

THE PRODIGAL

BY VIRGINIA TYLER HUDSON.

The Music Room of Alice's Longing Girl Dreams.



By Virginia Tyler Hudson.
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"A ND now, welcome, dear to our home! With it, you must accept me, it's a true—but remember, it's New York! And think how long you've wanted to live in New York!"

As she spoke, Richard Harvey unlocked the door of his apartment. He stood aside and curtained grandly as his wife entered the hallway.

"New York!" breathed Alice in rhapsody, clasping and unclasping her hands in a nervous way she had. She ran childishly from room to room, delighted anew with every fresh evidence of the thoughtfulness of Richard, who had planned and prepared it for her.

"Why, it's all wonderful, beautiful, dearest!" she exclaimed. She stopped to throw her arms around the neck of her husband, and tipped up to kiss him on the cheek. "You're too good to me, who whistled the tremble in her voice showing how near were the tears. 'Too good!' Ah, to think you have brought me away from it all—the children, their everlasting worn-out stockings and the buttons, and the old cracked piano—to this!" she swept her arms to include the beautiful home she saw in the city. "To this—and to New York! Ah, Richard!"

The man smiled tenderly into the florid face upturned to his own.

"But you haven't seen the music room yet, madame," he retorted gayly, and threw open another door.

There it was! The music room of Alice's longing girl dreams. A soft light filtered through a stained-glass window upon the gleaming surface of a small grand piano. A wide bench stood in front of it. Even the pink roses in their cut-glass bowl, of which she had so often talked to Richard as an inevitable part of the picture, were not missing; but he had placed candelabra with ruddy-tinted shades upon a table to include the beautiful home she saw in the city. "To this—and to New York! Ah, Richard!"

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Alice dropped on the piano bench. "Oh, Richard! Richard! Then you do believe in me! You do! And you'll help me—help me to be! It does look selfish of me, after all this, does it not? But, dear, I must—she flung herself in his arms, passionately, pleading—she went on: "And you—you're too good to me—you're the epitome of all goodness and honor!"

Richard smiled vaguely. He had heard himself spoken of differently in a varied career. She continued: "After all, though, if I'm a success, Richard, dear, it will be your success, too, in a way. If I thought I could never be a great singer—a really great one—I'd rather die than go on trying. You've been my inspiration—would it seem too mean if I said my opportunity? You've encouraged me so! Ah, help me! Help me!"

Richard bent solemnly slowly down and kissed her fair hair.

"I will try to be a good wife to you, Richard," Alice went on. "I'll try to deserve it all—but how better can I do it than by making you proud of me? I can do it. I'm not domestic, and I don't do cooking and scrubbing and housekeeping. I'm so glad we can have a housekeeper. To be compelled to do all those things at home came near making me even hate the babies who were responsible—and there was so much of it to do—until you came, dear. New York and fame were far, far better—those days."

Richard was solemn. He looked at his pretty young wife, sitting before the open piano, running her fingers lightly over its keys. The spell of the person in the dimly lighted church through which he had just gone was strong upon him. He had hoped that it would so affect the little western girl who had come to him that it might awaken the womanly instinct of which he so firmly believed her to be possessed, but which she had never yet shown him. He had hoped that she might forget her yearning for the "home" of those days.

"Alice," he said, "do you love me?"

The solemnity of his voice startled her. It had not the ring of a lover's belief, but the ring of a lover's doubt.

"Of course I do—didn't I marry you?" she answered him.

"Why do you ask it?"

"I might turn the question on you, Mr. Richard Harvey. Why did you?"

"You, who know the world so well—who believe in the 'new'—and who are so young, so provincial—with an immense amount of domestic knowledge acquired under protest—and you didn't believe in me?"

"You're right," he said, slowly. "I

have been about all over the world. I might say I have been surprised with all it has to offer. But I had to find a little western town where you were, beloved, before I found how near heaven our little terrestrial planet is."

The hurt look in his eyes made her self-reproachful. She flung herself on her knees beside him.

