

Hetty, or The Old Grudge.

By J. H. CONNELLY.

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CHAPTER IV.—(Continued.)

"Why, mother, I haven't been gallivanting."

"Don't tell me! Wasn't John Cameron waiting for you on the hill? Didn't Danny get tired and come away, leaving you two together? Of all the men in the world, it must be John Cameron you go out in the woods to meet! I should think you might have more pride about you—and you a Mulvee! You know very well there never yet was any love lost between the Mulvees and the Camerons, even among our forebears in the old country. The Camerons, indeed! A stuck-up lot, who think themselves better than anybody else, because they have a clan; while, as is well known among wise men, the first Mulvee was a king—and an Irish king; and I'd like to have anybody show me a Cameron that ever was a king. I wonder if you've forgot how John Cameron's father got the best of you in that lawsuit, when we had to pay one hundred dollars for our bull jabbing his horn into old Cameron's mare, and it never did seem sense nor reason nor justice nor goodness to me that we should be held responsible for the natural dispositions of the dumb beasts."

"Don't cook fish till you catch them, mother," answered Hetty, placidly. "You've been swallowing some of Danny's yarns. I should think by this time you'd know better than to believe anything that he says, except that he's hungry or don't want to wash himself."

"Wasn't it true that you and John Cameron had a meetin' up on the 'Back-bone'-to-day? Wasn't he waiting there for you to come along?"

"He was waiting, certainly, but hardly as a matter of choice, I think, or for me," replied the girl, with a little laugh.

And then she went on to narrate the facts of Jack's mishaps and her share in his rescue, without remembering, however, anything about the shooting, all traces of which she had, on her way home, taken care to hide from casual observation. While she was telling the story, her mother and Mary Elder kept up a running commentary of exclamations:

"Law's sakes!"

"Did you ever?"

"If that don't beat all!"

Danny, being hungry, had better use for his mouth than talking with it, but by the knowing grins and leers with which he favored Hetty, he sorely tempted her to box his ears.

The girl's vivid recital of John Cameron's peril quite won her mother's sympathetic interest, for Mrs. Mulvee was at heart a kind, well-meaning woman, wishing ill to none, even to a Cameron, so long as the old faction grudge did not happen to be stirred up. But the story had a keener interest for Mary Elder, who, being a clear-sighted girl, saw what the widow did not perceive, or even suspect.

Soon after supper, Danny—in his customary state of rebellion and angry disgust with the familiar assurance that he would be hard enough to get him up in the morning, even if he went now, was driven off to his bed in the loft.

Then the three women abandoned themselves to the ecstatic delight of an unhampered conversational revel over the subject of dress. Mary Elder was a skillful dressmaker, who made, or, at least, cut and fitted, the best gowns of half the well-to-do women in that part of the country. The whole year round she was in demand, and sure of enthusiastic welcome at any one of fifty farm houses. All the latest fashions known in Pittsburg she could be depended upon for supplying, and she was a treasure-house of knowledge concerning all the new things the most stylish women in the county had or contemplated having. And she was prudent, withal. Every wardrobe or individual garment reported by her was presented in its best light. A thing "turned" or "made over" to look like new, from her point of view, was new. She betrayed no secrets. It was not necessary that she should do so to make her news interesting or establish her position as an authority.

At length, Mrs. Mulvee, having yawned until her jaws cracked, declared she could sit up no longer, and went off to bed. Hetty "covered" the big fire in the grate by piling upon it a large quantity of the finely broken coal called "slack," which melts into a crust during the night, and at the first touch of the matutinal early poker bursts into a mass of roaring flame. Then she and Mary sat down together before the fireplace, in the half-light cast from between the lower bars of the grate, and, with their arms about each other, talked in low tones.

"You told me something you did not tell your mother, don't?" said Mary, drawing her younger friend closer to her.

"Why, no! How so? What?"

"That you were in love with John Cameron?"

"Why, Mary! How do you do talk?"

"Oh, don't try to deny it to me, dear. I'm enough older than you to read the signs. You can't help telling your love or letting it tell itself. Your voice would make it known if you were only talking about the weather; and if you are silent, your happy eyes will laugh it out to the world; and if you shut them tight, the flame in your cheeks will tell the story, as it does now."

