

Hetty, or The Old Grudge.

By J. H. CONNELLY.

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CHAPTER XV.—(Continued.)

The day watchman of the ferry company, smoking his pipe on the bank as John drove down by him, warned him, as he did all who seemed to be strangers.

"The ice isn't as safe as it has been."

"But they are still crossing on it," answered John, argumentatively. "There is a cutter just starting to come across from Pittsburg now."

"Oh, yes. They do. And they will, until somebody breaks through and is drowned. I suppose, as they do every winter. I don't say it isn't safe enough yet, for a single horse and cutter if you are careful; but you'll have to look out you don't get off the curving track that is marked out. There are thin patches inside the bends, both ways, where it wouldn't be safe for a man to go afoot, let alone drive a horse."

"Thank you heartily for the caution," replied the young man, gathering up his reins. "I'll stick to the road and go fast."

"That's the safest way."

And fast John did go. Whether the black horse was inspired by the novelty of trotting upon so level a floor, and feeling the cutter hardly a feather's weight behind him, or whether he was conscious that there was danger in giving the ice time to crack under him, none may say, but whatever the cause, he went across well inside a three-minute gait. He was still slowly mounting the steep, deeply rutted road from the river into the city when a two-horse sleigh, with two men in it, dashed across the bridge over Saw-Mill Run from Temperanceville into South Pittsburg and down the slope to the ferry landing.

There the faithful watchman halted them, to repeat the warning he had given to John Cameron a few minutes before.

"You'd better not go out on the ice with that double-team!" he cried to them.

"Why not?"

"The ice may not hold you. It has been getting weaker for several days past, and heavy teams don't chance it any more."

While he was speaking, the cutter John had remarked starting from Pittsburg reached the bank and came slowly up.

"He seems to have come across all right," argued Simeon Mulvill, who was one of the men in the sleigh, jerking his head toward the man in the cutter.

"Oh, yes. But there's only one of him and one horse."

"How's the ice?" shouted Rufus Goldie to the lonely driver.

"Good enough, I guess," the man replied, with an air of indifference, stopping to let his horse rest a little.

"Did it crack much?"

"Not that I noticed, only about the middle, where I met a cutter going the other way, and the double weight made it roller some."

"Did that cutter have a young man and a girl in it?" demanded Simeon, eagerly.

"Yes."

With an oath and without waiting for any further information or hearing the warning cried after him to "stick to the road," Simeon gave his horses the lash, and they plunged down the bank and out on the ice.

Instead of following the long, curving sweep of the comparatively safe track, he drove in a straight line toward the landing on the farther side of the river. The ferry watchman and the man in the cutter, the latter standing up in his vehicle to see better, watched in silence and with staring eyes the progress of the foolhardy travelers. The sleigh crossed the first thin field of ice and passed the middle of the stream in safety.

"Gosh!" exclaimed the watchman. "They'll do it; but I wouldn't try it for a farm."

At that very moment, when the swiftly flying vehicle was within a hundred yards of the Pittsburg shore, horses, men and sleigh suddenly disappeared from sight. There was no struggle, no reappearance and battling for life, nothing but a wide circular expanse of water, that looked black, and in which big pieces of ice slowly came to the surface and lazily drifted down to the lower side.

CHAPTER XVI.

The lovers knew nothing of the tragic incident that had occurred behind them. They were not even aware that they had been pursued, and were quite happy in the confidence that their troubles were practically at an end—the state of mind that is the rose-garlanded dawn through which Fate delights to usher the wayfarer into the chamber filled with her most abominable surprises. Cloudless skies are those least to be trusted, for skies, like all things else, must change, and to them all change must be for the worse. They smile most when preparing to overwhelm us.

John drove to the old Farmers' Inn, kept by Andrew Robinson—one of the family from which Robinson's Run took its name—put his horse and cutter in charge of a hostler, led Hetty to the sitting-room and sent for the landlady. Andrew was believed to be personally acquainted with every adult in Washington County, and was so universally popular among them that, so far as they were concerned, his was the only house of entertainment in the city. The genial old fellow deserved the regard in which he was held, for he was honest, kind-hearted and generous, worthy traits of character that were shared by his excellent wife, who was quite content to be his equal, without claiming to be his "better" half. That he was fat, somewhat bald, somewhat slow of speech, and, in some inexplicable way, had picked up a strange Quaker habit of speech in no way detracted from his general merit.

Feeling instinctively well assured of his sympathetic interest, John told him all about the elopement, as far as it had gone, and demanded his aid in the further steps necessary to realization of their hopes.

"Why, to be sure, lad. I'll stand by

to you like a brother—as I would have stood by thy old father before thee, who was my good friend, had he called upon me in like case. But there is nothing to be done this day in the way of marrying. It is now sun-down, and the license cannot be taken out before to-morrow morning."

