

Prologue to Love

By
MARTHA OSTENSO

© MARTHA OSTENSO—WNU SERVICE

THE STORY THUS FAR

Lovely, independent Autumn Dean, returning home to British Columbia from abroad without her father's knowledge, stops at the home of Hector Cardigan, an old family friend. He tells her that she should not have come home, that things have changed. Arriving home at the "Castle of the Norms," she is greeted lovingly by her father, Jarvis Dean, who gives her to understand that she is welcome—for a short visit. Her mother, former belle named Millicent Odell, has been dead for years. Autumn cannot understand her father's attitude, though she gives him to understand that she is home for good. Her father gives a welcoming dance at the castle. Autumn meets Florian Parr, dashing, well-educated young man of the countryside. Late in the evening Autumn leaves the dance, rides horseback to the neighboring ranch where she meets Bruce Landor, friend and champion of her childhood days. He takes her to see his mother, an invalid. His father is dead, thought to have killed himself. As soon as his mother sees Autumn she commands Bruce to take her away, that death follows in the wake of the Odells. Autumn is both saddened and perplexed. Bruce, apologetic, can offer no reason for his mother's attitude. Autumn calls again on Hector Cardigan—this time to find out the reason for Mrs. Landor's outburst. From his conversation she inferred that Geoffrey Landor killed himself because he loved Millicent Dean, her mother. Meanwhile, Bruce Landor rides to the spot where his father's body was found years before. There he meets Autumn. Autumn and he talk of their families. They agree that her mother and his father loved each other deeply—and that their love is the cause of present antagonism. Florian Parr, at the castle for dinner, proposes to Autumn. She refuses him. The next day Autumn meets Bruce in a herder's cabin. There they declare their love for each other, and determine to stand together against everyone who might come between them. Autumn tells her father that she is going to marry Bruce. She is aghast to see his reaction, and is agonized to hear him whisper that Geoffrey Landor did not take his own life. He tells her the story. Millicent, his wife, and Geoffrey Landor had fallen in love with each other.

CHAPTER V—Continued

Autumn heard Jarvis' hands moving slowly up and down the arms of the chair.

"I must have gone a little mad then," he went on after a pause. "There was no use in my trying to hold her. I knew that. She was gone already, you see. But I couldn't let her go. I hoped that I might do something to win her back, perhaps. The weeks went by, but I soon knew it was hopeless. She was kindness itself to me, but she would forget sometimes and go about the house like one in a dream. She would sit with me throughout a whole evening and never speak a word. I became bold one day and went over to see Jane Landor when Geoffrey was in town. I asked her if she knew what was going on between Millicent and her husband. She denied that it was so, but I knew she was fully aware of it. She was too proud to admit it. I was a little unreasonable, I guess. I told her what I thought of a woman who could not keep her husband to herself. She told me to go home and look after my wife. That was the last time I spoke to Jane Landor, except for politeness when we met in public."

His voice had become very low now, but strangely controlled. "Spring came, and I knew Millicent and Geoffrey were having rendezvous, but there was not a breath of scandal. I said nothing at first. I said nothing until I could stand it no longer. Then I—I gave orders. I made Millicent a prisoner in her own house. I forbade her going anywhere beyond the grounds unless I went with her. Perhaps I was foolish in that. At any rate, I kept them apart. Millicent didn't protest. If this had been one of her silly flirtations, you see, she would have died rather than give in to me. But it wasn't. This was real to her—and she didn't utter a word of protest. She obeyed me to the letter. Presently I heard that Geoffrey was drinking heavily and neglecting his work. The gossip of that was on every tongue. When he was found—shot to death by his own gun—it was easy enough to suppose that it was either suicide—or accident."