"That is only the red firelight."

"God grant the fire that light comes from may never die down in ashes."

"Oh, Mary! How you say that?"

"I have reason to, for I know better than you do yet what love is; how happy or how wretched one may be made by it."

Hetty shuddered, and for a few minutes both were silent, looking at the fire, one seeing in it the past, the other the future.

On the surface of the melting mass of rich bituminous coal near the front—where it was thinnest piled and most readily acted upon by the fierce heat beneath—glossy, jet-black gas bubbles formed continuously, slowly swelling larger

and larger each in its turn suddenly bursting into a bright but generally only momentary blaze. Sometimes the flame would catch the gas rising in slender columns of dark smoke from where the "slack" lay thickest, and for an instant produce an effect like a diminutive display of "heat lightning." Again it would persist for a longer time, as much as a minute or two, in a long, slender, tongue of lissing, golden light. No two bubbles acted exactly alike, either in formation or transformation. And a pretty picture those fitful illuminations made of the homely but cheerful kitchen interior, every detail of which was brought out by them in most vivid relief. The bright tints of tin and copper shone like burnished silver and gold; the old dark oak table took on a mahogany color; the full moon face on the dial of the old-fashioned tall clock assumed an expression of intelligent consciousness; weird shadows danced among strings of brilliant scarlet peppers pendant from the ceiling; and even the blue mandarin, with its blue suite, crossing a blue bridge from a blue forest to a blue pagoda, on the great dishes reposed on the shelves, was brought out clearly in evidence and looked pretty rather than preposterous. But these were not the sights that Hetty and Mary saw. The fire elements' magic wrought other pictures for them. At length the seamstress resumed, speaking in a low, sad voice, hardly louder than a murmur in a minor key:

"You don't know how much older than you I am, dear, both in years and in sorrow. Maybe I do not look my age. They say that those who don't care do not grow old so fast as those who do, and I guess that must be so. I don't care. I have nothing left to care for. But I have had my romance, and buried it before you were put into long frocks. It was in Pittsburg, where I went when I was only a slip of a girl to learn dress-making, and where I lived as you know, a good many years. Well, I was engaged to be married there to a young man named Grant Guthrie. He was a machinist, and I can't tell you how handsome and good he was and how dear to me. And he loved me, too. Yes, I am sure he did—in a man's way, though. He was all I thought of or cared for, and, having him, I would not have been conscious that I desired anything else. But, besides me, he loved glory and his country, and he had ambition to make a name for himself and fortune; so nothing would do for him but he must enlist in the army and go away to Mexico."

She stopped speaking for a few minutes. When she went on again, her voice trembled, and a sudden flare of freighth showed that tears were standing in her eyes. She continued:

"He was going to become a colonel, perhaps a general. Then he would return home a hero, marry me and go to Congress and be a great man. The one thing he never thought of was that he might not live to come back; and he never did. He was shot down by Mexicans in one of the first battles, and only lived long enough to give a comrade his dying message to me; and he is buried far away in a land I shall never see."

Her voice broke, and she wept without an effort at constraint. Hetty embraced her, kissed her brow, patted her shoulder as one soothes a sorrowing child, and murmured, expressively:

"There, there, dear! Don't take on so, don't!—Maybe it is all for the best."

"Yes," sobbed Mary, doubtfully; "that is what the minister says—that 'all is for the best'—but I can hardly make up my mind that he is right."

"And don't you believe there will ever come a time when you will be with him again?"

"Not in this world, anyway; and this is all we really know anything about."

"But I think I should try to hope so, if I were you."

"So I do; so I do. But, oh, it is so hard to believe in the light of another world that sends no ray into the gloom of this! There, there! Don't let us talk any more about my old story. Bury it in your heart, as I do in mine; only, if you ever recall it, let it be to warn you not to hope for too much happiness from love. And now, dear, tell me about yourself. Does John love you?"

"Oh, he has never said a word of love to me. Indeed, we hardly ever spoke before to-day. I suppose that miserable old quarrel between the Camerons and the Mulvees kept him from seeing me."

"But not you from seeing him?"

"No, no! I looked at him sometimes; enough to know him by sight, anyway."

Mary smiled at the naïveté of the admission.

"But, now that he has seen you, how does he look at you? As if he loved you?"

