

# PRUDENCE of the PARSONAGE



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## CHAPTER X—Continued.

"Must you prepare meat for bread-ing half an hour before cooking, or when?" demanded Fairy, from the dining room door.

"What?—Oh!—Fifteen minutes before. Don't forget to salt and pepper the crumbs, Fairy."

"Perhaps some time your father will let you and a couple of the others come to Des Moines with me in the car. You would enjoy a few days there, I know. I live with my aunt, a dear, motherly little old soul. She will adore you, Prudence, and you will like her, too. Would your father let you spend a week? We can easily drive back and forth in the car."

"Maybe he will, but who will keep the parsonage while I am away?"

"Fairy, to be sure. She must be a good fairy once in a while. We can take the twins with us, Connie, too, if you like, and Fairy will only have to mother your father."

"Prudence, shall we have tea or coffee?" This was Lark from the doorway. "Fairy wants to know."

"What?—Oh!—Which do you want, Jerry?"

"Which does your father prefer?"

"He doesn't drink either except for breakfast."

"I generally drink coffee, but I do not care much for it, so do not bother—"

"Coffee, Lark."

"Did you ever have a lover, Prudence? A real lover, I mean."

"No, I never did."

"I'm awfully glad of that. I'll—"

"Prudence, do you use half milk and half water for creamed tomato soup, or all milk?"

"What?—Oh!—All milk, Connie, and tell Fairy not to salt it until it is entirely done, or it may curdle."

"What in the world would they ever do without you, Prudence? You are the soul of the parsonage, aren't you?"

"No, I am just the cook and the chambermaid," she answered, laughing. "But don't you see how hard it will be for me to go away?"

"But it isn't fair! Vacation is coming now, and Fairy ought to take a turn. What will they do when you get married?"

"I have always said I would not get married."

"But don't you want to get married, some time?"

"Oh, that isn't it. I just can't because I must take care of the parsonage, and raise the girls. I can't."

"But you will," he whispered, and his hand touched hers for just a second. Prudence did not answer. She lifted her eyes to his face, and caught in her breath once more.

A little later he said, "Do you mind if I go upstairs and talk to your father a few minutes? Maybe I'd better."

"But do not stay very long," she urged, and she wondered why the brightness and sunshine vanished from the room when he went out. "First door to the right," she called after him.

Mr. Starr arose to greet him, and welcomed him to his combination study and bedroom with great friendliness. But Jerrold went straight to the point.

"Mr. Starr, it's very kind of you to receive a perfect stranger as you have me. But I understand that with a girl like Prudence, you will want to be careful. I can give you the names of several prominent men in Des Moines, Christians, who know me well, and can tell you all about me."

"It isn't necessary. We are parsonage people, and are accustomed to receiving men and women as worthy of our trust, until we find them different. We are glad to count you among our friends."

"Thank you, but—you see, Mr. Starr, this is a little different. Some day, Prudence and I will want to be married, and you will wish to be sure about me."

"Does Prudence know about that?"

"No," with a smile, "we haven't got that far yet. But I am sure she feels it. She hasn't—well, you know what I mean. She has been asleep, but I believe she is waking up now."

"Yes, I think so. Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?"

"No, indeed. Anything you like."

"Well, first, are you a Christian?"

"Not the kind you are, Mr. Starr. I go to church, and I believe the Bible, though I seldom read it. But I'll get busy now, if you like. I know Prudence would make me do that." And he smiled again.

"Do you drink?"

"I did a little, but I promised Prudence this morning I would quit it. I smoke, too. Prudence knows it, but she did not make me promise to quit that?" His voice was raised, inquiringly.

"Would you have promised, if she had asked it?"

"I suppose I would." He flushed a little. "I know I was pretty hard hit, and it was such a new experience that I would have promised anything she asked. But I like smoking."

"Never mind the smoking. I only asked that question out of curiosity. Tell me about your relations with your mother when she was living."

"She has been dead four years," Jerrold spoke with some emotion. "We were great chums, though her health was always poor. When I was in school, I spent all my vacations at home to be with her. And I never went abroad until after her death because she did not like the idea of my going so far from her."

"Jerrold, my boy, I do not want to seem too severe, but—tell me, has there been anything in your life, about women that could come out and hurt Prudence later on?"

Jerrold hesitated. "Mr. Starr, I have been young, and headstrong, and impulsive. I have done some things I wish now I hadn't. But I believe there is nothing that I could not explain to Prudence so she would understand."

"All right. If you are the man, God bless you. And, do you mind if I just suggest that you go a little slower with Prudence? Remember that she has been sound asleep, until this morning. I do not want her awakened too rudely."