Autumn gathered her hands together tightly about her knees. "I had gone up north to look at some wolf traps I had set the day before. I had told no one I was going there, for I wished to be alone in the woods and think over my problem. It was early summer and I went on foot. I carried a fowling-piece with me in the hope that I might raise a partridge along the way. Millicent was very fond of the breast of partridge. It was still early afternoon when I went out—along the way we go to Absalom's camp—but down the gully you wanted to follow that morning after you came home. At the farther end of the birches I flushed a couple of partridges and brought them down. I went on and inspected the traps I had set. I found them empty and returned the same way I had come. As I entered the birches, I came upon a brood of partridge chicks that kept running before me and hiding under leaves and keeping the woods alive with their ceaseless chirping. I realized then that they were the brood that belonged to the brace of birds I had bagged only an hour before. I was sorry for them, I remember, even then."

He paused for a long time, and a sigh of unutterable weariness seemed to pass all through his body. Autumn turned slightly and clung to his knees.

"It was there that Geoffrey Landor rode down upon me," Jarvis said at last. "He had evidently been drinking. I don't know what it was that brought him down there just then. He couldn't have known that I was there. No one knew. He seemed surprised at first, and looked at me as if he did not know me. Then he got down from his horse and came to where I was standing. He confronted me with an insolence that put me beside myself. I shall hear that taunting laugh of his to my dying day—and into eternity. I tried to quiet him, knowing that he had been drinking, but it only angered him the more. When I turned to go away from him, he stepped suddenly in front of me and whipped out his revolver. He told me he could not go on living without Milli-

cent—that it had to be either him or me. It took me a minute or so to understand what he meant. He was actually challenging me to a duel. He looked magnificent as a god as he stood there instructing me with cool arrogance what I must do. Even then I did not believe that he meant to go through with it. To me it seemed an insane thing, even in those days. Then he called me something—it was an epithet that not only involved my own honor but Millicent's as well—and I struck him. I struck him with all my might. I wanted to kill him. He lifted his hand quickly—the one with the revolver in it—probably to guard against the blow—perhaps to kill me. I do not know what was in his mind. I saw him fall face downwards—and I heard his gun explode at the same instant—a sort of muffled sound. I watched him then, and waited for him to get up. But he didn't rise. I knelt and turned him over. Geoffrey Landor was dead."

Autumn's burning eyes were buried against his knees, but no tears came. The image behind her lids seemed to have seared away all emotion.

"What I did immediately after that I do not know," Jarvis continued. "My memory there is a blank. I think I dragged his body to the water to revive him if possible. When I saw he was past all help, I left him in the shallow water, face downstream at the sound of the shot. I looked around me and wondered what I should do. And in the stillness came only the chirping of the partridge chicks. I turned and ran out of the gully. When I reached the open, on the top of the hill there where the trail turns eastward to the sheep camp, I sat down and thought of what I must do. I became very calm. I soon knew there was but one thing I could do. If I had gone to the authorities and told my story—just as it all had come about—I would probably not have been believed. I wouldn't have minded that, although life meant much more to me then than it does now. What I did not want was that the whole story involving Millicent should be brought to light. So far as anyone knew, Millicent and I were as happy together as we had always been. For her sake as much as for my own, I think, I resolved to say nothing about it to anyone. I came back home. Late that night, I saddled my horse and left word that I was riding down to Absalom's camp. Something drew me back to the spot where I had last seen Geoffrey alive. I think I expected to find him alive still. I don't know. I rode as far as the entrance to the gully and halted to listen for some sound that might reassure me. As I stood and listened, I heard nothing but the mad chirping of the partridge chicks. I have never gone back there since. The next day, one of his own men found Geoffrey's body where I had left it. I went to Millicent that night and told her that I was sorry. She had been weeping. I told her exactly what had happened. She did not look at me. She said, 'Your secret is safe with me, Jarvis.' Before the end of the summer she died of a fever."

His voice was emotionless now as the stark tale came to an end. He leaned forward slightly and clasped his hands. "Now you know why I did not want you to come back here," he said simply. "I did not want you to come back—to this."

"You have nothing to fear, Da," Autumn murmured.

