

PRUDENCE OF THE PARSONAGE

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A PAINFUL ACCIDENT BRINGS TRUE ROMANCE TO THE PARSONAGE GIRLS—MAYBE REAL LOVE

Mr. Starr, widower Methodist minister, is assigned to the congregation at Mount Mark, Ia. He has five charming daughters. Prudence, the eldest, keeps house for him. Fairy is a college freshman. Carol and Lark, twins, are in high school. Constance is the "baby." The activities of the Starr girls—Prudence's work, Fairy's school affairs, the pranks of the youngsters—and the family perplexities make the story; it is simply a recital of glorified homely incidents. The preceding installment described the capture of a notorious burglar in the parsonage and the reward promised the girls.

CHAPTER VII—Continued.

Mr. Starr on Thursday morning had taken the early eastbound train to Burlington. He attended the evangelistic services at the tabernacle in the afternoon and evening, and then went to bed at the hotel. He slept late the next morning. When he finally appeared the clerk came at once from behind the desk to speak to him. Two or three other guests, who had been lounging about, drew near.

"We've just been reading about your girls, sir," said the clerk respectfully. "It's a pretty nifty little bunch! You must be proud of them!"

"My girls!" ejaculated Mr. Starr. "Haven't you seen the morning paper? You're Mr. Starr, the Methodist minister at Mount Mark, aren't you?"

"I am! But what has happened to my girls? Is anything wrong? Give me the paper!"

Five minutes later Mr. Starr and his suitcase were in a taxicab speeding toward Union station, and within eight minutes he was en route for Mount Mark—white in the face, shaky in the knees, but tremendously proud in spirit.

Arriving at Mount Mark, he was instantly surrounded by an exclamatory crowd of station loungers. The name of Prudence was upon every tongue, and her father heard it with satisfaction. In the parsonage he found at least two-thirds of the Ladies' Aid society, the trustees and the Sunday-school superintendent, along with a miscellaneous assortment of ordinary members, mixed up with Presbyterians, Baptists and a few unclassified outsiders. And Prudence was the center of attraction.

She was telling the "whole story," for perhaps the fifteenth time that morning, but she broke off when her father hurried in and flung her arms about him. "Oh, papa," she cried, "they mustn't praise me. I had no idea there was a burglar in the house when I ran down the stairs, and I honestly can't see that much credit is due me."

But Mount Mark did not take it so calmly. And as for the Methodist church—well, the Presbyterian people used to say there was "no living with those Methodists, since the girls caught a burglar in the parsonage." Of course it was important, from the Methodist point of view. Pictures of the parsonage and the church were in all the papers for miles around, and at their very next meeting the trustees decided to get the piano the Sunday school had been needing for the last hundred years!

When the five hundred dollars arrived from Chicago, Prudence felt that personally she had no real right to the money. "We must divide it," she insisted, "for I didn't earn it a bit more than any of the others. But it is perfectly glorious to have five hundred dollars, isn't it? Did you ever have five hundred dollars before? Just take it, father, and use it for whatever we need. It's family money."

Neither the younger girls nor their father would consent to this. But when Prudence pleaded with them earnestly, they decided to divide it.

"I will deposit two hundred and fifty dollars for the four younger ones," he said, "and that will leave you as much."

So it was settled, and Prudence was a happy girl when she saw it safely put away in the bank.

CHAPTER VIII.

Romance Comes.

Sometimes, Methodists, or Presbyterians, or heretics—whatever we may be—we are irresistibly impelled to the conclusion that things were simply bound to happen! However slight the cause—still that cause was predestined from the beginning of time. A girl may by the sheerest accident step from the street car a block ahead of

her destination—an irritating accident. But as she walks that block she may meet an old-time friend, and a stranger. And that stranger—ah, you can never convince the girl that her stepping from the car too soon was not ordered when the foundations of the world were laid.

After all, it was very simple. Across the street from the parsonage lived a girl named Mattie Moore—a common, unlovely, unexciting girl, who taught a country school five miles out from town, and rode to and from her school, morning and evening, on a bicycle.

One evening, early in June, when the world was fair to look upon, it was foreordained that Prudence should be turning in at the parsonage gate just as Mattie Moore whirled up, opposite, on her dusty wheel. Prudence stopped to interchange polite inanities with her neighbor, and Mattie, wheeling the bicycle lightly beside her, came across the street and stood beneath the parsonage maples with Prudence. They talked of the weather, of the coming summer, of Mattie's school, rejoicing that one more week would bring freedom from books for Mattie and the younger parsonage girls.