"Neither do I," said Jerrold quickly. "Shall I go down now? The girls have invited me to stay for supper, and Prudence says I am to come back tomorrow, too. Is that all right? Remember, I'll be going home on Monday."

"It is all right, certainly. Spend as much time here as you like. You will either get worse, or get cured, and—whichever ever it is, you've got to have a chance. I like you, Jerrold. Prudence judges by instinct, but it does not often fail her."

Prudence heard him running down the stairs boyishly, and when he came in, before she could speak, he whispered, "Shut your eyes tight, Prudence. And do not scold me, for I can't help it." Then he put his hands over hers, and kissed her on the lips. They were both breathless after that. Prudence at last was aroused from her slumber.

## CHAPTER XI.

### She Orders Her Life.

That was the beginning of Prudence's golden summer. She was not given to self-analysis. She hadn't the time. She took things as they came.



"Do You Drink?"

She could not bear the thought of sharing with the parsonage family even the least ardent and most prosaic of Jerrold's letters. But she never asked herself the reason. The days when Jerry came were tremendously happy ones for her—she was all aglitter when she heard him swinging briskly up the ramshackle parsonage walk, and her breath was suffocatingly hot. But she took it as a matter of course. She knew that Jerry's voice was the sweetest voice in the world. She knew that his eyes were the softest and brightest and the most tender. She knew that his hands had a thrilling touch quite different from the touch of ordinary,

less dear hands. She knew that his smile lifted her into a delirium of delight. Prudence never thought of that. She just lived in the sweet ecstatic dream of the summer, and was well and richly content.

So the vacation passed and Indian summer came.

It was Saturday evening. The early supper at the parsonage was over, the twins had washed the dishes, and still the daylight lingered. Prudence and Jerry sat side by side, and closely, on the front porch, talking in whispers. Fairy had gone for a stroll with the still faithful Babbie, Connie and the twins had evidently vanished. Ah—not quite that! Carol and Lark came swiftly around the corner of the parsonage.

"Good evening," said Lark politely, and Prudence sat up abruptly. The twins never wasted politeness! They wanted something.

"Do you mind if we take Jerry around by the woodshed for a few minutes, Prue?"

Prudence shifted suspiciously. "What are you going to do to him?" she demanded.

"We won't hurt him," grinned Carol impishly. "Maybe he's afraid to come," said Lark, "for there are two of us, and we are mighty men of valor."

"That's all right," Prudence answered defensively. "I'd sooner face a tribe of wild Indians any day than you twins when you are mischief-bent."

"Oh, we just want to use him a few minutes," said Carol impatiently. "Upon our honor, as Christian gentlemen, we promise not to hurt a hair of his head."

"Oh, come along, and cut out the comedy," Jerry broke in, laughing. Then the twins led him to the woodshed. Close beside the shed grew a tall and luxuriant maple.

"Do you see this board?" began Lark, exhibiting with some pride a solid board about two feet in length. "Well, we found this over by the Avery barn. We've found a perfectly gorgeous place up in the old tree where we can nail this on to the limbs—there are two right near each other, evidently put there on purpose for us. See what dandy big nails we have!"

"From the Avery's woodshed, I suppose," he suggested, smiling.

"Oh, they are quite rusty. We found them in the scrap heap. We're very good friends with the Averages, very good, indeed," she continued hastily. "They allow us to rummage around at will—in the barn."

"And see this rope," cried Carol. "Isn't it a dandy?"

"Ah! The Avery barn must be inexhaustible in its resources."

"How suspicious you are, Jerry," mourned Lark. "We thought when you had the board nailed on, you might rope it to the limbs above. Do you suppose you can do that, Jerry?"

"Well, let's begin. Now, observe! I loop this end of the rope lightly about my—er—middle. The other end will dangle on the ground to be drawn up at will. I bestow the good but rusty nails in this pocket, and the hammer here. Then with the admirable board beneath my arm, I mount—"

And Jerry smiled as he heard the faithful twins, with much grunting and

an occasional groan, following in his wake.

It was a delightful location, as they had said. The board fitted nicely on the two limbs, and Jerry fastened it with the rusty nails. The twins were jubilant and loud in their praises of his skill and courage.

"Oh, Jerry!" exclaimed Carol, with deep satisfaction. "It's such a blessing to discover something really nice about you after all these months!"

"Now, we'll just—"

"Hush!" hissed Lark. "Here comes Connie. Hold your breath, Jerry, and don't budge."