"Richard, dear, I didn't mean it!" she gently—she smiled up at him through her tears. "Have you any buttons to sew on?" she asked. Richard drew her close to him as he spoke.

"I married you, sweetheart, because I loved you. I love you with a love that's too sacred a thing for me even to talk about. I wanted you for my wife. Do you know what I mean, sweetheart?"

"Have you forgotten what the preacher told the tremolo tenor said only an hour ago?"

Richard sighed. He didn't admit to himself the disappointment he felt. He was home-hungry. The world's buffeting had made him long for a niche—his wife could have his own possessions—his wife—his home—perhaps his family. In Alice Fields he believed he had found his ideal. Truthfully, it didn't make much difference to him whether she was or not. He knew he loved her—loved her with all the spirit of a strong man whom the world could never defeat. He had told her so, and she had come to him. He shut his eyes tightly to the fact that Richard had written more about coming to New York than about coming to him. She owned a voice of rare beauty, ranging from a mezzo to a soprano. He had found her through its medium. It had been fame alone for which she had passionately longed. Richard was conscious of his disappointment at her lack of emotion at the time which had been so sacred to him. He would give her time.

"There was another reason I married you," he stammered on. "Not the least reason. I believed I could give my little girl freedom from her life in the 'new'—and with all things. I'll help you, sweetheart."

"Ah, Richard! My Richard!" she cried again happily. "I'll succeed, too! I tell you I will! I'm going to be great—great!"

Richard could not complain of emotion now. He bowed her head in his arms, and his body shook with sob. Then she looked up.

"We'll forget the buttons, won't we, Richard? I'll sing for you. Won't that do?" she asked.

The man listened while her voice thrilled out. It was an old favorite of his she had chosen. He listened as if enchanted.

"Oh, the heart that has truly loved never forgets," he murmured. "But as fondly loves on to the close; when he sets, the same face she turned when he rose."

He got up and went out of the room. She sang on.

Richard Harvey walked mechanically through the rooms he had prepared for his wife's homecoming. He smiled over the work basket drawn up by the side of a low rocker; he laughed aloud because it was filled with violets. An incongruous little flowered kimono hanging in her room, he passed by as if ashamed; she had not noticed the gift in her hurried birdlike flight. He paused a moment in a room off their own bedroom—a cosy chamber, but little furnished.

"We have no need for it now," he had told himself. "Perhaps—later on—"

He walked stolidly into the bathroom and he had brought home to her his wedding day. It was indeed a different Richard on the promise of his wife's voice. Hour after hour she practiced.

"You know you said you'd help me, Richard," he said to him one day when he begged her to go for a drive through the park with him. Spring was in the air, and the violets were in bloom. He had never before known a woman who could resist the combination of violets and spring. "I must practice each afternoon. It is ideal for Nevil's 'Spring Song.'"

"One spring morning, bright and fresh, the prodigal, by taking the prodigal out for a drive. The prodigal, a ferocious young bull terrier, had been vested in the seniors, and most easily Richard, lying at his feet in the loneliness of self-government.

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"Every undergraduate would be required to actually live in his 'quad,' and the number of students in each 'quad' made up as nearly as might be of equal numbers of seniors, juniors, sophomores and freshmen; because it is clear to every one that the life of the university can be best regulated and developed only when the under-classes are in constant association with upper-classes under such terms as to be formed and guided by them. The self-government of each group would naturally be vested in the seniors, and most easily in the juniors, who were members of the 'quad.'"

The object would be to place unmarked members of the faculty in residence in 'quads.' In order to bring them in close, habitual, natural association with the students, and to give them a real social life of the place into one another; to associate the four classes in a genuinely organic manner, and make the university a real social body, to the exclusion of cliques and separate class social organizations, and to give to the university the kind of common consciousness which apparently comes from the closer sort of social contact, to be held only outside the classroom, and most easily to be got about a common table, and in the contacts of common life.

