

KITTY'S HUSBAND

By Author of "Hetty," Etc.

CHAPTER XIV.—(Continued.)

"The secret is not my own," he continued earnestly after a minute; "you must be satisfied with half confidences."

I waited.
"What I want to tell you, Kitty, is this. I am bringing a visitor here to-night to sleep. I want no one to know that he is here. He is eluding justice. I am sorry to say that I am abetting him."

"John, what has he done?"
"Don't be frightened, Kitty. We can sleep in safety without fearing for our lives. He has forged a cheque—a cheque for a large amount. It is not his first offense. Many years ago he was guilty of a similar forgery; then the would-be prosecutor was bought off, the case was never brought into court. This time he has to deal with men who are made of sterner stuff. They will hear no compromise; they insist on prosecuting; for weeks past I have been trying to negotiate with them, to save him. I have failed."

"Is he worth it, John—worth all your work?"

"No, I think not."

"Why are you so anxious, then?"
"For old friendship's sake."

"Was he an old friend of yours? Oh, let him come here; we can hide him!"

"Kitty, you spoke then almost as your old self might have spoken. No, dear, he was never a dear friend of mine. As I said before, Kitty, you must be content with half confidences. A few weeks ago I hoped he had escaped. He could not be found. Then we discovered that he had returned to London and was here in hiding. To-day I find, what I feared yesterday, that his hiding place has been discovered; he dares not return there to-night. When it is much later and the way is clear, I shall bring him here. No one need see him, Kitty. I have a

"Don't stand at the window, Meg," I urged.

But Meg did not heed me. She stood between the parted curtains, and looked out across the wet pavement shining in the gaslight.

"Madame Arnaud!" cried Meg suddenly.

"Madame Arnaud?" I repeated.

"She is coming in with John. She chooses strange hours for calling. Kitty, the clock is just striking nine. Well, I am glad that some one has come to enliven our dullness—even a dull caller is better than no one."

"But not tonight," I said absently.

Meg turned away from the window; we both waited for John to bring Madame Arnaud into the drawing-room. We waited in vain. There were steps in the hall, then John's study door closed, and all was silent in the house.

Meg and I were silent, too; the rain beat against the panes; I sat and listened to it absently. Presently Meg crossed the room and stood beside my chair, and kissed me caressingly.

"Madame Arnaud must have gone again," I said, almost defiantly, defying Meg's unspoken sympathy, turning and looking up at her.

Meg did not answer. Presently she drew a low chair just opposite to mine.

An hour dragged by. All through that hour, even while Meg talked, I was listening with a strained attention.

"Go to bed, Meg," I said at last, pleadingly.

"Why, Kitty?"

"Do go, Meg," I urged.

Meg glanced at me. Then for once, she rose and kissed me again and went.

The wind had risen; the rain beat deafeningly against the window. Sounds in the house were lost in the sounds of the storm outside. I crossed

upon his speech; his effort after self-restraint was evident.

"Why should I wish to live?" I asked. "Why? Tell me why."

John sighed and made no answer. I went on passionately—

"If the wind blows upon me a little, if the rain touches me, you are sorry. You are not sorry that my heart is breaking. It is breaking all day long—always. And you—you do not care."

"Kitty, I think you are mad when you talk like this."

I pushed back my hair, which was falling loosely about my forehead, and looked at him with an odd little smile—a heart-broken half-bitter smile.

"I should be happier if I died," I said. "And you—could you marry Madame Arnaud, John?"

John's gray eyes flashed a quick, startled, scrutinizing glance at my face.

"That is one of the things, Kitty, that I cannot allow even you to say," he returned at last severely.

There was a long silence. It was John who was the first to break it. He spoke slowly, and his tone was heavy as he spoke.

"You asked me the other day to let you leave me," he said. "I refused. I was wrong—and you were right. You may go, Kitty. I will not try to keep you with me."

I was silent. John turned away, with a tired and heavy sigh.

