

# Netty, or The Old Grudge.

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## CHAPTER I.

Notably strange formation, among the green beauties of Western Pennsylvania, in the wall-like hill locally known as the Devil's Backbone, which is thrown high across the Raccoon Creek Valley. Though its elevation is hardly more than five hundred feet, the abruptness with which it rises out of the meadow lands, the straightness and length of the lofty line its summit makes against the sky and the absence of near rival eminences cause it to seem, when viewed from the valley, a real mountain. Its top, for a length of about two miles, is level and straight, and is traversed by a road, one of the most charming drives imaginable, and not by any means so difficult of access as might be expected, since the slope at the end of the hill is so gradual that teams, drawing loaded wagons, ascend it with little difficulty. Through an alley of tall trees it runs, their boughs arching overhead and their dead leaves carpeting the spaces between their great trunks, and make a wall of foliage on either side, through rifts in which, here and there, glimpses are afforded of blue sky and fleecy white clouds drifting across it. Nowhere is the summit more than four or five rods in width.

One flank of the hill is steep, but not beyond a skillful and daring climber's scaling. The other, however, is like a stupendous wall. Denuded of its mask of foliage, that rocky face would be seen scarred, seamed and wrinkled by ages of passive resistance to the destroying forces of nature. Rain, frost, sunshine and wind have graven deeply their traces upon it. But, while the summer lasts at least, it is fresh and fair.

During all the season of foliage and bloom, one looking up from the valley can scarce think of that time-furrowed face, but only its vivid mask from the summit down to the base, where the crystal creek has undermined it and where fishes, alarmed by the cattle plashing among the gravel on the farther side of the pool, dart across the reflected sky and through the inverted forest to find refuge among the never-lifting black shadows far beneath the rocks. All the nooks and crannies in that rugged wall are full of life. Foxes have their hiding places in the caves; birds build their nests in safety in spots accessible only to things with wings; chipmunks and squirrels frolic and bark among the branches; snakes sun themselves on exposed points of rocks; owls blink and ponder in the deepest shadows; bees store their golden sweets secure from all despoilers; myriads of Nature's wild children here find homes, safe from each other and from the common enemy, man.

Late in the afternoon of a short autumnal day, John Cameron, returning home, was hunting in the distant hills, strolling along the Devil's Backbone toward the valley. A big bunch of gray squirrels upon his right shoulder showed that he had had good success; but evidently his hunt was not yet over. He moved almost noiselessly, his rifle lay ready on his left forearm, and he was keenly alert for any sight or sound betokening the presence of game. To his ears came the sigh of the forest, that is never hushed, and through it the impatient barking of a foolish squirrel that, having caught sight of him, must needs proclaim the fact to the universe, instead of prudently scampering away in silence to a place of safety. The crack of John's rifle sounding strangely small and sharp away up there where there was nothing to echo it, put an abrupt stop to the barking, and a little gray, furry lump tumbled from the top of a hickory tree to the ground, at the very brink of the precipice, and lay motionless. In the very act of stooping to pick up his game, John's keen eye caught sight of a thin, dirty-white, cotton string, tied to a little bush, close to the ground. It had been covered by leaves, and would have remained unseen, had not the squirrel's body knocked them away and exposed it.

Why should anybody have tied a string there? He laid down his gun and proceeded to investigate, hauling in two or three yards of the slack of the string which dangled over the face of the cliff. Then it broke.

What the mischief is at the other end? He laid down John to himself. He laid down the string, and thrusting his body out perilously far over the edge of the precipice, tried in vain to see, among the rocks and bushes below, what held the other end of the string. Fifty feet below a large hickory tree seemed to be firmly rooted in a ledge of earth among the rocks, and one of its strong branches was only a few feet beyond his reach. He calculated that if he could get hold of that branch he might safely swing down by it to a dogwood tree of similar size, on the ledge he wished to reach. Of course, if his hold gave way, or the branch broke, he would go on down to the bottom of the precipice, and probably break everything frangible in his anatomy. But if he did not take that risk, he could not learn what was at the other end of the string. That settled the question of his making that attempt. Having in view a possible shot at a fox or rattlesnake when he got down there, he loosed his rifle by the string, to be firmly purposed reaching. Then, by means of a long forked stick, he drew in to him the hickory branch, clutched it, swung off, and made the descent he had planned in safety. But the eludgment of the mystery had not yet been attained. The string continued on, still further down, passing through a crevice in the rock, into which it had doubtless been blown by the wind when dangling free—and he had to make a second descent, even more perilous than the first, to reach a still lower ledge. This, too, he effected safely, having first sent his gun down ahead of him, as before, and at length he found the other end of the string.