Then said Prudence: "Isn't it great fun to ride a bicycle? I love it. Sometime will you let me ride your wheel?"

"Why, certainly. You may ride now if you like."

"No," said Prudence slowly. "I used to ride, but am afraid it would not do now. Some of the members might



"Sometime Will You Let Me Ride Your Wheel?"

see me, and—well, I am very grown-up, you know. Of course," she added hastily, "it is different with you. You ride for business, but it would be nothing but a frolic with me. I want to go early in the morning, when the world is fast asleep. Let me take it tomorrow morning, will you?"

"Yes, of course you may," was the hearty answer. "You may stay out as long as you like. I always sleep late on Saturdays."

So Prudence delightedly tripped up the parsonage board walk, wheeling the bicycle by her side. She hid it carefully in the woodshed, for the twins were rash and venturesome. But after she had gone to bed, she considered her plan to Fairy.

"I'm going at six o'clock, and, Fairy, if I am a little late, you'll get breakfast for papa and the girls, like a dear, won't you?"

Fairy promised. And early the next morning Prudence, in red sweater jacket and cap, set out upon her secret ride. It was a magnificent morning, and Prudence sang for pure delight as

she rode swiftly along the country roads, guided only by her own caprice. She knew it was growing late, "but Fairy'll get breakfast," she thought, comfortably.

Finally she turned in a by-road leading between two rich hickory groves. Dismounting at the top of a long hill, she gazed anxiously around her. No one was in sight. The nearest house was two miles behind, and the road was long and smooth and inviting, and the hill was steep. Prudence yearned for a good, soul-stirring coast, with her feet high on the framework of the wheel, and the pedals flying around beneath her skirts. It seemed safe. The only living thing in sight was a sober-eyed, serious mule peacefully grazing near the bottom of the hill.

Prudence laughed gleefully, like a child. She never laughed again in exactly that way. "Here goes!" she cried, and, leaping nimbly into the saddle, she pedaled swiftly a few times, and then lifted her feet to the coveted position. The pedals flew around beneath her, and the wind whistled about her in a most exhilarating way.

But as she neared the bottom the placid mule suddenly stalked into the middle of the road. Prudence screamed, jerked the handlebar to the right, to the left, and then, with a sickening thud, she struck the mule head first, and bounced on down to the ground, with a little cry of pain. The bicycle crashed beside her, and the mule, slightly startled, looked around at her with ears raised in silent questioning. Then he ambled slowly across the road, and deliberately continued his grazing.

Prudence tried to raise herself, but she felt sharp pain. She heard someone leaping over the fence near her, and wondered, without moving her head, if it could be a tramp bent on highway robbery. The next instant a man was leaning over her. "It's not a tramp," she thought, before he had time to speak.

"Are you hurt?" he cried. "You poor child!"

Prudence smiled pluckily. "My ankle is hurt a little, but I am not a child." The young man, in great relief, laughed aloud, and Prudence joined him rather faintly.

"I'm afraid I cannot walk," she said. "I believe I've broken my ankle, maybe my whole leg, for all I know. It—hurts—pretty badly!"

"Lie down like this," he said, helping her to a more comfortable position, "do not move. May I examine your foot?" She shook her head, but he removed the shoe regardless of her headache. "I believe it is sprained. I am sure the bone is not broken. But how in the world will you get home? How far is it to Mount Mark? Is that where you live?"

"Yes"—considering—"yes, I live there, and it must be four miles, anyhow. What shall I do?"

FINED FOR WEARING BEARDS

History Tells of English Judge's Order for Compulsory Shaving of Barristers in His Court.

Nowhere was there more prejudice against beards than at the Inns court of centuries ago. The black books of Lincoln's Inn of the sixteenth century are full of references to offenders who were "fined double comens duryngge such tyme as they shall have any berde." This proving ineffective, a batch of bearded barristers was in 1554 "banysshed from ye Howse," and shortly afterward a judge's order was obtained for the compulsory shaving of some of the members. The Inner Temple benchers were not quite so severe, for a fine of 20 shillings was the sole penalty imposed in 1555 "for wearying beardes of more than three weekes growthe." The war against bearded barristers continued at the Inns of Court until the seventeenth century.