"We will talk of it tomorrow," he added. "It's too late—we are neither of us calm enough—to talk tonight. But you shall go. I promise."

I think I murmured a few incoherent words of thanks as I turned away. I might go! The privilege seemed an empty boon, indeed. I had no feeling of elation, no feeling of contentment in having won. Life stretched away blankly before me, bereft of every joy, every hope.

Even now I cannot recall the long hours of that night with an aching pity for that old self of mine who lay sleepless, tearless the whole night through, and heard the hours strike one by one, and waited in a dull, hopeless, unexpected way for the dawn to break.

The dawn came at last. The sun rose slowly above the house tops—a red orb in a copper-colored sky. I dressed wearily, and turned with a heavy heart to go down stairs.

My hand was on the handle of my door when the door was opened from outside. Meg came in. At the first sight of her face I stepped forward quickly and put my arm around her. Her face was deathly white—white even to the lips. Her lips were tremulous, and yet they were trying in a pathetic way to laugh at herself and at me—at herself for her emotion, and at me for my solicitude.

"I ought to faint, Kitty," she said, looking at me with a queer, tremulous little smile. "It would be better—and—and romantic, dear."

She pushed away the eau de Cologne I had brought her, and gradually the color came back into her cheeks.

"You should have told me he was here," she said, after a minute, half lightly, half reproachfully.

"Did you see some one, Meg? Were you startled? A—friend of John's came last night to stay. I didn't tell you."

"Do you know who he was?" she asked.

"No, I don't know—John didn't tell me. But he told me that he was coming. I wish you hadn't seen him, Meg. He startled you—naturally—when you didn't know that any one was staying here. Would you mind, Meg, not saying to any one that you have seen him?"

Meg laughed harshly.

"I am not likely to mention it, Kitty," she said drily. "It is not often, dear, that I boast of that early escapade of mine. When I am an old woman and very dull I may weave a romance out of those ices and love letters and jam puffs; but I am not old enough just yet. I shan't talk of it, dear; don't fear."

"Meg, what do you mean? Who was it you saw? Not Arthur St. John?"

(To be continued.)

COLLIS' SECRETARY.

How a Raise was Made to His Salary

The Chicago News of a late date gives currency to the following story: A few years ago Collis P. Huntington's private secretary, Mr. Miles, asked for an increase of salary. "Do you need any more money?" asked Mr. Huntington, thoughtfully. "No, sir, I don't exactly need it," replied Mr. Miles, "but still I'd be glad to be getting a little more."

"Ah—hum—m—m," mused his employer, "can you get along without the advance for the present?" "Oh, yes," answered the secretary, "I guess so, and the matter was dropped. A couple of years later a new boy appeared at the Miles home and the secretary thought the time propitious to renew the application. "Why, my dear sir," said Mr. Huntington, when he heard him through, "I raised your salary when you asked me before. "I never heard anything about it," said the secretary, in amazement. "Probably not," returned Mr. Huntington; "in fact, I used that money to buy a piece of property for you. I'd just let it stand for a while if I were you." Mr. Miles thanked him warmly and retired, somewhat mystified. Recently Mr. Huntington called him into his private office. "By the way, Miles," he said, "I have sold that real estate of yours at a pretty good advance. Here is the check." The amount was \$50,000. The property was part of a large section purchased by the railway king as an investment for his wife.

Height of Vulgarity.

Among the French, formerly, to make even the most casual reference to a handkerchief was considered the height of vulgarity.



MY MOST NOTABLE THANKSGIVING

BY FRANK R. STOCKTON

It was Thanksgiving time, nearly thirty years ago. To the ordinary inhabitant of that portion of this country where I then dwelt the season was very much like other seasons of autumnal fruition; there was nothing in the earth, the skies, or the waters that gave to this period any peculiarity which would distinguish it from the similar period of any other year, past or to come.