It was tied to a small but heavy parcel, closely wrapped in a cloth that, as he unrolled it, seemed to bear blood stains. Eleven solid silver spoons and a gold

watch were in the package. Carefully wound around the watch, to protect it from dampness, was a strip of oiled silk, two feet long and three inches wide, upon which he made out the initials, "W. S.," scratched as if by a pin-point. The watch was well worn, but had no marks by which it might be identified, excepting, perhaps, its number. Engraved upon the spoons, in florid, interlaced lines, was a monogram that might have been "K. B. W.," or any other possible combination of those three letters.

"Mighty!" exclaimed John. "If 'finds it keeps,' as the boys say, it was worth while climbing down here."

Thrusting his prize in his pocket, and seeing no sign of a fox or any other game, he began casting about for means to get back to the top of the cliff. It is generally easier, in hill climbing, to ascend than to descend safely, and, knowing this, he had not until now troubled himself about how he should return; but all rules have their exceptions, and he quickly realized that this was an exceptional case. Even if he could have got back to the first ledge, which was doubtful, the dogwood and hickory trees would no longer serve him. He could not swing upward. A shimmer of Raccoon Creek was visible so far below him that he thought he was just about half way between it and the moon.

"Consarn the string and all belonging to it, and the man who put it there!" he muttered.

The ledge upon which he stood was hardly ten feet long and not more than a yard in width. He sat down and cogitated.

"So long as I keep still I'm safe enough; and if I yell long enough, somebody on the road will hear me and help me out of this scrape, but that may not be for two or three days, so few go by this way. When the sun goes down, it's going to be colder than Greenland's icy mountains up here, and if I move around in my sleep, as I'm pretty sure to do if I'm cold, I'll fall far enough to bust a hole in the solid crust of the earth. It behooves me to yell."

Standing up and bracing himself for a strenuous effort, he shouted, at the top of his voice:

"Hello-o-o-o! Hello-o-o-o!"

A feeble echo, that seemed to come up from the meadow, was his only answer.

fetch a rope or get somebody to help me. Hi, there! Quit that! Gol dern ye!"

The freckle-faced, red-headed little imp, laughing with such abandon that his teeth showed, was digging earth from the edge of the cliff with a stick and tumbling it down.

"I'll break your back the first time I catch you!" yelled the angry man down below.

"Oh! You will? Then I'd best break yours first, while I have the chance."

And he recklessly let fall a handful of stones that John had no little difficulty in dodging, and which excited him to such a vocal tempest that the hearing of it filled Danny's cup of happiness to the brim.

"I don't suppose," cried the thoroughly exasperated young man, "that it would be possible to kill you with a bullet, for you were born to be hanged; but I'm a goat if I don't try to wangle you with a snip shot, once for luck, anyway."

Danny laughed more heartily than ever at his fury, and sent down another lot of stones, some of which struck John and bruised him severely. Goaded to seriously attempting what he threatened, Cameron snatched up a flat stone and hastily fixed it in the fork of a small tree rising in front of the ledge upon which he stood, so that a bullet fired against it would ricochet to where Danny was operating. Then he caught up his rifle, cocked it and waited, saying to himself between his set teeth:

"I'll pop him the first time he chirps."

But he waited and listened in vain for the imp's chirp. Danny, inspired by a new idea of mischief, had suddenly descended, camping swiftly up the road, he met his sister Hetty—a tall, graceful, handsome girl—who, with an ax upon her shoulder, was leisurely approaching.

The lad was not at all bad-hearted. He simply wanted fun. Unfortunately, that which commends itself as fun to the mind of a vigorous lively boy is generally characterized as devilry by older persons, and Danny had a widespread reputation as an incorrigible imp. But he really meant no harm. He had a little spite against John Cameron, who had had occasion to switch him a few times—as almost every man in the township had, more or less—but his spite was not enough to prompt a desire to do any real injury. It demanded nothing more than the exquisite fun of searing John and getting him wild with rage. That enjoyment achieved, Danny would cheerfully have gone a long way, if necessary, for help to rescue him. But in the midst of his mischief, he conceived the idea of a sprightly variation upon it; nothing better than putting his sister in his place, and diverting John's wrathful obligations to her innocent head, to the mutual confusion of the pair. So he ran to her, and with a good simulation of excited horror, cried:

"Oh, Hetty! John Cameron has fallen over the edge of the cliff!"

feared were realized. Face downward among the leaves, lay the body of a woman motionless—scant doubt, dead—killed by his bullet. Who she was he could not tell; but that did not matter. His deed was a murder, anyway; and he felt that the best thing he could do would be to let go all holds and drop. Better do that than be hanged.