"Nothing to fear? God in heaven! Geoffrey Landor destroyed my life. It was not enough for him that he robbed me of my wife's love. He laid upon me the responsibility of his own death. I have never recovered from that, Autumn. I have borne it all these years in secret. And now you tell me you want to marry the son of the man. It will kill me."

As though she were suddenly invested with a strength not her own, Autumn got to her feet and smiled down at Jarvis as she extended her hands.

"Come, Da," she said softly, "it must be as though it has never happened. We shall never speak of it again."

He looked up at her and smiled in whimsical sadness. "My poor little Autumn," he said, and the

hand that had lain inert on the arm of the chair brushed across the stricken eyes, "my poor little Autumn—there seems no end."

She lifted her head proudly. "You are wrong," she said. "There is an end—even to this." Her breath caught her, in spite of herself, like a barb in the throat. "I must have been mad tonight—but I didn't know."

She threw her arms fiercely about him, all the pride and loyalty of her blood in the embrace. He patted her hand, and his lips moved without a sound.

Presently they got up together and walked in silence out of the room, Autumn's arm about her father, his hand leaning heavily on her shoulder.

CHAPTER VI

Throughout the interminable night Autumn knelt at her window in the darkness, watching the stars wheel across the sensuous velvet of a sky lately cleared of rain, until at last the blood red sail of a waning moon stood in the west, and she knew it was only a brief hour or so before dawn. Cramped with chill, she crept back into bed. In the fitful sleep that came to her, she dreamt that Bruce Landor was dead, and that somehow she had caused his death. She awoke to a thin, gray daylight, to find that her face was wet with



His voice was emotionless now as the stark tale came to an end.

tears. In the reality of her dream, she turned over on her pillow and gave herself up to despondent weeping.

Later at their early breakfast table, which Hannah had made lovely with a centerpiece of daisies and cowslips on a yellow linen cloth, Autumn met her father with a mood as fresh and bright as Hannah's flowers. She had dressed in a skirt and jacket of bright blue wool, with a gray ruffled blouse of sheer batiste, a costume which had once before drawn from Jarvis one of his rare expressions of pleasure.

"I'm all ready to leave for Kelowna, Da," she said. "I do wish you were going along. It would do you heaps of good."

He looked at her with surprise. "I didn't think you were going till this afternoon," he said.

"I've changed my mind," she replied.

Hannah brought in the steaming cereal. As the old woman busied herself about the table, Autumn stole a glance at her father. It was apparent that he had had a sleepless night. Haggard lines underscored his eyes, and his stern mouth was set in a straight line of pain. But his manner betrayed nothing of what he had suffered during the night.

He glanced up with a heavy frown at Hannah.

"Did you remember to salt the oatmeal this morning?" he asked with elaborate severity.

Hannah glanced at him disdainfully. "Salt causes hardening of the arteries," she retorted.

"There's plenty in yon porridge for you, sir."

Autumn laughed, and Jarvis pretended to heave a deep, patient sigh. The meal progressed with small talk of things about the ranch, of the children of Tom Willmar, the foreman, of the likelihood of a good fruit and hay crop. If Autumn had never before been grateful for the presence of old Hannah, she gave silent thanks now to that homely, faithful body who sat at table with them, unconsciously helping to tide them over a painfully difficult hour.

The meal finished, Autumn prepared at once to leave for Kelowna. She did not again urge Jarvis to accompany her, but before she got into her car she threw her arms about his neck and clung to him for a long moment without a word.

"No doldrums now, Daddy," she whispered.

He smiled at her, a grim, twisted smile, and she slapped him manfully on the shoulder and then was obliged to turn away as she saw the tears start to his bleak eyes.

"So long, darling!" she sang and jumped quickly into the car.

"Take care of yourself," he said huskily, "and don't drive too fast. Good-by—good-by!"