But there was something that made this Thanksgiving season very peculiar in my eyes. For some time the whole world had seemed to me to be permeated by the knowledge that something was about to happen which had never happened before, and which could not, by any possibility, happen again.

I had always loved the Thanksgiving season. To be sure, much of the brightness and color in which the landscape reveled in October was lost, but the rich browns of the oaks, the heavy greens of the pines and the cedars, lighted up here and there by some late hanging sumac leaves or reddening ivy, with hill and dale gently softened by the mists of Indian summer, made a picture in which I delighted as much as I did in the beauties of any other season.

But in this year the late autumn foliage was much finer than I had ever known it before. Van Dyke never dreamed of such browns as I now saw, and the curtains of distant mist seemed ever about to rise upon visions of even greater beauty than those which then entranced me.

I had always liked the first keen winds which had come to us as the advent couriers of winter, making it delightful to walk and be out of doors, and also agreeable and satisfactory to go into the house. But this year there was a sparkling spice in the air which it would have been impossible for other people to understand, even if



A GREAT YEAR FOR RABBITS.

they had perceived it. I knew it was there, I understood its origin, and I did not care a snap of my fingers whether or not anybody else knew anything about it.

In those days, after the regular periods of meteoric showers, there used to be a good many falling stars which appeared to be left over from the grand display, and I had always been accustomed to watch for these with a great deal of interest, for the

reason that I generally forgot to go out of doors on the regular star-falling nights, and, therefore, was naturally anxious to make the best of what was left of the shower.

This year the few stars that rewarded my vigilance by falling in the latter part of November were exceptionally fine meteors. They glistened more brightly they scintillated, they moved slowly, as if they wanted to let me know that they knew of something as well as I did.

The birds of that autumn were of particularly bright plumage. I remember that they sang very well, and although I am not positive that those



MY FIRST BOOK.

who were in the habit of migrating to the south in the late autumn delayed their journey this year, those of them who did remain made themselves very conspicuous and agreeable.

It was a great year for rabbits. In earlier days I had given much attention to trapping these little creatures, but seldom took much interest in the sport until the snow had covered the earth, and thereby induced game creatures of various kinds to cast their eyes upon the delicate morsels exposed in traps by men and boys. But now, although I did not care to trap the rabbits, I was charmed to gaze upon them as they skipped about on the edge of the woods, wagging their little tails and sitting up looking from side to side, with their little noses nervously trembling, while their long ears waved in the breezes. The rabbits' fur seemed very long and fine that year, and I am sure that its color must have been extraordinarily well adapted for the adornment of human youth and beauty.

I do not know that there were great crops of corn that year, or that the pumpkins had glided to a greater extent than usual the brown, denuded fields, but I felt the farmers ought to be very happy people.

To me the country was pervaded with an atmosphere of richness and unsurpassed fulfillment. I knew that the apple crop had been very good; at least I knew that the trees had borne some remarkably good fruit, because I had tried a good deal of it, and it had never possessed to a greater extent the juiciness and sub-acid flavor of which I was so fond.

It was also a great year for squirrels. I do not wish it to be supposed that I was not, and am not, fond of squirrels. I like them better now than I used to in my earlier days, although they are as active competitors in the business of chestnut gathering as when I was younger. But in this Thanksgiving season of which I speak the squirrels

must have been fewer or lazier, for I made no complaints about the scarcity of chestnuts.

If I remember rightly, those I ate were remarkably fine, either one great chestnut in a single hull, or a fairly large one with two little ones which did not interfere with the expansion of the fittest.

There was a peculiarity about the weather of that November; very often the skies were really cloudy and gray, and the rain sometimes came down with steady persistence, while the cold and penetrating winds made people think of heavy overcoats before their appointed time. But these days of bad weather had very little effect upon me or upon my spirits. It did not occur to me that the melancholy days had come, and as for their being the saddest of the year, that was impossible. At that time some sort of a sun was always shining. If it were not the ordinary sun about which our earth revolves, it was a particular orb which existed for my especial satisfaction. It sometimes even shone at night, after I had gone to bed—that is, if I happened to be awake.