"Is a license needed?"

"For a true, lawful, binding marriage—yes. Those might go to a squire, as, indeed, persons of small consideration in the community do—sometimes from choice and more often by necessity—but such a way of taking a wife is not met for a Cameron; and unseemly haste is not demanded of thee by the circumstances. There has cunningly thrown thy pursuers off thy track and may rest in peace this night. To-morrow thou mayest take in a seemly manner the most serious step to which thy life hath yet brought thee. Bethink thee, lad; the taking of a wife is not a light thing, like the buying of a cow. It is not thy happiness only, but thy honor and that of thy father, and a long line of Cameron's behind him, that will put in the hands of this maid. When thou dost call her 'wife,' she will have one foot upon the step where now stands thy good mother. Doth not this seem then to thee a grave thing, fit to be done solemnly, with due consideration, under all required forms of law and the blessing of God? Come! Look not so glum. Thou knowest I am right. I will call down Betsy, my wife, and put her straightway in charge of the maid, that in no case of misadventure

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to you like a hard thing to say, my child, but that is one of the first things to consider. Is he anything to the widow Mary Cameron, who used to be a McDougal?"

"She is his mother."

"Oh! Then no fear but he is all right for means to keep a wife. Is he wild?"

"John, wild? Oh, no! Not at all. Not so far as I ever heard, anyway."

"Then why is your mother opposed to him?"

"Because he is a Cameron."

"Oh, what a foolish woman! The idea of keeping up that old grudge to such an extent! I thought it had died out years ago. Well, such nonsense does not deserve to be countenanced, my dear child, and it will not be Betsy Robinson's fault if you don't marry the man of your heart to-morrow, no matter what mamma may think about it. But to-night you'll have to be content to bide with me. Nobody can ever say a word against you when it is known that you have been with me, the same as one of my own girls, from the time you came to town with your lover until you stood up before the minister. Young as you are in the ways of the wicked world, my dear, and thinking no evil yourself, you know little of what ill-minded persons might say if they were given the least opportunity for talk, and it is best, believe me, to do as I say."

"Oh, I will, Mrs. Robinson—just whatever you say. You are very kind, I'm sure, and I know you are right. I wouldn't have run away as I did if I had not expected we would be married to-day. That is—I hardly think I would."

"Of course, you wouldn't, or else you would, and it don't really make any difference which, now," laughed Betsy, good-humoredly, "for I'll see that everything is all right. When you are going home, I'll give you a letter to show to your mother, along with your marriage lines, and if she has even a little bit of sense, she'll make no more fuss. And I'm not going to be too hard on you. I've been young myself. After supper, I'll let you and John sit up in this room until ten o'clock. No person is likely to come in, because there are few in the house, the roads being so bad now, except men, and they don't come into the sitting-room much. But you must come

to bed at ten o'clock. Remember that."

"I'll not forget," promised Hetty, laughing and blushing.

John accepted the conditions with sincere thanks, and did not attempt to trespass upon the time-limit that had been set. But he took every minute of his allowance, until the clock was actually striking ten, and in that long, uninterrupted happy talk, the young couple settled thoroughly their future, for at least a very considerable distance ahead—quite forgetting that lovers' plans, like dreams, are most liable to "go by contraries," as the day not yet done might well have illustrated to them. Primarily, they would be married to-morrow in the forenoon and go straight to John's mother's house, where they would live until he had fixed up the old "Duncan homestead"—which was John's by inheritance—for their own home. It would need a new roof, a new spring-house would be required, and a good deal would have to be done to the barn; all of which could be completed by time for starting the garden in the spring. They had settled what stock would have to be bought and had under discussion enlargement of the orchard—when the clock struck ten.

"I declare!" exclaimed Hetty, standing up, "if we haven't sat here all evening talking over things like a couple of old married folks, and not said ten words about love!"

"It don't seem to me as if there was anything else in it at all," answered John, tenderly, rising and putting his big arm about her waist. "Haven't we been busy planning a home for Love himself?"

"But, before I leave you and run up to Mrs. Robinson, you might, just once, tell me how much you love me."

"I couldn't tell you that, Hetty, if I put all night into trying. It will take me the rest of my life to show you how much I love you."

"Darling, you have told me already."

They were standing near the door. He pressed her close to his breast, kissing her passionately, again and again, whispering reluctantly between the kisses:

"Good night, love; good night."

As he relaxed his hold upon her and straightened himself up, she suddenly flung her arm about his neck, drew his head down so that her lips touched one of his ears, and whispered:

"I love you, John."

Then, with a celerity that dazed him, she bit his ear, kissed his lips, sprang out of his arms, darted through the door and vanished. The bite was sharp, and the kiss sweet; and which came first he could not have told for the life of him.

(To be continued.)

Was Not Afraid.

Employer (to clerk who has been sent to collect some money)—Well, what did he say?

