Though it's more fer little Sary thet I care than thet expense.

An' then Chrisy went to Texas—Chrisy always was our pride,

But he headed off some cattle, an' he hurt his spine an' died.

An' now Sammy's in the city, an' that ain't so fur away,

But he's writ us that a baby's brought 'em their Thanksgivin' Day!

So we nattered down the table, bein' by ourselves, you see,

An' the turkey'll las' forever, jes' fer Sary an' fer me;

An' the raisins in the mince pie, bought fer Sammy's special taste,

Sence he didn't come to eat 'em, sorter seem to be a waste.

Yep, the railroads tuck 'em from us, an' we're all alone at last,

An' Thanksgiving's like I told yeh, jest a mem'ry of the past;

But we're countin', me an' Sary, on a better place, an' then

We will have a big Thanksgiving, an' the child'n home agaln,

A. B. P.

### HIS THANKSGIVING.

Tinkle-tinkle, tinkle-tinkle, tinkle-tinkle.

The leading man engaged in an attempt to remove a black spot from his dress cravat by means of an application of white grease paint, paused and listened.

"It's a mandolin," he said. "That's a new wrinkle. We've had all kinds of fends in this company since we started out, everything from cigarettes to bicycles. Who's the musician, I wonder? Oh, I say, Jenks! Jenks! Who's the band wagon?"

There was a step in the narrow passageway that led to the dressing rooms, and Jenks, the property man, appeared in the doorway. "Sh!," he said, "not so loud. The old man'll hear you."

The leading man started. "The old man, did you say—not Merriam?"

"Yes, Merriam," in a whisper.

The leading man sat on his trunk. "That beats me," he said. "The Ancient Mariner tinkling a mandolin. Now I'm prepared to see Father Time playing sentimental ditties on a jew's harp."

Jenks did not laugh, a fact which helped to sober the other man. "It's no surprise to me," said the property man, gravely. "I says to Mrs. Jenks just before I left the hotel, says I, 'Mrs. Jenks, you know what night this is?' 'Thanksgiving,' she says. 'Why, right,' says I, 'and it'll be a hard night for Merriam.'"

"Poor old man," says Mrs. Jenks, a-wipin' of a tear. "Poor old man, I suppose he'll be playing of his mandolin agaln." "That he will," says I.

"He hasn't missed it, as near as I can judge, for thirty years. As sure as Thanksgiving night comes, just so sure he gets out that old mandolin of his and tinkles away. And it's always the same tune. God! But it does make my mind go back. I'll never for-

real reason for the change, but in the tomb scene I don't see how they could help feeling it.

"Those of us who saw it from the wings will never forget it. The women were in hysterics and the stage hands and flymen were nearly as bad. I don't know how Merriam ever lived through it, but this I do know. He was a different man from that night. He seemed to lose all his ambition and he withered up so, that when I met him at a rehearsal two years later, I hardly knew him. He was bent much as you see him now, and was playing character old men. Every year he dropped down further, until they wouldn't trust him with anything better than bits and servants. Yes, sir, and that old man has played Romeo with the best of them."

The story was finished, but the mandolin still tinkled. The leading man's face was drawn, and Jenks sat thinking. Perhaps the former was thinking of his own high tide of prosperity, and of what the future had in store for him.

But sympathy and curiosity are closely allied, and soon the two men were tiptoeing through the passageway. They paused before the old actor's room. A ray of light filtered through a crack in the thin pine door. Merriam was dressed and made up for

### A CROWD AROUND THE STAGE DOOR.

a comedy servant. His green livery coat hung on a peg on the wall, and the red wig with which he covered his own white hair lay on the dressing table before him. There, too, was a faded photograph of a pure-faced girl in the dress of Juliet. The actor was bent over his mandolin and the leading man now caught the tune for the first time, broken, but recognizable.

"When other hearts and other lips Their tales of love shall tell, Then you'll remember, you'll remember—"

Twang! There was the sound of a broken string.

"First act! All up for the first act!" The callboy came tumbling down the passage and the listeners hurried up to the stage. A few minutes later the callboy came up, too, and he found the stage manager fuming.

"Where's Merriam?" he cried. "I can't hold the curtain all night for that doddering old fool. Hurry him up, will you?"

The boy disappeared, and reappeared almost instantly.

"Mr. Merriam's—"

The tears choked his voice and he got no further. The stage manager made a rush for the stairs. Ten minutes later he came up dressed for the comedy servant, but the man whose name was down on the bills for the part lay in his dressing room clutching an old mandolin, with his eyes fixed on a faded photograph.

### The Soldiers in Battle.

It is not easy for the hearts in darkened rooms today, mourning sons and brothers to see God's face in the gloom, and if we give thanks for brave men and brave deeds, for the heroism that faced death unflinchingly in the trenches or on the seas, it should be in humility, that the world has not progressed far enough in God's way to be relieved of the curse of war, but we can be unreservedly thankful for the voices that have rung out in all the land for peace. Let us be thankful that never before have so many men and women been pleading for the right in defiance of the wrong. Never before have so many thoughtful ones faced the evils of the times, the great underlying causes of sin and misery, and sought to solve the knotty questions of our modern civilization.

### Servants at Dinner.

"That night there was a good deal of hand-shaking, and the word went around that there was to be a wedding at Christmas."

"The next night on my way to the theater I noticed a crowd around the stage door, and heard talk of a runaway. I hurried up, and as I did so Merriam came out, his face as white as a ghost's."

"For God's sake, get a doctor, Jenks!" he cried.

"I rushed to the nearest drug store, and, luckily, found one there. When we got back to the stage door Merriam was waiting, and, without a word, he led us to a sofa in the wings on which Nellie Moore was lying. The doctor bent down over her for a minute, shook his head and said he was too late.

"An understudy played Juliet that night and Merriam as usual was the Romeo. The audience didn't know the