(To be continued.)

## HIS COURTSHIP WAS BRIEF.

Real-Estate Man Tried Business Methods and Met with a Rebuff.

One day last week a little South Side widow called upon a real-estate man who has charge of some of her property. They engaged in some earnest conversation relating to business matters. The widow's telephone rang the next morning, and the real-estate man said that another call at his office would be necessary. In the course of the second visit a jest or two interrupted the talk on rentals and taxes. The widow has a gay little laugh, and it sounded like music to the weary ears of the man. He asked if he might not bring certain facts which he would glean during the next twenty-four hours to her personally. In other words, he wanted to call, and being a good-natured body, the widow said he might. He went, he saw, and he proposed.

"And this is how he did it," the widow explained afterward. "I certainly am in love with you," he said. "When you came into the office I said to myself, 'My, but she's a fine piece of furniture. She would be an ornament to my house.' Now I am going to go at this matter right, and what I've got to say I'll say quick. You suit me. Your clubs and societies must go, for I must be all I want to marry you to-morrow. Any time after 10 a. m. will suit me. What do you say? Here's my hand. Is it a go?"

The astonished woman replied: "Why, I don't know you."

"Oh, that's all right; don't let a little thing like that stand in the way," the man said. "You just come down to my office to-morrow morning. I'll take you over to the bank, then I'll introduce you to some of my friends. That's no trouble. Will you be there?"

"Why, the very idea!" said she. "No." Then he was very indignant and felt he wasn't appreciated.

"That's like a woman," he growled. "Never knows when she's got a good thing."—Chicago Inter Ocean.

## Satisfied with the Choir.

When Lord Alverstone, the new Lord Chief Justice of England, was Sir Richard Webster, Attorney General and Tory member for the Isle of Wight, he used to sing pretty regularly in the supplied choir of Kensington parish church. One of his constituents, who did not know him by sight, thought he would like to see his member in this uncommon position for a great lawyer. So, when next in London, he attended morning service one Sunday, and asked a verger which of the choir was Sir Richard Webster.

"Well," replied the official, "that's the vicar, those are the curates, and I'm the verger; and so long as the choir gives satisfaction it is not my business to inquire into the antecedents of any of them, man or boy."—London M. A. P.

## Victims of Seasickness Confer.

This is the day of specializing and the last note of specialization in journalism takes the form of a Journal for the Seasick, says a London newspaper. Naturally enough, it was a Parisian who conceived this sprightly idea, which has for its main purpose to discover a specific for seasickness. All the travelers of the universe are invited to write all they know about every symptom, remedy, alleviation or aggravation of seasickness, and the reading thereof should contribute to ease the depression which usually accompanies that terror of the landsman afloat. For the man who discovers the "specific" there is a prize of \$20,000.

## FARMS CAN BE MADE TO PAY.

Life May Be Prolonged and Comfort Secured Though Money Is Lost.

A professor in Cornell University has been discussing in print the question whether a farm can be made to pay. He thinks it can, but with some mental reservations on the subject of what it means to have a farm "pay." He says of one of his early experiences with his farm:

"Half of country life is in the living. It is in the point of view. It is in the way in which we look at things. Thoreau rejoiced when it rained because he knew that his beans were happy. One day my man was agitated because the woodchucks were eating the beans. He would go to town at once and buy a gun. I asked him how many beans the woodchucks would probably destroy. He thought from one-eighth to one-quarter of an acre. Now, one-quarter of an acre of field beans should bring me a net cash return of \$3 or \$4. I told him that if he had a gun he would waste more time killing the woodchucks than the beans would be worth. But the worst part of it would be that he would kill the woodchucks, and at daylight morning after morning I had watched the animals as they stole from the bushes, sniffed the soft morning air and nibbled the crisp young leaves. Many a time I had spent twice \$4 for much less entertainment. My neighbor thought that I ought to cut out the briars in the fence corner. I told him that I liked to see the briars there. He remarked that some folks are fools. I replied that it is fun to be a fool."