"I hardly know," answered Hetty, with a little embarrassed laugh. "You see, I have no experience to judge by; but I think—yes."

"Then I guess he does. The heart does not need experience to read that look. It is true that some men can lie with their eyes, as others can with their tongues; but I do not think John Cameron is one of that sort. No, he is of good, honest, manly stock. And I can speak impartially about that, for, you know, my family is mixed up with both the Camerons and the Mulvees."

"But more to the Camerons. You would take up for them first."

"Why? You savage little partisan! I believe you are disposed to find fault with me for speaking well of a Cameron!"

"Oh, no, no, indeed! I am for one Cameron against the world."

CHAPTER V.

The tax for keeping the public roads in repair was, in those days, payable either in money or labor, and the latter method was generally preferred in the agricultural districts. This fact was, however, by no means attributable to inability of the farmers to pay cash, or because they had a prejudice against

parting with their silver. "Road-tax Days" had come to be popularly regarded as exciting events. They brought neighbors together on week days, when political discussions, exchanges of rumors supposed to be news, good-natured personal banter and occasional horse trades could be indulged in with propriety. The legal hours of labor were "from sun-up to sun-down."

It was only about a fortnight after John Cameron's adventure on the "Back-bone" that "Road-tax Day" came around in the township of Elder, and called forth, as usual, the entire able-bodied male population. By daybreak, they commenced arriving at the great white oak, on the township line, which was the rendezvous appointed by the roadmaster. A sort of tacit understanding, born of habit, prevailed, as to the implements and tools each man should bring to the work, so that all were amply provided with axes, shovels, pick-axes, cant-hooks, handspikes and hoes. Some came with teams and plows or bob sleds, to run drainage furrows at the sides of the road or drag heavy weights.

The first comers assumed the right to banter later arrivals upon their tardiness, and many a sharply rude jest was good-naturedly taken and replied to by a keen rejoinder, until, finally, the last comer, a young fellow who had but recently been married, was made the subject for so lively a general attack as overwhelmed him and made him sullen for the day, his wit being no match for the assembled township. With few exceptions, the people in that part of Washington County then were of Scotch-Irish extraction, and their humor was of the dry, biting, sly sort peculiar to that breed of jokers; keenly effective as uttered, but almost impossible of even approximately imitated in simple speech. Words were converted into barbed and venomous darts of meaning by an arch look, a suggestive intonation of voice, or, at times, by their covert allusion to some purely personal matter which had become popular knowledge.

Soon all were busy at work. The echoes were stirred by the ringing sounds of ax strokes and the shouts of the drivers to their horses. Young squirrels, high up in the oak and hickory trees, yelped inquiries to their elders as to what they thought of the strange proceedings going on away below; and the wise ones barked back that, strange as it was true, no present harm to the squirrel race was threatened. Inquisitive crows, having thoroughly satisfied themselves, by sharp observation from a safe distance, that there were no guns near at hand, came impudently close, perched over the merry-makers' heads and cawed down their criticisms upon what was going on. The horde of dogs accompanying their masters, having formally opened the ceremonies, in conformity with ancient custom, with a pronounced "free fight," came to an amicable understanding with one another, and, joining forces in pursuit of minks, rabbits and chipmunks, made the forest ring with their hunting choruses.

At noon the men suspended their work, and the dogs momentarily abandoned their bootless hunting. Each man had brought his dinner with him, and in a sunny spot, well sheltered from the wind, they all sat down near together to eat what the contents of the canteens were. The contents of the canteens were of various kinds, but the young men, to kill time during the remaining portion of the dinner hour, entered into a series of competitive contests of strength and skill, "putting" a heavy stone, "tossing the cat," jumping and throwing stones at a mark. In each of these exercises the competitors gradually but surely dropped out until but two were left, John Cameron and Rufus Goldie, between whom there was a strong feeling of rivalry that spurred them to efforts far beyond those of their fellows.