"Isn't she in on this?" he whispered. He could hear Connie making weird noises as she came around the house from the front. She was learning to whistle, and the effect was ghastly in the extreme. Connie's mouth had not been designed for whistling.

"Sh! She's the band of dark-browed gypsies trying to steal my lovely wife." "I'm the lovely wife," interrupted Carol, complacently.

"But Connie does not know about it. She is so religious she won't be any of the villain parts."

Connie came around the corner of the parsonage, out the back walk be-



Side by Side Talking in Whispers.

nenth the maple. Then she gave a gleeful scream. Right before her lay a beautiful heavy rope. Connie had been yearning for a good rope to make a swing. Here it lay, at her very feet, plainly a gift of the gods. She did not wait to see where the other end of the rope was. She just grabbed what she saw before her, and started violently back around the house with it, yelling: "Prudence! Look at my rope!"

Prudence rushed around the parsonage. The twins shrieked wildly, as there was a terrific tug and heave of the limb beside them, and then—a crashing of branches and leaves. Jerry was gone!

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## JOKE SOMEHOW MISSED FIRE

Incident That Illustrates the Danger of Plagiarism When One's Memory May Cause False Step.

A party of men were discussing at the dinner table the relative merits of their favorite heroes. They were waxing warm over the subject, when one man appealed to his host to agree with him in saying Napoleon was the greatest man of the age.

"Why, yes," was the reply. "Napoleon was a very great man, but this," holding up the nutmeg grater which he had used in mixing the punch bowl, "is a grater."

A would-be wit who was one of the party thought he would like to reproduce the joke as his own, so he carefully arranged a dinner at which none of the men present at the former one should appear. A table napkin was held by him, under which a grater was concealed, and the conversation skillfully led up to the desired topic. Wellington was the hero of the evening, the host keeping discreetly out of the discussion. Presently a man observed, "We have not heard your opinion, Brown."

The host immediately seized his opportunity, and producing the little instrument, said gravely, "Wellington was indeed a great man, but this is a nutmeg grater."

And then he wondered why nobody laughed and all looked at him curiously.

### Influences the Brain.

Every organ in the body exerts in some way an influence upon the brain. Those whose lives are along the systematic, plodding way—the great crowd of us—have no excuse for "temperamental fits." If we take care of our health every organ does its duty, and brain and nervous system do not become temporarily poisoned.

### Use for Horsechestnuts.

The soapy nature of the kernel of the horsechestnut has led investigators to search for a way to use it in removing dirt and grease from textile goods. According to Les Matieres Grasses, several methods of extracting this soapy substance have been patented, and, moreover, profitable uses have been found for other constituents of the horsechestnut. The shell is rich in tannin, and is used in preparing an extract for tanning leather. The kernel contains about six and six-tenths per cent of a pale yellow oil similar to almond oil. After the oil has been extracted, the residue, treated with dilute alcohol, yields an extract containing about 15 per cent of esculic acid, a saponaceous substance that has excellent lathering and cleansing properties. The material left after the oil and soap have been removed can be made into a white starch. When treated with cold water, to remove the bitter principle, it is suitable for food.

### St. Anthony Needed a Bath.

At a recent meeting of the conference of sanitary inspectors J. Tovy Thomas, chief sanitary inspector for the Rhonda Valley, said that though writings on health were among the oldest in the world, sanitation for some generations made slow progress. The filthy habits of the hermits of the Middle Ages and of the early Christian saints were practiced by the monks or more recent eras. Indeed St. Jerome praised these habits of the hermits, and especially commended an Egyptian who combed his hair only on Easter Sunday and never washed his clothes. St. Anthony never washed his feet, and Thomas a-Beckett, when slain, had undergarments in such a condition that one shuddered at the description.—London Times.

Mexico City is 7,415 feet above sea level. Its death rate has been notoriously high.

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This preparation is a toilet requisite and is not intended for the cure, mitigation or prevention of disease.

### The Unwritten Law.

Hewitt—When I was in Kentucky I was arrested for violation of the liquor law.

Jewett—How was that?

Hewitt—I declined to take a drink.—Exchange.

## PAINS SHARP AND STABBING

Woman Thought She Would Die. Cured by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

Ogdensburg, Wis.—"I suffered from female troubles which caused piercing pains like a knife through my back and side. I finally lost all my strength so I had to go to bed. The doctor advised an operation but I would not listen to it. I thought of what I had read about Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and tried it. The first bottle brought great relief and six bottles have entirely cured me. All women who have female trouble of any kind should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound."—Mrs. ETTA DORION, Ogdensburg, Wis.

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