Clerk—That he would break every bone in my body and pitch me out of the window if I showed my face there again!

Employer—Did he? Then go back at once and tell him that he is vastly mistaken if he thinks he will intimidate me by his violence.—The King.

The actual weight of a ton of coal as sold by some dealers is a dark secret.

SUPPOSE WE SMILE.

HUMOROUS PARAGRAPHS FROM THE COMIC PAPERS.

Pleasant Incidents Occurring the World Over—Sayings that are Cheerful to Old or Young—Funny Selections that Everybody Will Enjoy.

Citizen—I want a perfectly noiseless lawn mower.

Dealer—You are a very considerate person.

Citizen—Yes, I have to be; if I can't get up early and cut grass without the neighbors hearing me I'll have to lend that lawn mower seven times before I get to use it again myself.—Chicago Record-Herald.

Took Them with Him.

Friend—How much money did your defaulting cashier get away with?

Bank Manager—Can't say.

Friend (in astonishment)—What! Haven't you had his books examined yet?

Bank Manager—No; he hasn't returned them yet.—Puck.

Miss Fortune's Cart.

There was a little girl And she had a little curl Right in the center of her forehead; And when it was curled it was very, very good.

And when it was straight it was horrid.

His Grounds.

"And on what ground do you base your application for divorce?" asked the lawyer of his new client.

"Exertion, sah."

"You mean desertion, I suppose. Your wife has left you, doubtless."

"No, sah, she hasn't left me, sah."

"Then you can't ask for a divorce on the ground of desertion."

"I said exertion, sah. Dat's de ground perzackly. She done exert herself continually to make me mizzable, sah. Put it on de ground ob exertion, sah."

He Explains.

She—Why don't you get a wife? Are you waiting to get rich before you marry?

He—Oh, no! I'm waiting to get rich when I marry.—Puck.

The Question Nowadays.

Friend—I understand your receiving teller has skipped out?

Bank President (sadly)—That's what!

Friend—Did he leave much?—Puck.

There Are Many Such.

Mrs. Gabbleton (musingly)—After all, one half of the world does not know how the other half lives.

Mrs. Flint (grimly)—Never mind! That is not your fault, dear!—Puck.

Professional Criticism.

First Arctic Explorer—Don't you think Polehammer is getting a big head?

Second Arctic Explorer—Decidedly. You'd think he was the only man who didn't reach the pole!—Puck.

Bringing It Back.

Clubberly—Old man, do you ever have any doubts about your love for her?

Castleton—Oh, yes; but when it comes on I get down a stack of unpaid bills and look them over.—Life.

Triumphant Flattery.

"So Dick and Daisy have made up? By George! After the way she laid him out I never expected it. How did he pacify her?"

"He told her that he'd rather quarrel with her than kiss any other girl."—Puck.

Hadn't Reported Yet.

"You say he died a soldier's death. What was the fatal wound?"

"It isn't known. The investigating Committee haven't yet decided whether it was due to the tobacco or to hot irons."—Philadelphia Record.

For Fun.

Manhattan—I wonder why it is that so many society women go on the stage.

Broadway—Perhaps it is because they are crowded out by the actresses that marry into society.—Life.

Anxious to Please.

"Who was that woman?" asked the editor.

"The President of the Woman's Rights Club," replied his assistant.

"She was making a kick because we referred to her as a 'strong-minded person.'"

"All right. Be careful to call her a 'weak-minded person' in the future."—Philadelphia Press.

Just What She Needed.

Tess—Della Mode wants me to try her dressmaker. I wonder if she'd suit me?

Jess—Oh, yes, indeed; she's just the one for you.

Tess—Really?

Jess—Yes, she's a wonder. Why, she can make the plainest kind of people look nice.—Philadelphia Press.

Evils of Politics.

Blithers—Our old friend, Col. Beetbad, is another instance of the strenuous life of politics.

Blithers—How's that?

Blithers—He sued an opposition party paper for printing a caricature of him, and the jury decided that the picture flattered the colonel.—Ohio State Journal.

Bound to Be Heard.

Jester—I understand our pastor is going to preach through a megaphone hereafter.

Junson—Why is that?

Jester—Why the sleeping members of the congregation snore so loudly that the others can't hear.—Ohio State Journal.

A Sporting Note.

First Bear—I saw a man shot a minute ago.

Second Bear—What for?

First Bear—For impersonating me, I think.—Puck.

Ready to Use.

Wife—Why do you buy such a lot of stamps at once?

Husband—So there'll be a few that won't get stuck together.—New York Weekly.

Sign of Spring.

"Have you heard a robin yet?"

"No, but I've seen a woman with her head tied up in a towel beating a carpet in the back yard."—Chicago Record.

Death Was Preferable.

"You ought to feel very grateful to Dr. Slo