

Prudence's Daughter

By ETHEL HUESTON

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CHAPTER IV—Continued

Jerrold laughed, but sobered quickly. If then it had not been financial need which brought this city youth to the Middle West—it was a matter far more serious. His heart sank within him. He thought of Prudence and her happiness in having Jerry with her.

"I'll call her up," he volunteered. And when he had his daughter on the wire, he said cheerfully:

"Oh, by the way, Jerry, I have a young man from New York here looking for a job—letter from you as a recommendation."

Jerrold waited. He waited until he realized that his daughter had nothing to say on the subject.

"Well, what shall I do with him? Shall I bring him up to the house?"

And then suddenly there came such a torrent of tumultuous words over the wire as caused Jerrold to gasp with dismay, while confusion and consternation spread over his kindly face. Presently a sharp click on the wire informed him that the conversation was at an end. He hung up the receiver. There was a deepening anxiety in his face as he said:

"My daughter says—Do you want to know what my daughter says?"

"Very much."

"I am pained to report that my daughter says if I bring you near the house she'll shut the door on both of us, that you came here for a job and I am to give you a job, and the harder you have to work the better it will be for you, but that personally she hasn't the slightest interest in you or in what becomes of you, as long as you keep out of her sight."

"Well, I'll be d—d," said Duane, and could say no more.

"Both of us," corroborated Jerry's father gently.

This turn of affairs burdened Jerrold with the entire responsibility for the young man. He did not like it. He didn't know what to do with him. He wished Jerry might have been more communicative about her impulses before she yielded to them. He thought she might at least have discussed the affairs of the Harmer Motor company with its official head before she involved the establishment in foreign complications of such portentous magnitude.

"Do you like the Middle West?" he asked weakly, remembering his duties as host, although he felt very much as if he had suddenly become the troubled owner of a white elephant placed in his Christmas stocking by some misguided well-wisher.

"Never saw it," said Duane Allerton. And then, suddenly feeling that perhaps some slight explanation was due this plainly harassed father, he went on: "You see, Mr. Harmer, I tried to—well, flirt a little—with your daughter in New York. And she didn't like it."

"Oh, didn't she?" Jerrold was surprised. He shot a quick look at the young man. He was very good to look at, even to perturbed and troubled Jerrold. He was inclined to doubt the sincerity of his daughter's dislike.

"But she does flirt," Duane went on positively. "Everybody said so. And besides, I saw her myself. But she seemed to single me out for her resentment. For no good reason, as far as I could make out."

"Wait a minute. I'll call her up again and tell her she can't do these things." Jerrold spoke quite sternly. But when he got the number, it was Prudence's voice that answered. She said that Jerry had gone wild away in the "Baby," and didn't know when she would come home, and if her father brought any strange young men around the house she'd never be home.

"See here," said Jerrold sharply, glad it was Prudence, with whom it was much easier to be stern than with imperturbable Jerry. "You should have told me about this."

Prudence professed her complete and absolute ignorance of it, at which her husband felt somewhat better. It was always a source of grievance to him when Prudence knew things first. He began to feel quite gratified because he had been selected for the brunt of the burden.

"Oh, it must have been a shock to you," he said sympathetically.

"Not a bit. I knew there was a man in it somewhere."

"How did you know that? Did she tell you—?"

"She told me nothing. I knew by the way she looked."

"Well, what shall I do with him? I don't know what to do with him! I don't think he knows how to work—and he doesn't want to work anyhow. What shall I—?"

"I don't know," said Prudence cleverly. "What do you think?"

When Prudence said that, both Jerrold and Jerry stepped warily, afraid of blundering. It was Prudence's way of getting herself out of a tight place. With those few words she could shift the entire responsibility for any matter in the cosmic universe and lay all consequential blame on other, stronger shoulders.

Jerrold hung up the receiver and faced the White Elephant grimly. The White Elephant, it must be admitted, seemed not in the least disturbed, rather pleased in fact, as though, like Prudence, he washed his hands of the entire affair and left himself to Jerrold's disposal.