It was not simply personal but rather the antagonism long-existent between those opposing factions, the Camerons and the Mulvees. By insensible degrees, from the time Rufus came to live in this neighborhood, he and John had grown into prominence as the very nearly matched champions of the young men, who, according to traditional duty, were keeping alive the ancient grudge of their ancestors. Yet Rufus was not exactly a Mulvee, but only "related to them." His connection was admittedly no closer than that his mother's first husband, who was a Beasleys—she being a McBride—had a brother married to a girl who half-brother took one of the Baker girls to wife, and everybody knew that the Bakers were related to the Mulvees from "away back," though few could tell exactly how. That was the way in which most of the old women figured out his "distant cousinship," though there were some who claimed to have found connection in another way, through the "Clancys—a claim against which much could have been, and was, said, without reaching any certitude. At all events, he was recognized as a relative and welcomed as an adherent of the Mulvees. But he was a "ne'er-do-well," working pretty faithfully at Sim Mulvee's sawmill or on his farm, but never, somehow, accumulating anything for himself, not even acquiring possession of a saddle horse. Of course, he was expected to have vices, for it was well known that he worked in Pittsburg several months before coming out to Washington County to live, five years ago, and the contamination of city life was beyond question. Every one had to admit, however, that he was a good-looking young fellow, lacking in the open frankness of countenance that characterized John Cameron, but with a fine athletic figure, regular features and a handsome head of straight hair, black as coal.

Each of Goldie's feats in the athletic contest was loudly applauded by the Mulvees, and each time he was defeated by John, the Camerons shouted for joy and triumph over their neighbors. From these indicative manifestations of feeling, progress was easy to the utterance of taunts and insinuating threats.

Several of the older men present, mindful of the promises given two years before by the recognized heads of the factions, when a Square McCalmont brought about a formal agreement of peace between them, interferred to prevent the fight that seemed imminent—and for which abundant precedent had been established on other "Road-tax Days." Their endeavors, at least, caused the hot-headed youngsters to hesitate, and fortunately an incident occurred which diverted

of their attention and averted the threatened danger, by restoring general good humor.

Danny Mulvee and the mail feller suddenly came dashing down the road, riding furiously and howling like Comanches. "The imp," whose saddle was simply a sheepskin, was mounted upon a bright bay two-year-old with a blazing face, that everybody recognized at a glance as the property of minister McLeod. The man rider—a boy only two or three years older than Danny—rode a good horse, with which he had, in a succession of semi-weekly races, repeatedly beaten every animal in the Mulvee stables—or, at least, those to which the imp had access. But Danny, who was not the sort of boy who could be ever so effectually dowered that he would stay downed, had to-day stolen from the pasture the minister's blooded colt, the joy of that good man's heart and the pride of his life, and was determined to "ride him for all there is in him."

(To be continued.)

Ruffs.

The extraordinary fashion of the ruff came into vogue in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The ruff was an enormous fluted collar, which, gradually rising from the front of the shoulders to nearly the height of the head behind, encircled the wearer like a nimbus.

The starching of these ruffs was considered a great art. In 1594, one Mistress Dingham Vander Plasse came to London, and followed the profession of a starcher of ruffs, in which she greatly excelled. She was the first who publicly taught the art, for which her charge was four or five pounds per pupil, and one pound extra for teaching how to make the starch.

The color of the ruffs was not always white, as we should like them were they to be fashionable now, but varied according to taste—white, red, blue, or purple. Stubbs speaks of these great ruffs or neckerchers, made of holland, lawn, cambric, and such cloth, so delicate that the greatest thread in them shall not be so big as the least hair that is.

Ruffs were also made of broad folds of the finest lace, which was sometimes thickly overlaid and clocked with gold devices. Some of these works of art were worth as much as two hundred pounds.

The ruff became unfashionable in consequence of its being worn on the gallows by Mrs. Turner, who was hanged for the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury.

A Human Hiss Cowed the Lion.

At Cape Town a lion tamer was going through a performance in a cage with a full grown lion lately caught. Suddenly it was seen that the brute was putting the trainer through his paces rather than being put through himself. Softly, crouching and creeping, the big cat edged itself between the thoroughly unnerfed man and the door of the den, fixing its victim with two rolling yellow orbs of flaming ferocity and saving the empty air with its tufted tail as it crouched preparatory to springing. Many men among the audience, used to the ways of wild beasts, saw and comprehended, but only one man possessed the knowledge and the presence of mind to avert the apparently inevitable. Pursing up his lips as though he were going to whistle, he emitted a hoarse, low, rasping hiss. The beast heard and understood, for the sound made by the giant constrictor when its huge body is coiled for the throw that never misses, that never relaxes and that no beast of the field is strong enough to withstand. Again and yet again the rancorous sound rasped the stiffness, and the angry brute drew back its head, its great eyes grew small and dull, the hackles rose and stiffened on its back, and it cowered, whining, on the floor of the cage.