Unheeding of the Laird's warning, she drove with reckless speed over the winding road, shutting out from her senses the painful beauty of the morning, with its assailing colors and perfumes of wildflowers that carpeted hill and glen. Where the sun slanted across a smooth hillock, violets, buttercups, larkspur and blue-eyed grass would be shining under dew as though beneath a great glass dome, and if she glanced aside in a sweet, leafy dell, there would be lily-of-the-valley and iris and lady's-slipper. But these were not for her now, she thought bitterly, as she stared at the road that ran crazily before her, uncurling like a toy serpent of painted paper.

Where the trail branched southward to Kelowna, she swung her car to the left and followed the road to Kamloops. The morning was young and there would be plenty of time to run in upon Hector Cardigan before going on to the Parrs'.

Old Hector was at work among his flowers in front of the house as she drove up. She blew her horn and he lifted his head and looked at her.

"Well, well!" he greeted her as she came through the gate. "You're abroad early."

"I'm running away, Hector," she replied with a laugh.

He cast an anxious glance at her. There was no way of telling what notions these youngsters might take. Besides, the girl was an Odell.

"From whom—this time?" he enquired, half banteringly.

"From myself, of course," she stated. "Who else?"

Old Hector shook his head. "You'll not find that easy, my dear," he observed. "But come along into the house."

She ran before him up the steps, through the open doorway, and into the drawing room where all the shades were drawn to exclude the morning sun.

"Let's have light, Hector!" she cried and hurried from one window to another to lift the shades. "One would swear you were trying to hide something in this old house of yours. It's positively spooky!"

He watched her, a helpless expression in his eyes, then smiled faintly as she tossed her gloves and hat upon a chair and helped herself to a cigarette from a box on the table.

"There's little a man of my age has to hide from the world," he said slowly.

"But you keep that little very well hidden, don't you?" she countered, lighting her cigarette and tossing the match into the fireplace.

There was something in the girl's mood that made him apprehensive. He moved uneasily to his accustomed position with his back to the open fireplace and clasped his hands behind him as he looked down at her.

"One never knows how well a thing is hidden, my dear, until someone attempts to seek it out," he replied evasively.

Autumn looked about at the tapestry-hung walls, then flicked the ash from her cigarette.

"Nor how poorly it is hidden—until someone blunders upon it," she added.

He smiled and rocked back and forward on the balls of his feet. He wondered what the girl was getting at. "Quite so," he agreed, "quite so."

Autumn got suddenly to her feet and tossed her cigarette away. "What a romantic old fraud you are!" she said abruptly.

"Me? I have never thought of myself—"

"Hector," she interrupted him, "why didn't you tell me everything you knew when I came here to talk with you last week?"

He regarded her suspiciously. "Did I withhold something?" he asked her.

She eyed him narrowly. "I am asking you why," she replied.

Hector's look was a challenge. "I prefer to be my own judge, my dear, as to what I shall tell concerning other people—or concerning myself, for that matter," he said.

Autumn stepped close to him and laughed a little shrilly, he thought, a little bitterly. "Don't you get hoity-toity with little Autumn, now," she chided mockingly. "You can keep your old secrets. I know all that's worth knowing about them, anyhow."

The girl's taunting mood, Hector thought to himself. She was her mother all over again. How often he had seen Millicent turn suddenly flippant when she wanted to conceal her true feelings, whether of disappointment over a trivial thing or of grief so deep that it broke her impetuous, wild heart.

"The gesture seems oddly familiar," he observed.

Autumn's anger flared suddenly. "It will become even more familiar, then," she retorted. "I have discovered who I am. From now on, I'm through with trying to be what I was never meant to be! It can't be done. I'm going to be myself, Hector Cardigan!" The old man's face had gone strangely pale.