## Beautiful Madame Le Vert.

"To no other woman of the South were there accorded so often the tributes of poetic and romantic fancy that clustered around the name of Octavia Walton, or Madame Le Vert as she was known after her marriage," writes William Ferrine, in the Ladies' Home Journal. "As a little child she charmed Lafayette with her brilliant conversation—she spoke the purest of French—and later she was the friend of Clay, Calhoun, Washington Irving, and, in fact, of nearly all the prominent people of her day. Nor was her cleverness unrecognized in Europe when she made the first 'grand tour.' It was there at a State ball in Buckingham Palace, whether she was escorted by Joseph R. Withers, the American minister at London, that she was presented to Queen Victoria. Presentations on the occasion of a State ball were not frequent, and the Southern beauty was delighted over the unexpected compliment. When the dances were over, and the Queen was again seated, the Lord Chamberlain waved his hand and the company moved back, leaving a vacant place around the royal chair. Madame Le Vert, with all eyes upon her, approached and was presented. Victoria advanced and graciously gave greeting, smiling sweetly as the American courtesied low before her, and then passed to the group that encircled the throne. About 2 o'clock in the morning the Queen bade adieu to her guests. Then one of the noblemen escorted Madame Le Vert around the picture and sculpture galleries and presented her to many eminent persons."

Stopped Cattle-Stealing.

For a long time the ranches along the Little Missouri suffered a great deal from the depredations of cattle thieves. Finally the sheriff called the ranch owners in consultation. Among them was Theodore Roosevelt. The sheriff severely denounced the thieves, asking for the opinions of the ranchers, and Mr. Roosevelt boldly replied:

"There ought to be no great difficulty in carrying out your suggestions, Mr. Sheriff, but I have a strong impression that you will not be the one to carry them out, for I am convinced, and I think every other man in this room is, that you have had more to do with the cattle stealing than any other man in the country."

The sheriff resigned his office the next day and left the country. And the cattle stealing stopped.—Ladies Home Journal.

## Coral Reefs in Georgia.

To the minds of most readers the mention of coral reefs calls up a picture of palm-dotted islets girt with white sands in a tropical sea, but geologists find coral reefs in the midst of great continents. These, of course, belong to a past age of the earth's history, but on that very account they are extremely interesting. During the past year several remarkable reefs of fossil coral have been explored near Bainbridge, on the Flint River, in Georgia. In one case a very large portion of the reef exposed consists of coral heads, some of which are more than a foot in diameter. Between twenty-five and thirty species of coral have been recognized in these reefs by T. W. Vaughan. They are ascribed to the tertiary age.

Ancient Cross Found in Canada.

A solid silver cross was recently recognized in Montreal from Michael Cit Goel, an Indian, who had found it while digging in the Lake Lemarganique district. A Jesuit has recognized the cross, which has two bars, as one of the fifty silver crosses presented to the Huron Indians in the early part of the sixteenth century to bribe them to fight for France against the Iroquois Indians, who were then friendly to England.

If artifice can only be known by their schools then the greatest among them cannot be known.

Umbrellas were unknown in this country until a few years before the Revolutionary War.

Mrs. James R. Smith, of Matinsville, Va., is the mother of eighteen children. She lately gave birth to a set of twins.

We admire the childish candor of a St. Louis tobacconist who advertises "Imported Havana cigars of my own manufacture."

State of Ohio, City of Toledo, ss. Frank J. Cheney makes oath that he is the senior partner of the firm of F. J. Cheney & Co., doing business in the city of Toledo, county and state aforesaid, and that said firm will pay the sum of ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS for each and every case of Catarrh that cannot be cured by the use of Hall's Catarrh Cure.

Sworn to before me and subscribed in my presence, this 5th day of December, A. D. 1895.

A. W. GLEASON, Notary Public.

Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally and acts directly on the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. Sent by mail, and is sold by Druggists and Dealers in Medicine.

Wanted Her Palled Through.

The glib falsetto of a North Missouri paper pretends to have heard of the following call for professional services sent by a local resident to a doctor in a neighboring town:

"Dear Doctor—My wife's mother is at death's door. Please come at once and see if you can't pull her through."

From an Author's Notebook.

The following is an extract from an author's diary:

"Rise at five and had a sonnet and a glass of cold water for breakfast. I retired early in the evening, as I feared the neighbors would be annoyed by the rattling of the knives and forks."



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