

AS IT USED TO BE.

When planning on a heart-dress for party and ball and show... The old folks light the best to be... They don't care for the best to be dead.

HESTER'S CHARGE.

BY MARION COTTELL.

"I wish," said Hester Conway, with a sigh, "that there were either more romances in my life, or more in yours."

"There's romance enough in your duty," said Hester, "and in mine, too. I should think, 'rotted Lottie, artfully adjusting her 'frizzes'."

"What is the matter?" cried Hester, catching her up. "You don't want to have me, you mourned the afflicted infant. 'No, you don't! You don't want me, and Mr. Peters said I was a 'peckable child.'"

"What is she talking about? I don't understand her," said Lottie. "No, you don't, you don't understand me!" cried Lottie, regarding this as a fresh grievance.

"By this time Hester had taken her, and was kissing and comforting her. "Come up stairs with Cousin Hester, Tude dear! Yes, she does want to have you—there!" And lifting the child in her strong arms, Hester carried her away.

"Tude was Hester's charge, her little bit of romance duty, as Lottie thought. She was the orphan child of a cousin who had been Hester's chief friend, near and dear as a sister, and her most faithful guide and counselor."

"Hester Conway was a noble looking woman—noble in form and feature, like one of Raphael's Madonnas. Her heavy dark hair rippled black plainly and looked in its right place, a bang would have destroyed her dignity of outline. There are a few women—rare—a few—who require no accessories of this kind. Lottie was not one of them, though she was a small, pretty, regular-featured blonde."

Poor Hester in her ill-natured mood, might have added, "Other people have little Tude to take care of, and she has Stanfield!" It was trying. Hester had never been so cross or so weak-minded before in her life, and she knew it. Figuratively, she shook herself as she shook the pillows, and tried to smooth her mind as she smoothed the counterpane.

Stanley was a friend of the family. He could come in and go out without interrupting the work, and felt quite at home, even with Hester, whom he stood somewhat in awe. Yet Hester liked him. He was so big and kind, so clever and so unselfishly courteous, so very much the reverse of foppish. She had had many acquaintances and some lovers, yet she had never known a man before whom she could call her friend, she had done good to many young men, yet she had never before met one who could do her good. But she felt that Stanley was as simple and great in mind and heart as in body. There was something restful about him, to an over-worked woman man in need of mental and spiritual refreshment.

With all his culture and worldly experience, he was, as Mrs. Conway laughingly said, "nothing but a great overgrown child." He was a little afraid of Hester, as if, in truth, that young lady had a perverse habit of appearing most icy toward the ice-cream. But most cruel of all was the chance that continually kept her away from him. There was always some work to be done upstairs, which Hester seemed to neglect for any other work, and she was less conscientious now, since Tude came, the child was forever required to be dressed, or put to sleep, exactly at the times of Stanley's visits.

"This morning little Tude was in an angelic mood," she said, sweetly, "I want to go see Tanfee; come on!" "Can't, Tude, I must finish this room." "Oh, come on! Want to see Cousin Lottie?" "Wait a while, Tude, Cousin Etta can't go now."

"Cousin Etta," asked Tude, solemnly, "do you like Tanfee?" "No," exclaimed horrified Hester, "incidentally." "I'm that's her!" reflected the small catchet. "The Tude," said Hester, a few moments later, "Now I'm ready, we'll go down stairs."

And down they went. Lottie was dreading the parlor now, talking sweetly to Stanley all the while, and they were so merry and friendly that Hester was sorry she had interrupted them. She felt that Lottie tacitly encouraged her to do so, and she was glad to see that the shallow little blonde made the best of her own opportunities. Then she looked at herself for her unkind thoughts, and in the midst of the conflict, groaned. "Stanfield, how the little maiden!" cried Stanley, looking at her. "She is very good to see me, isn't she?"

"Yes," replied Tude, in innocent accents, "I like you, Cousin Etta doesn't, she said so. Ain't she mean?" "There was a horrid plan. Hester's cheeks flamed, but she would not conceal her indignation. She looked, equally flushed, gently put down the child, and turning round with his usual bright, ready smile, talked easily of something else. His tact and kindness poor Hester took for indifference."

"Little Tude," said she, that night, very softly, as she laid her cheek against the child's face, "you were cruel—oh, so cruel, to me today, but you didn't mean it. Tude, you broke my heart!" "Tude was half asleep, and didn't understand it, but she caught the last words and murmured." "No, I didn't, I didn't break a bit, Cousin Etta." And she dozed off.

"Tanfee, who has that room?" "She looked at a little rose bush in a flower-pot, which Stanley had himself given Hester a year ago, and which he had seen wonderfully delighted to find in her room. He brought it to the child." "Gimme that rose, I want to kiss it. Cousin Etta kissed it one time, 'n' I want to." "She's delicious," said Mrs. Conway. "Of course she is," cried Hester, excitedly. "Her heart. It ain't broke—no, no, Cousin Etta."

"And Tude waited patiently. That child, sick or well, certainly had a wonderful memory." "What queer things have you been saying to her, Hester?" said Mrs. Conway. "She said that I broke her heart, and I didn't!" shrieked Tude. "Light broke in upon Stanley's mind. After he had quieted the child, he kissed her, and said—"

"Good-by, you blessed darling." There was a certain little process of resurrection that went on after that. He began to put on a look of great sympathy, and his petting, and repeated to himself many times, with fierce determination: "A man that has a tongue, is a man who has a heart." "But, alas! the ice-cream seemed to have turned to ice in very dead. A colder, haughtier, more unapproachable being than Hester became, after Tude's revelations, would be difficult to find. Stanley, convicted of a most humiliating mistake, lost every particle of hope, and was almost determined to be patient and courageous."

After a while, matters became very much worse. Tude, who had been improving, took cold in some mysterious way, had a relapse, and was in real danger. The trouble and hurry and toil re-commenced. Stanley was convinced that Hester would often sail down the stairs, with a leucisid smile, but it must be confessed, a beating heart, just as the front door closed behind him. It was hard; for every cool, haughty Hester had under a big, kindly, foolish woman's heart, a big, kindly, foolish woman's heart. She did want—friendship! Of course she did! Worst of all, that great sensitive, ridiculous man imagined that she avoided him purposely, and cherished the delusion that she couldn't endure him.

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A New and Cheap Diet.

DERIVE the recent famine in China the resources of the country have been strained to the utmost to supply the millions of mouths that have cried aloud for food, and to keep alive the millions of human beings that had strength neither to reap nor to sow.

In addition to the "starving for life" in the bread that forms "the staff of life" in the East, many curious substances have been pressed into service as human food, and among these none has performed a more useful part than seaweed. Certain kinds of marine algae such as the carrageen, or Iceland moss, have been used to a limited extent for dietary purposes of the poor, but universal in China, however, is the use of a choice and afterwards from necessity, a seaweed diet. It is intended to make it, among rich as well as poor, the staple of the day. The weeds are first of all "vegetable," while in the Malay Archipelago it is considered a delicacy. The seaweed diet is considered a delicacy. The seaweed diet is considered a delicacy.

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