They Couched Honestly.

Some years ago a home missionary had been preaching on an island whose principal product is the clam. One day he received an unexpected compliment as to the thoroughness of his spiritual work.

The good man was working in his shirt-sleeves on a new church. A stout sea-captain hailed him:

"Are you the minister here?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I've got ten dollars for you."

"For the church?"

"No, for yourself. I like your way of doing things here. I've come to this island for clams a good many years, and always found them a thousand or fifteen hundred short when I got home. It will pay me to have you keep preaching doctrines which make people count their clams honestly."

Explicit Directions.

Two bicyclists, reaching a strange Long Island town, decided to take the train home. They stopped, says the New York Sun, to ask a colored woman the way to the railroad station.

"We are strangers," they said. "Will you kindly direct us to the station?"

"Certainly, sah," she replied. "Keep agoin' right on till yo' comes to de corner wha de ole postoffice used ter be, den tu'n to yo' left an' yo'll go right to de station."

As they rode off she beamed with pride, with amusement, and although they found the station they have yet to discover the "corner wha de ole post-office used ter be."

Indisputable.

There was a momentary pause in the conversation at the five-o'clock tea.

The voice of a huckster in the street outside broke in upon the silence.

"Ap-puls! Ap-puls!" he yelled. "Aw-Fings! And lemons! Gra-apes! Fresh fruit! Fresh!"

"He seems to be putting on the loud peddle," remarked one of the guests.

Yet they say five-o'clock teas are stupid affairs!

It is far more honorable to black boots than it is to black characters.

"It Seems as Though my Back Would Break."



Is it not true? Women suffer, feel the very life crushed out of them, grow old before their time. Each morning wake up determined to do so much before the day ends, and yet—

Before the morning is very old the dreadful BACKACHE attacks them, the brave spirit sinks back in afflict; no matter how hard they struggle, the "clutch" is upon them and they fall upon the couch crying:

"Why should I suffer so? What can I do?"

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Backache is only a symptom of more fatal trouble—heed its warning in time.

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AN OPEN LETTER TO WOMEN.

"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM:—I have been so delighted with Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound I thought I would write and thank you. My system was entirely run down. I suffered with terrible backache in the small of my back and could hardly stand upright; was more tired in the morning than on retiring at night. I had no appetite. Since taking your Compound I have gained fifteen pounds, and am gaining every week. My appetite has improved, have no backache, and I look better than I ever looked before. I shall recommend it to all my friends, as it certainly is a wonderful medicine."—Mrs. E. F. MORTON, 826 York St., Cincinnati, O.



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\$5000 REWARD Owing to the fact that some skeptical people have from time to time questioned the genuineness of the testimonial letters we are constantly publishing, we have deposited with the National City Bank of Lynn, Mass., \$5,000, which will be paid to any person who can show that the above testimonial is not genuine, or was published before obtaining the writer's special permission.—LYDIA E. PINKHAM MEDICINE CO.

The Doomed Cur. Indignant Ike—"Dat cur o' yourn bit me, lady. Wot ye goin' to do 'bout it?"

Housewife—"Oh, I shan't do anything for him, but just let him die. We were going to poison him anyway."—Chicago News.

The Severest Critics. Penfield—"Is that a good book of his?" Merritt—"It must be. His friends won't believe he wrote it."—Judge.

Schoolboy Wisdom. A question in an examination paper was, "What is the difference between an optimist and a pessimist?" The answer of a sixth form boy was, "An optimist looks after your eyes and a pessimist after your feet."—London News.

Wife's Window's SOOTHING SYRUP for children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic, the colic.

Silencing Complainers. Servant—"Please, mum, the boarders complained that the steak was tough this morning."

Mrs. Simdier—"Too bad. Give them liver tomorrow."

Servant—"And they want maple syrup for their griddle cakes."

Mrs. Simdier—"Omit the griddle cakes."

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