Long after this the prejudice against the unshaved barrister remained. The late Vice Chancellor Bacon carried his dislike so far that he refused to listen to bearded or mustached counsel, pretending that he could not hear them. Even now, although there are plenty of bearded barristers and K. C.'s, few have attained eminence. The most brilliant exception was perhaps the late Judah Philip Benjamin, "silver-tongued Benjamin," who, despite his mustache and American "goatee," earned the princely income of \$35,000 a year.—London Chronicle.

Oil From Various Sources.

During the last year, in Germany, about 662,250 pounds of oil were obtained from sunflower seeds, and this year promises a rich crop of poppy seed. Attention has also been drawn to the high percentage of oil contained in cherry and plum stones, which are usually thrown away. According to the statistics of 1900 there were 22,000,000 cherry and 70,000,000 plum trees in Germany. Large quantities of fruit stones were collected by school children last year, but great quantities were thrown away or destroyed owing to the difficulty of extracting the oil from them.

In 20 generations every person has had 131,076 direct ancestors.

In answer, he pulled off his coat, and arranged it carefully by the side of the road on the grass. Then jerking open the bag he had carried, he took out a few towels, and three soft shirts. Hastily rolling them together for a pillow, he added it to the bed pro tem. Then he turned again to Prudence.

"I'll carry you over here, and fix you as comfortably as I can. Then I'll go to the nearest house and get a wagon to take you home."

Prudence was not shy, and realizing that his plan was the wise one, she made no objections when he came to help her across the road. "I think I can walk if you lift me up."

But the first movement sent such a twinge of pain through the wounded ankle that she clutched him frantically and burst into tears. "It hurts," she cried, "don't touch me."

Without speaking, he lifted her as gently as he could and carried her to the place he had prepared for her. "Will you be warm enough?" he asked, after he had stood looking awkwardly down upon the sobbing girl as long as he could endure it.

"Yes," nodded Prudence, gulping down the big sob rising in her throat. "I'll run. This confounded cross-cut is so out of the way that no one will pass here for hours, I suppose. Now lie as comfortably as you can, and do not worry. I'm going to run."

Off he started, but Prudence, left alone, was suddenly frightened. "Please, oh, please," she called after him, and when he came back she buried her face in shame, deep in the linen towel.

"I'm afraid," she whispered, crying again. "I do not wish to be left alone here. A snake might come, or a tramp."

He sat down beside her. "You're nervous. I'll stay with you until you feel better. Someone may come this way, but it isn't likely. I cut through the hickory grove to save a mile. That's how I happened to find you." He smiled a little, and Prudence, remembering the nature of her accident, flushed. Then, being Prudence, she laughed.

"It was my own fault. I had no business to go coasting down like that. But the mule was so stationary. It never occurred to me that he contemplated moving for the next century at least. He was a bitter disappointment." She looked down the roadside where the mule was contentedly grazing, with never so much as a sympathetic glance at his victim.

"I'm afraid your bicycle is rather badly done up."

Do you believe that Prudence could be made to believe there was such a thing as love at first sight?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

England's Great Arsenal.

Though the vast arsenal of Woolwich is at our doors, few of us who sleep in London have any real sense of its colossal presence, its immense significance, the tremendous force it stands for. Its origin dates back to other wars, but when the present war began its workers were only 14,000 in all, without a woman in the number. Now there are 17,000 women and 50,000 men.

That is not all. Notwithstanding its fierce reality Woolwich is a symbol rather than a geographical expression. To that center of the Thames, 3½ miles by 2½, with its numberless workshops, its endless avenues and its 120 miles of internal railway, there radiate the activities of scores of associate factories round about, so that 30,000 workers more, chiefly women (67,000 in all), are feeding this almost fathomless reservoir.

Woolwich is a great mechanical octopus with arms that reach over, across and around London and the country about it.—London Times.

New Mirror Is Magnifier.

A mirror which magnifies at any distance without distorting the lines or the focus of the object reflected has been perfected by the Erie (Pa.) manufacturer. The mirror is particularly adapted to the needs of mechanics in looking underneath or in back of objects, but is also a practical household article. As it reflects a white light, it is said to recommend itself particularly to the examination of internal or underneath mechanical parts which are difficult to readjust unless taken to the light for examination. Hence, it is also claimed to be invaluable for examining the throat, teeth, mouth or eyes.

On Parnassus.

"What's the matter with Hercules?" "Eh?" "Why did he buff the little man?" "He didn't like his line of talk. Seems the little man is an efficiency expert. He told Hercules he went through a lot of useless motions in performing those twelve labors."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Male and female slaves were sold publicly in the fairs of England during the fourteenth century.



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