And then like a rare flash of inspiration Jerrold saw a way out. He scribbled quickly on a piece of paper,

"I tell you what," he said triumphantly. "She's gone out in the car—Jerry, I mean. You go up to the house and see Prudence. She'll tell you what to do. It seems you are expected to take a position and go to work for me. Come in tomorrow if you think you can stand it, and we'll see what we can scare up. But the first thing for you to do is to go right up there as fast as you can and see Prudence."

Jerrold sent a boy from the shop to take him to the house in one of the cars, and Duane found himself standing on the wide veranda of the great white house, shadowy beneath great branching maples with leaves faintly turning to gold at the edges, before he realized that he had no idea under heaven as to whom he had come there to see.

"See Prudence," Jerrold had told him, with vast relief.

"In love like Prudence," Jerry had said on that memorable night in Carter Blake's kitchen.

"Good Lord!" he thought in trepidation. "Am I to blurt it out like that, 'Lead me to Prudence'?" For what or whom she might be, whether sister, companion, or friend, he had no slightest idea.

In another instant he would have bolted for freedom from this embarrassing predicament, but the door opened in the face of his dismay, and Katie's sober placid features confronted him.

"Er-uh," he stammered nervously, and then he faced it bravely, with that winning smile which never yet had failed to blaze a trail for him. "It sounds rather a fool's errand, I know," he said pleasantly, "but Mr. Harmer sent me up and told me to see Prudence."

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springing as they did from the same emotion.

She found herself apologizing for her daughter. "You must really excuse Jerry if sometimes she seems a little self-willed, almost strong-headed, her father says. I can't imagine where she got so much backbone. I'm very easy about everything, and her father is wax in the hands of anyone who tries to wheedle him, but Jerry has a terrible mind once she gets it made up."

Duane found himself thinking less of Jerry than of Prudence, rather, thinking through Prudence to Jerry again. His impression of that lovely though willful young woman had to undergo a swift transformation now that he saw Prudence. She explained everything he had not understood before. He found her a rational accounting for the moods of a maddening maiden.

Prudence did not ask questions. She just talked, laughing with him, at New York, at Jerry, at the Middle West, and at his curious obedience to the caprice of her always capricious daughter.

"And you may have to go to work, too," she told him. "She seems quite to have set her heart on making you work. She used to scoff at the nobility of labor as applied to herself, but she seems to have no such scruples in regard to you. Perhaps she is going to ennoble you in spite of yourself. But possibly you will not mind. You do not look at all lazy."

"I've worked before—as you might say. Well, I never washed cars for a living, but perhaps I can if I must."

He asked Prudence if it surprised or disappointed her, when Jerry gave up her dreams of Art, her hope of becoming a painter.

"Not a bit," this amazing woman told him. "It didn't surprise me, and it certainly didn't disappoint me. I was glad of it. I knew all the time she couldn't paint."

"Then why did you send her—alone—to study, to—?"

"I knew it, but she didn't. She had to find out somehow, didn't she?" And then she talked more of Jerry, of a Jerry he had felt might be in existence but had not known in person. "She may not be much of an artist," she said, "but she's a beautiful, wonderful daughter to Jerrold and me. We don't care whether she can paint or not, she's ours."

After a little, when he felt he could safely venture to intrude upon the intimately personal, he asked rather awkwardly:

"Would you mind telling me—how—you fell in love?"

Prudence blushed a little, laughed delightedly. "Oh, the silliest thing," she said apologetically. "Didn't Jerry tell you?"

And then she told him of that early morning on the lovely Iowa countryside, when she went coasting down a steep grade on a borrowed bicycle into disaster and wreckage at the bottom. When she sympathized, laughing, with the Prudence lying in the dust by the roadside, battered and crumpled and torn, with the ruins of the borrowed wheel about her, and on her conscience—

"Oh, don't be sorry," she pleaded gaily, joining his laughter, "for I opened my eyes and there stood over me—Jerrold—Jerry's father—and we looked at each other—"

Duane's lips were a rigid line. "Love at first sight!" he muttered grimly. "I might have known it."