Giving his reasons for being opposed to the present club life, Dr. Wilson says: "The plan is, briefly, to draw the undergraduates together into residential 'quads,' in which they shall reside as well as eat together, and in which they shall, under the presidency of a resident member of the faculty, regulate their own corporate life by some simple

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CASTE MUST GO FROM COLLEGE LIFE—Continued from First Page This Section

system, and the report has been adopted without reservation.

Now, it but remains for the precursors and students to get together when the next term convenes and decide how the provisions of the report can be carried out.

Dr. Wilson believes that the great problem of reorganization should be immediately solved in order that the health and progress of Princeton as a teaching body and a social body may be secured.

He admits that the move he proposes is radical, yet takes an optimistic view of the outcome. Indeed, he believes that the recent steps toward democracy at Princeton have put the whole university in a wholesome humor of reform.

This reform, he believes, is in the way of eliminating the spirit of grind and pedantry in the college. Instead of the proper attitude at most colleges of students maintained at the feet of great scholars and paragon on high, Dr. Wilson has induced the young Princeton men to read and think for themselves, with perceptions to guide, not direct them to study with them, rather than rule over them.

And now, with the abolishing of the professor, he has set the task of abolishing it between elder brother and younger brother of the student body.

"Princeton," Dr. Wilson told the trustees, "had become so far as the undergraduates were concerned, merely a delightful place of residence, where young men for the most part happily occupied with other things, were made to perform certain academic tasks."

He declared that the life and consciousness of the students were mainly academic and detached from the interests which in theory take young people to college.

Yes, and even stronger than this. Witness:

"For a great majority of them residence here meant a happy life of camaraderie and sport interrupted by the grind of perfunctory lessons and examinations, to which they attended, rather than because they were seriously engaged in getting the training to fit them for the world which they must face when their happy freedom was over."

Now, isn't that a pretty plain way for a college to live? It is a pretty plain way, really haven't been going to college to learn?

But they're going to learn at Princeton if Dr. Wilson has his way.

It might look as though Dr. Wilson were opposed to recreation at college. This isn't so. He is one of the most enthusiastic advocates of sports, and he says, "leisure and study ought not to be separated in all-right compartments. Leisure ought to be enriched and diversified by the interests which study creates."

In the midst of play there ought to be a constant consciousness of what the place means and must be made to stand for—a place of thoughtful, many disciplines, men, disciples of university ideals."

One of the strongest statements made in the report to the board of trustees was this: "In brief, the social ambitions created by the system of club life are too strong for individual honor."

This was used in reference to the system of proselyting members of the clubs, and sophomores classes into the clubs. "Above is a treaty understanding at Princeton that no club shall membership among the lower classes; there is also an agreement between the lower classes to not seek such honor. And yet so strong is the rivalry between the clubs and the desire to

get as members the picked men of the under classes after promotion that all sorts of deals are resorted to. The ramifications of the club system extend to the lower strata, despite the clubs' pretention to oppose such a system.

President Wilson does not propose to stop the trustees in another address to stop with the social reorganization of the university. His greater purpose for the revitalization of the university as an academic body, whose objects are not primarily social, is to eliminate that do not tend to the main end in view.

"I have long foreseen," he said, "the necessity of thus drawing the undergraduates together in genuinely residential groups, in direct association with members of the faculty, as an indispensable accompaniment and complement of the preceptorial system."

"The clubs simply stand in the way of this, and are doing nothing but to the detriment of the university."

The remedy which President Wilson proposes is to substitute for the club life, as well as for the existing dormitory life—which he declares is far from effective in fostering a good college spirit—system of what he would call "quads," this word being an abbreviation of quadrangle.

In brief, the idea is to have all students live in a quadrangle building very much like a dormitory, and fitted with dining room, reception room, game room, and in fact, almost all the facilities that might be found at the club.

This is a description of the "quad" plan prepared by Dr. Wilson himself: "The plan is, briefly, to draw the undergraduates together into residential 'quads,' in which they shall reside as well as eat together, and in which they shall, under the presidency of a resident member of the faculty, regulate their own corporate life by some simple

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