THE HERALD.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 1891.

WAS SHE AN ——?

THE STORY OF A WOMAN'S SECRET.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

CHAPTER I.

A YOUNG WOMAN'S STRANGE VISITOR.

From New York Weekly.

"Come, Dillon, there's a good fellow—go along to the Everleighs' tonight."

"My dear August, I have renounced such vanities. I am hopelessly blase. I should only bore myself and everybody else concerned with me."

"To oblige me, Forde."

Forde Dillon looked up at his friend, with a half-inquiring, half-quizzical expression. He was lying upon a sofa, smoking and reading in luxurious ease—a man far beyond the first flush of youth, and who had outlived youths impulses and follies—who at thirty-eight sauntered alone through existence, and looked with a sort of wondering pity upon the rushing, jostling mass of people, struggling and striving about him; looked on their battle of fame, wealth, power—great goals, but yet not worth trouble spent in winning them. Where was the use, he would inquire, when life itself was only a summer day, whose morn or noon might merge itself at once into the eternal night?—when men only grasp success to fall down powerless and be succeeded by the fellow-men who come trampling over their corpses?

"The comprehension which has made great heroes and grand martyrs—the knowledge of life's nothingness—had served to make of him only a weary wanderer on the way."

This was said by another writer, of another man; would that it had been left for me to say, for it might have be truthfully written of Forde Dillon.

"What's the object, my dear fellow?" he inquired, lazily. "Of course there is one, when you ask me to give up my favorite novel and meerschaum for the glare and din of a great reception. Put it strong, if you want to impress me sufficiently."

"There is a reason," acknowledged August Fenn, coloring to the very roots of his curly hair. He had not got beyond the age of blushing, if his companion had. "I want your opinion of Juno Trent."

"Juno! She was the Olympian lady who was bound with a chain and hung up in the clouds, wasn't she? Great Jupiter! how they treated women those days! Even the gods didn't get along without tiffs after marriage, curtain lectures and the like, it appears. A clear reason, to my mind, why men should avoid the noose matrimonial. It is hoped that this Juno of yours may be of a more amiable disposition than her predecessor, if you have made up your mind, in the face of all precedent, to rush into that lovers' paradise which inevitably ends in Benedict's misery. Is it a bad case, August? Let's have the symptoms, my dear boy!"

"Not while it pleases you to take that tone."

Dillon raised himself from his recumbent position.

"Now," he said in quite a different voice, and meeting with kindly eyes the others indignant gaze. "I hope you know me too well to be offended at anything I may say, old fellow."

"All right, Forde. Only I can't hear chaffing on that subject. My case, as you call it, is so bad that all the hopes of my life are centered on winning Juno Trent for my wife. If I fail——"

A swift gloom blotted out the glowing tenderness which had come into the young, handsome face finished the sentence as words could have done.

"Tell me about it. Who is this Miss Trent who has accomplished what a score or more of other young ladies have failed in doing—ensnared the fancy of the best part? The reason? And I was absolute[illegible] into a state of thankful[illegible] you had safely run the [illegible] eyes and fair face. [illegible] remember the [illegible] tell" said [illegible] ried [illegible]

"[illegible] me. The loveliest, the most lovable, and I love her; the whole story so far is told in that. I doubt if you have heard the name. There are those who may take exception to Miss Trent's position—she is companion, or something of the sort, to Mrs. Everleigh; but my life will be crowned with its greatest happiness and greatest honor if she can give favorable regard to my suit."

"Can you doubt it? But, August, a companion!"

There was remonstrance and consternation in his tone. For in our own democracy we have our social grades as distinct as in those older countries where the yeomanry, the gentlefolk and the aristocracy prevail. Like mates with like in the natural order of things, and where this rule is openly defied, the challenge for comment and disapproval is flung down.

"She is treated as one of the family, and she is as perfect a lady as I have ever seen," cried Fenn warmly.

"That, of course, or she would never have attracted your attention. But what of her family? Low people, probably, who would revolt you."

"She has no near relatives living. She is utterly alone in the world. Even if it were not so, if it were as you say, it could make no difference in my regard for her."

"No relatives! That does not speak well for any young person. It is only another way of saying that she has no relatives whom she is willing to admit. What would your friends say, August, if they were to hear you were insnared by an adventuress?"

"I will not have such a term applied to her even by you. Don't judge her until you have seen her, and don't force me to quarrel with you, please. I have every faith in your judgement; I have no fear that you will find any fault in her; but I want your approval of my choice. You will come?"

"I will go, but I do not need to reserve my judgement. I am as firmly convinced now, as I will be four hours hence, that Juno Trent was not the one who would be approved by Colonel Fenn as his son's wife."

"Colonel Fenn's prejudices are strong, but he is not utterly unreasonable, and your opinion will have weight with him, Dillon. No more words about it, dear old fellow. Wait and see her."

It was with the air of a martyr that Dillon prepared himself for presentation at Mrs. Everleigh's social reunion, but for Fenns sake he would make the sacrifice. He felt toward him as he might have felt toward a junior brother. Fenn himself was a typical Virginian—frank, generous, and chivalrous; and Dillon had constituted himself as a sort of guide and protector during this the young fellow's first winter in New York.