Prudence nodded. "Yes, love at first sight," she repeated softly. "Don't you let anyone tell you there's no such thing. There is! At least there was in our day. Oh, well, perhaps it is not technically and scientifically down in the books as love at first sight. But there is that little pleased wakening up, that warm attraction—and if it stops, it is nothing. But if it goes on and on, it is love at first sight. Like ours! But perhaps things are different now, times are changed, and girls are very different."

Duane was looking past Prudence now, beyond her, to the heart of Jerry, her daughter, unchanged with the changing times. In that moment he knew with unflinching sureness why he had come to this remote and curious place in answer to the impulsive appeal of her letter. His eyes, on Prudence's face, saw not hers but Jerry's.

"I'm surprised she didn't tell you about it," Prudence was saying. "From the time she could talk, she has adored that bit of the family history. When she was a baby, and a little girl—yes, and until she was a pretty big one, she would always say she was going to fall in love like Prudence. She thought nothing else was really love! She used to tell perfect strangers with the utmost frankness and assurance, that it would come to her like that—love—a sudden look, and knowing—" Prudence laughed tenderly. "She got over it, of course. When she was old enough to understand, she realized that it doesn't happen like that once in a thousand years, or more."

Duane said nothing. For once, Prudence was wrong. Jerry had not changed. All through her babyhood, and into her woman's estate, that had been the dominant hope and faith of her gay romantic heart. And he, with profane, half-drunken fancies, and not half-drunken lips, had rent the veil

from the beautiful illusion that had been her tenderest dream.

"I love Jerry," he said aloud to Prudence. In a very slow and sober voice. "Did you know it?"

"I—I rather thought so," said Prudence, with a little quivering of her sensitive lips. But she smiled immediately. "I—I don't mind a bit," she said bravely, in gentle apology for that betrayal of her lips.

CHAPTER VI

Jerry Calls for Help

Jerrold returned to his home that night in an unnaturally depressed and embittered frame of mind. Why should he, he demanded of Prudence in a stern voice, be saddled with a protege like that—as big as himself, and who by his own admission knew nothing of motor cars beyond the steering wheel. Prudence agreed with him that it was perfectly reprehensible on the part of their daughter, and she couldn't imagine what things were coming to with this new generation! She balanced herself on the edge of the bathtub while he was shaving, followed him meekly into the room they shared together and stood patently beside him at the dressing-table while he viciously jerked a fresh tie into place.

"It's the way you've raised her," he said in a tone that cleared himself of



Jerry Stood Up, Looked Her Father Straight in the Face, Her Voice Was Very Gentle. "Why Can't I?" Was All She Said.

all moral responsibility for Jerry at least, however much Duane might rest upon his shoulders.

"I know it," Prudence agreed meekly. And then she told her husband that she hoped he would be very tactful that night when Jerry came home, so that things might work themselves out to a neat conclusion without interference on his part.

"Tact? What do you mean tact?" he demanded.

"Tact—you know what tact is, don't you? It means, say nothing and believe everything you hear," she explained sweepingly. "It means, don't say a word to Jerry about the young man, don't so much as breathe his name—and if she mentions him of her own accord, believe everything she says even if you know she's making it up word for word as she goes along."

Jerrold, who had always found her counsel good, consented to follow the dictates of tact as she portrayed it in his dealing with Jerry. And so all during dinner they talked with passionate concentration of a thousand things that on this night interested them not in the least—of Jerry's houses and her struggles with labor problems, of Jerrold's business, and Prudence's innocent pursuits, of politics, wars and religion, but not one of the three raised a voice on the subject of Duane Allerton.

After dinner they sat down for a practice game of three-handed bridge, but when Prudence, playing spades, revoked twice in hot succession without a word of protest from her opponents, she put her cards on the table.

"You're not paying attention," she accused them. "How can you expect to teach me to play bridge unless you watch me? I trumped hearts twice, and here I have two hearts in my hand, and now I don't know what to do with them."

Jerry laughed. "Pretend they're trumps. Anything is fair if you can get away with it," she said indifferently.

And then her father, abandoning the admonitions of Prudence and the guidance of tact, turned on her in desperation.