"Don't look startled, Hector. Your secrets are perfectly safe with me—just as Jarvis Dean's secrets. It is my choice to fall in love and kill each other over a woman, it's no affair of mine. Let the tradition go on. It's the Basque bell, Hector, and nothing that you or I can ever do will ever stop it ringing!"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Speaking of Sports

Big Ten Loses In War Against Outside Foes

By ROBERT McSHANE

WHEN the Big Ten football conference closed its books this year, ending the most jumbled season in recent history, the ledger showed the loss of 12 out-of-conference games as balanced against 11 wins and three tie games.

Four of those 11 non-conference victories were made at the expense of Oberlin, Wabash, Arizona and South Dakota. Which means that in major non-conference games the Big Ten was especially disappointing.

Ohio State holds the Western conference championship, for which the school is largely indebted to Michigan and Northwestern. Iowa, had it defeated instead of tying Northwestern, would have shared the championship with Ohio State. Michigan alone was able to defeat Iowa.

During a generally unhappy season, Iowa was the only one of the 13 major midwestern teams—including the Big Ten, Michigan State, Marquette and Notre Dame—which



EDDIE ANDERSON

did not lose two games or more. The table gives final Big Ten Standings, together with points for and against:

	W	L	T	PF	PA
Ohio State	5	1	0	156	41
Iowa	4	1	1	82	85
Purdue	2	1	2	30	30
Michigan	3	2	0	147	57
Northwestern	3	2	1	47	37
Illinois	3	3	0	75	48
Minnesota	2	3	1	92	76
Indiana	2	3	0	56	69
Wisconsin	0	5	1	33	83
Chicago	0	3	0	0	192

Tie games do not count in the standings.

The jumbled conference race is symbolized by this strange outcome: Illinois and Minnesota were the two teams which whipped the Wolverines and kept Michigan from an unbeaten year. Ohio State then proceeded to defeat both Illinois and the Gophers, but lost in the closing game to Michigan. Northwestern's tie with Iowa allowed the Buckeyes to claim the Big Ten title.

Season of Upsets

Altogether, it was a season of upsets and surprises. One of the outstanding developments was the phenomenal rise of Iowa under Coach Eddie Anderson, who is serving his first year with Iowa. In each of their seven major games the Hawkeyes had to be figured as the short ends. They were the underdogs because of manpower shortage.

Another surprise was the collapse of Michigan's "wonder team." Both Illinois and Minnesota took charge of affairs and whipped the Wolverines without a great deal of trouble.

Northwestern failed to live up to its pre-season rating. Coach Lynn Waldorf wasn't too enthusiastic about the great amount of publicity given his potential All-America candidates, remarking that "We're not as good on grass as we are on newspaper."

Other events which upset early fall predictions were the consistent disappointments of Wisconsin and Purdue, the relatively poor showing made by Minnesota for the first time in six years, and the University of Chicago's dismal record against conference competition.

Spotlight Turns

The "upset" games in which heavily favored teams lost, included: Illinois 16, Michigan 7; Iowa 7, Notre Dame, 6; Iowa 13, Minnesota 9; Iowa 4, Purdue 0; Michigan 21, Ohio State 14; Purdue 3, Northwestern 0.