But it was not only nature that was more than usually agreeable; the people of this world, so far as I knew them, were very pleasant, remarkably so. I do not remember quarreling with a living soul during the whole of that November. It seems as though my intercourse with my fellow beings was unusually genial. In regard to social progress and the steady betterment of the human race, I was an ardent optimist. Even people I knew as not being very pleasant of manner or intelligent of speech seemed then good company.

Politics did not trouble me at all. I suppose a good many people voted for the wrong men, but I paid no attention to their misguided actions. It was scarcely possible there could be any candidates for office who did not possess some virtues, and a strong disposition in the direction of general altruism made me wish well to all good people who had been selected to administer the affairs of township, county or state.

There was truly something exceptional in this Thanksgiving season. Other people may not have noticed it, but it impressed itself most forcibly upon me. How could it be otherwise? It was a time that my first book was published.

In the East.



At a fashionable Thanksgiving dinner the butler brings in the turkey. It is then removed and carved in the butler's pantry.



I LOOKED STRAIGHT AT HIM.

disguise prepared for him. Tomorrow, when he leaves here, he will, I hope, be unrecognizable. His berth has been taken for him in another name in a ship for South America. Once there, he will be beyond the law."

John stood talking to me for some time longer, arranging the details of our plot.

"Shall I see him, John?" I asked.

"I think not, Kitty."

I rose at last to go. John detained me a minute longer.

"Not a word to Meg," he warned me.

"No," I promised.

"One would not willingly trust state secrets to Meg," he added, with a slight smile. "Try to keep her with you all the evening, Kitty. As for the servants, I will tell them to build up the study fire and then not to disturb me again tonight. When dinner is over, take Meg back to the drawing-room and keep her there."

"You will not be at dinner, John?"

"No," he answered abstractedly, "I am going out now."

"Where?" I asked.

The question escaped me before I had time to think; it was not often that I questioned him about his goings. He looked a little vexed at the question now.

"To Madame Arnaud's," he answered simply.

I turned toward the door; he opened it for me, smiling at me as he did so.

"Thank you, Kitty," he said in a grateful tone. "You have helped me very much."

"A wifely duty!" I returned, with a bitter little smile. "Don't thank me, I was bound to help you; and I turned away from him with the sound of my own bitter mocking voice ringing in my ears."

CHAPTER XV.

"Heigh-ho, what a long evening this is!" and Meg sighed. "Wind and rain, wind and rain; listen to it."

the room, took up my stand at the window, where Meg had been standing, and closed the curtains behind me to shut out the light of the room.

Minutes went by, minutes that seemed like hours. At last the house door opened, shut softly, and John and Madame Arnaud came out together, and passed the window where I stood.

I waited. Ten minutes passed. The clock struck eleven slowly, and John passed the window again—this time alone.

He let himself in silently; he went back to his study, and for an hour longer I waited.

The fire had gone out, the room had grown cold; but my head was hot and throbbing. I threw open the window and knelt beside it, welcoming the cold wind that swept in, even welcoming the rain that beat against my burning cheek. After a minute I shivered. But even then I did not move. Physical cold seemed to deaden for a minute all the passionate burning tumult of thoughts that were surging through my brain.

The wind caught the curtains and made them sway to and fro. Suddenly, as the door was opened, I turned to see John coming in with a firm quick step across the room. He drew down the window sharply before he spoke a word. Then he turned to me, with a quick glance of mingled severity and gentleness. He tried to speak patiently, but there was something of anger in his self-controlled tone.

"Do you try to make yourself ill, Kitty?" he asked.

I had risen from my knees, and I stood leaning against the shutter, my hands held down before me. I looked straight at him, all the agony, all the hopelessness of the past two hours shining in my eyes.

"I try to die," I said calmly, with the calmness of the deepest passion.

John's eyes expressed a passion as deep as mine. He was putting a curb