"See here, Jerry, I'll stand for a lot—and heaven knows I've had to—but when it comes to bringing a strange young man out here from New York and dumping him down on me without warning, and washing your hands of him in cold blood—well, you can't do it."

Jerry stood up. She looked her father straight in the face, but her voice was very gentle. "Why can't I?" was all she said.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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Sunday School
'Lesson'

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D.D., Dean of the Evening School, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)
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Lesson for October 4

PAUL IN ATHENS

LESSON TEXT—Acts 17:16-34.
GOLDEN TEXT—"For Him we live, and move, and have our being."—Acts 17:28.
PRIMARY TOPIC—Paul Tells the People About God.
JUNIOR TOPIC—Paul Preaches on Mars' Hill.
INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—God the Father of All Mankind.
YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—True and False Ideas of God.

I. The Idolatry of the Athenians (v. 16).

Athens was the intellectual metropolis of the world at that time, the home of the world's greatest eloquence and philosophy. Paul's spirit was stirred within him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

II. Paul Disputing With the Athenians (vv. 17-21).

1. In the Synagogue (v. 17a). True to his usual custom, he went into the Jewish synagogue and entered into earnest argument with the Jews and devout persons.

2. In the Market Place (vv. 17b-21). From the Jews he turned to such as were found in the market place. Here he came into touch with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. The former were atheistic materialists. They denied the doctrine of creation, and gave themselves up to sensual indulgences since they rejected the idea of a future judgment. The latter were pantheists. When they heard the preaching of Paul they desired to know what new doctrine he preached, so they invited him to the Areopagus where he might speak to them of his new doctrine. They inquired as to what this "babbling" might say. Since the Athenians spent their whole time either in telling or hearing some new thing, they were willing to listen to Paul. The word, "babbling" means literally, "seed picker." They conceived Paul to be a globe-trotter who had gathered up seeds of truth here and there over the world, and that he was somewhat like themselves, interested in talking about that which he knew.

III. Paul's Address on Mars' Hill (vv. 22-31).

1. The Introduction (vv. 22-23). He did not accuse them of superstition, but as in the Revised Version, he introduces his discourse in a courteous and conciliatory manner, stating that he perceived that they were very religious. This he explains by saying that as he was viewing their city he beheld an altar with an inscription to the unknown god. This was his point of contact. He proceeded at once to connect it with the idea of the living God, implying that this altar had been erected to Him.

2. The Body of His Discourse (vv. 24-31).

(1) A Declaration Concerning God (v. 24-25). He created the material universe (v. 24). This was a direct blow at the philosophy of both the Epicureans and the Stoics.

b. His Spirituality and Imminence (v. 24-25). He is not worshiped with men's hands as though He needs anything, neither is He confined by any sort of a religious temple. Being essentially spiritual, He demands heart service, and being transcendent, above all, He is not confined to earthly temples.

c. His Active Providence (v. 25). He gives existence, bestows needed gifts, and as sovereign, directs all things.

(2) A Declaration Concerning Man (vv. 26-31).

a. This was a blow at the foolish Athenian pride which supposed that they were superior to all other people. This proposition he proved from their own literature (v. 28).

b. Nations have their place by the sovereign purpose of God (v. 29).

c. Men Should Seek God (v. 27). His goodness and grace in supplying all our needs, and ordering that even the affairs of the nations should move men to seek and seek God.

d. The Pressing Obligation to Repent (vv. 30-31). This was his supreme message.

IV. Results of Paul's Preaching (vv. 32-34).

1. Some Mocked (v. 32). This is even the case today. Men and women will mock the preacher who preaches a judgment to come.

2. Some Procrastinated (v. 32). Many do not mock, but they hesitate to accept and act upon the urgency of the message.

3. Some Believed (v. 34). Wherever the gospel is preached there are some who believe and are saved.

As Men Succeed

Men succeed in proportion to the fixity of their views and the invincibility of their purpose. If you can find out a man's quitting point, the place where he gives up, turns back, you can measure him pretty easy.—Marden.

Children's Prayers

Jesus loves to hear the earnest prayer of a little boy or girl more than He does a long hypocritical prayer of a big preacher.—Gospel Minister.

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