In Mrs. Everleigh's marble mansion, in Mrs. Everleigh's gas-lit rooms, amid the slowly moving, well dressed, well-bred throng, Dillon's misanthropic sentiments were not displayed. All men seem made after one common model, when incased in regular evening dress and on regulation evening behavior; but as he moved on by his friend's side, smiling the stereotyped smiles, and speaking the accustomed society platitudes, he was keeping watch for Fenn's enchantress. Keeping watch of Fenn, too, and seeing the sudden eager flash of his brown eyes, it did not need the latter's words to tell him she was near.

"There she is! Wait a moment—take one look. Is she not lovely?"

Dillon did look critically. He saw a petite lady, fair-haired, dark-eyed, features piquent and complexion dazzling, arch, bright, and thoroughly charming even to one blase as himself. But his mission was to put down madness, not encourage it, so he coolly answered:

"Lovely, I admit—under the gas. Fair women with dark eyes usually do light up well; but how much is due to art and dress I wouldn't like to say. Not Junoesque in the least, and her beauty was a conceded point from the first, since it suited your taste. But not the style of woman who have reigned at Fenn Eyrie. Think of presenting her there."

August smiled. The picture of that bright, frivolous, child-like creature, transplanted to the dark, old manor house that had owned stately Southern beauties for its mistresses, held no absurdity to his mind. Then he was presenting his friend to Miss Trent, with empressement, a manifest anxiety that the two should think well of each other.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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Ma. Lee. "Why, Addie, you needn't cry about it! I only said Mrs. Allen was a very well-informed woman, and I wished you would follow her example."

Miss Lee. "Yes, and last week you said you wished I could manage to look as stylish as Mrs. Allen—and she makes all her own clothes. But she has what I haven't."

Ma. Lee. "What is that?"

Miss Lee. "Well, she gets all of her information from the Metropolitan Museum. I admit that she knows all that is going on, and is bright and entertaining in conversation; but I could do as well as she does if I had the same source of information. She has not the least number of her Metropolitan Magazines, and I have never seen a reading, about various social matters and the topics of the day, that I would pick up in a month by my occasional chats with friends. It certainly covers every topic of interest, from the news of the day down to the details of housekeeping; and everything is so beautifully illustrated, too. Every time Mamie goes over to the Museum she comes back and tells me to get you to take Demorest's Family Magazine, as the stories are so good. Even the boys watch for it every month, as a photo is found for them to fill in its pages; and Mr. Allen swears by it. It is really wonderful how it suits every member of the family!"

Ma. Lee. "Well, perhaps I had better send for a Specimen Copy; for, if it is anything like what you say it is, it will amuse and improve the whole family."

Miss Lee. "I see that W. Jennings Demorest, the publisher, 15 East 14th Street, New York, is offering to send a Specimen Copy for 10 cents, so we can't lose anything, as each number contains a 'Pattern Order' entitling the holder to any Pattern she may choose, and in any size, which alone makes each copy worth 50 cents; and I just want a look at the Mrs. Allen's. The subscription price is only $2.00 a year, and I must say I can't see how they can publish so elegant a Magazine for so little money."

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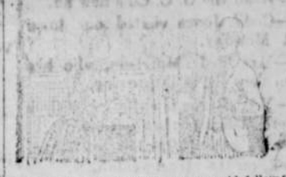

"Hello! Tom. Glad to see you, old fellow! It's almost ten years since we were married. Sit down; let's have an experience meeting. How's the wife?"

"Oh! she's so-so, same as usual,—always wanting something I can't afford."

"Well, we all want something more than we've got. Don't you?"

"Yes; but I guess 'want will be my master.' I started to keep down expenses; and now Lil says I'm 'mean,' and she's tired of saving and never having anything to show for it. I saw your wife down street, and she looked as happy as a queen!"

"I think she is; and we are economical, too,—have to be. My wife can make a little go further than anyone I ever knew, yet she's always surprising me with some dainty contrivance that adds to the comfort and beauty of our little home, and she's always 'merry as a lark.' When I ask how she manages it, she always laughs and says: 'Oh! that's my secret!' But I think I've discovered her 'secret.' When we married, we both knew we should have to be very careful, but she made one condition: she would have her Magazine. And she was right! I wouldn't do without it myself for double the subscription price. We read it together, from the title-page to the last word of the stories keep our hearts young; the synopsis of important events and scientific matters keeps me posted so that I can talk understandingly on what is going on; my wife is always trying some new idea from the household department; she makes all her dresses and those for the children, and she gets all her patterns for nothing, with the Magazine; and we saved doctor when he was so sick with the croup, by doing just as directed in the Sanitarian Department. But I can't tell you half."

"What wonderful Magazine is it?"

"Demorest's Family Magazine, and—"

"What! Why that's what Lil wanted so bad, and I told her it was an extravagance."

"Well, my friend, that's where you made a grand mistake, and one you'd better rectify as soon as you can. I'll take your 'sub.' right here, on my wife's account; she's bound to have a china tea-set in time for our tin wedding next month. My gold watch was the premium I got for getting up a club. It was a gem, with the new Premium List for clubs, sent free to any address. If you don't see it in your town, you've only to write to Demorest's Publication Office, 15 East 14th Street, New York, and specimen copy, containing the Premium List, will be sent you free. Lil's been reading the Magazine ever since I told her what it was, and she's bound to have it. Good-bye, Tom; don't forget to get your wife a copy."

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