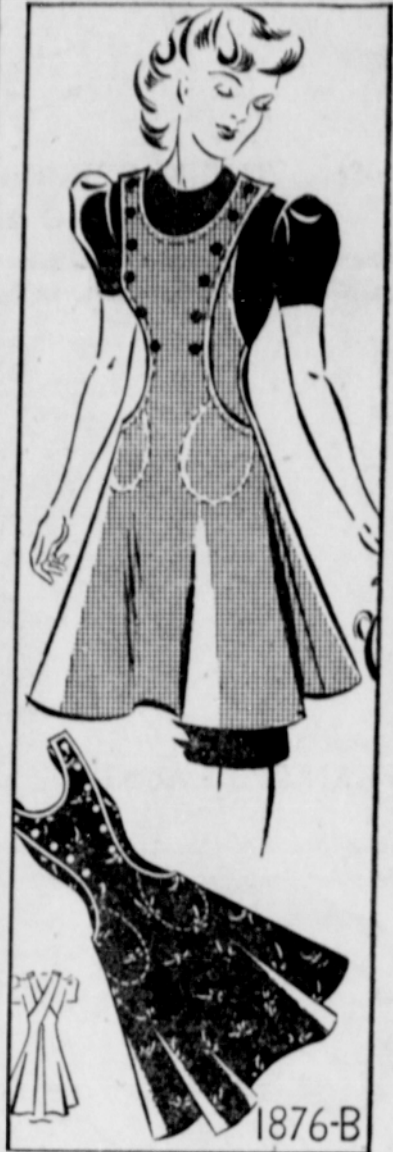
Failure of the Big Ten teams to maintain their usual pace turned the spotlight in other directions. Cornell did much to re-establish the East's claim to gridiron greatness. Tennessee's great record, though made against mediocre talent, brought cheers from the nation's football addicts. Another great team was Texas A. & M. Authorities were loud in their praise of Southern California, unquestionably one of the greatest of grid machines.

Though Big Ten teams lost in the war against outsiders, interest in conference struggles was greater than ever. Nothing could be taken for granted. The race was close enough to thrill every downtown quarterback, and the final result was in doubt until the last whistle had blown.

Practical Pinafore That Will Stay Put

THIS pinafore apron (1876) will be a great favorite with everybody in the sewing circle—it's the most useful kind you can have! It goes on in a jiffy—not even a sash to tie! It covers both the top and the skirt of your dress thoroughly. It won't slip off the shoulders. It has two capacious patch pockets that you will find mighty handy.

Buttons and bright piping give it a gay touch; it's prettily small at the waist and flared at the skirt. Best of all, it's so easy to



make that you can turn it out in a few hours. Send for the pattern today, and make half a dozen aprons like this, so that you'll always have one ready to put on, fresh and clean. It's nice for gifts and club or church sales, too. Make it of gingham, percale, chintz or linen, in cheerful prints or plain colors.

No. 1876 is designed for sizes 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, and 44. Size 34 requires 2 3/4 yards of 35-inch material; 2 yards bias binding to trim.

Send your order to The Sewing Circle Pattern Dept., 149 New Montgomery Ave., San Francisco, Calif. Patterns 15 cents (in coins) each.

Unforgivable Hypocrisy

The only vice that cannot be forgiven is hypocrisy. The repentance of a hypocrite is itself hypocrisy.—Hazlitt.

CONSTIPATED?

Here is Amazing Relief of Constipation Due to Stagnant Bowels. **Nature's Remedy** is a natural, all-vegetable laxative. It is mild, thorough, refreshing, invigorating. Dependable relief from sick headaches, bilious spells, tired feeling when associated with constipation. Get a 25c box of NR from your druggist. Make the test—then if not delighted, return the box to us. We will refund the purchase price. That's fair. **NR TO-NIGHT** Get NR Tablets today.

Alma Mater of Fools
Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other.

666 relieves misery of Colds fast!
LIQUID—TABLETS
SALVE—NOSE DROPS

Time to Plow
Plow deep while sluggards sleep.

Watch Your Kidneys!

Help Them Cleanse the Blood of Harmful Body Waste

Your kidneys are constantly filtering waste matter from the blood stream. But kidneys sometimes lag in their work—do not act as Nature intended—fail to remove impurities that, if retained, may poison the system and upset the whole body machinery. Symptoms may be nagging backache, persistent headache, attacks of dizziness, getting up nights, swelling, puffiness under the eyes—a feeling of nervous anxiety and loss of pep and strength. Other signs of kidney or bladder disorder are sometimes burning, scanty or too frequent urination. There should be no doubt that prompt treatment is wiser than neglect. Use **Doan's Pills**. Doan's have been winning new friends for more than forty years. They have a nationwide reputation. Are recommended by grateful people the country over. Ask your neighbor!

DOAN'S PILLS