

Prudence's Daughter

By ETHEL HUESTON

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CHAPTER IX—Continued

Jerrold carefully assisted Prudence and Jerry into the car and sat in the corner beside them, holding Jerry's hand.

Jerrold would have considered it an affectation to have a chauffeur drive him about town, "able-bodied and in my right mind for the most part," as he always said, but on rare and state occasions like the present he had one of the boys from the factory take them out while he sat with the others in the tonneau of the limousine, rigidly erect and alert and always prepared for the worst.

Jerry laughed at him. "Settle down, father, settle down," she urged, snuggling her fingers closer into his hand. "We'll die together, en famille, that's one comfort."

Jerry's fingers were like ice. But there was nothing of drooping sadness in her pose; rather with a strained alertness she remained stiffly upright, her eyes brilliant, her slender chin tilted to an unwonted high degree.

They knew everyone at the clubhouse, and as they made their way to the table reserved for them in a far corner they were obliged to stop by many chairs for a laughing word with one and another. They saw Duane on the moment of their entrance. He was at a table with Irvin Weatherby and his wife and Edith, the oldest of his three daughters. Happily, that table was not directly on the aisle they passed through. They lifted their hands to Jerry as she went by, nodding, laughing, and Jerry swept them all in a quick, bright greeting, forming the words, "I'll see you later," with her lips as she passed.

Duane was amazed at the studied perfection of her manner, the absolutely impersonal friendliness of her glance.

"Let me get someone to sit with us," Jerrold suggested, as they reached their table. "I'm afraid I may seem dull. We should have made up a party."

Jerry put a pleading hand on his arm. "No, father, please. I'd so much rather be—just by ourselves."

"I don't want him to think you—we—I don't want anyone to think—anything."

Jerrold floundered for words. In his partisanship of Jerry, he would have no stranger, not Duane Allerton nor any other, have a chance to suspect her of any loneliness or subject to any slight.

Jerry smiled gratefully for his concern as she slipped prettily into her chair. She shook her head.

"You certainly are a sweet old thing, father. But I am not trying to impress him. I don't care to make him jealous. I don't want to try any childish bluffing. I just feel like having you and mother. So why bother?"

For at least the thousandth time in his life Jerrold told himself proudly that Jerry was a little brick. She looked about the great room with her usual air of friendly interest, nodded to her friends here and there, chatted a little with those near her, and discussed the gowns, complexions and coiffures of the other women with her mother. She even made a brave pretense of eating her dinner as if she were placed before her. But when once in a while her fingers touched her father's hand, the icy chill of them cut him like a flash.

At first, in his loyalty to her, he would not even look across to the Weatherby table after that first greeting as they entered the room. But finally, when he realized that Jerry had herself perfectly in hand and needed no anxiety of his, he turned that way. Duane's eyes, smoldering, somber, were fixed upon her lovely profile, the cloudy blackness of her dark hair, the creamy whiteness of her throat and the shoulder half turned from him.

Jerrold could not withhold a friendly, sympathetic smile, and Duane responded with a grateful, unsmiling nod.

"Any fool could see what's in his mind," Jerrold thought. "The whole town will be buzzing with it now."

When they went into the ballroom the orchestra was playing. They found a pleasant place for Prudence to sit, and Jerry danced with her father. Then she danced with young Doctor Morse, and then with Newton Marklin, each time returning to her place beside her mother. It was after the third dance, when Duane had performed his duty as guest to his hostess and to Edith and had sat out a stupid dance with old Mr. Weatherby, that he excused himself with stumbling words, and with stubborn determination, with trepidation in his heart, he turned his steps toward Jerry.

They saw him coming. Jerrold's pleasant smile froze upon his features, and he toyed nervously with the narrow chain at his watch. Prudence held her breath. Only Jerry kept up her light, bright chatter, although her fingers shook. Duane continued doggedly toward her, his eyes upon the cloudy blackness of her hair.

Jerrold spoke quickly as he drew near, holding out his hand. His voice was very friendly.

"Oh, hello, Duane. How do you like the Middle West at its very wickedest?"

"Oh very much, sir, thank you," Duane clung to his hand like a man drowning, but Jerrold passed him on, perforce, to Prudence.

"You've met my wife, I know—" "Oh, yes, Mrs. Harmer. But it seems a very long time. It is very good to see you again."

Prudence lifted her hand, lifted both hands, greeted him with a warm, almost foolish effusiveness, but she could not postpone the inevitable. He looked beyond her to Jerry.

"G—good evening," he said lamely, and his eyes were riveted to the haughty lift of her chin.

Jerry smiled. Mindful of the eyes of the friendly, always interested home town, she lifted a slender, ice-cold hand and dropped it for a moment in his. She caught her breath at the sudden contact. If he retained it, if he drew it warmly into his, caressed it, as he had done in the studio that unforgotten and unforgettable night, she knew she could not withstand the tenderness of his touch. Duane held it barely a second longer than is allowed by a strict convention, and released it slowly.

"W—will you sit down?" she offered generously, in gratitude for his relinquishment.

The way he dropped into a chair beside her gave somehow the impression of a ship tossed in a stormy sea, suddenly and surprisingly finding that its anchor held.

"Oh, mother, look!" said Jerry brightly. "There's Judge Harris and his new little wife from California." She explained to Duane: "Judge Harris is one of the city pillars, has been

for centuries, it seems. And a few weeks ago he amazed everybody by marrying a seventeen-year-old girl on the Coast. Naturally he is our chief subject of gossip. She is pretty, isn't she? Perhaps people will think she is only his daughter."

Duane professed a tremendous interest in the wild marriage of the old judge, and the four of them discussed it down to the minutest detail, until the subject sank of its own weight and died away.

There was an awkward interval.

"Will you dance, Mrs. Harmer?" Prudence stood up at once. "I'd love to," she declared, quite as if she meant it.

Then Jerry laughed. She touched her hand to Duane's arm. "Let me warn you! Mother cannot dance. She is likely to do perfectly terrible things on the floor. Father and I have been teaching her to dance for twenty years, and she can't do it yet! She's only trying to be polite to you."

"Oh, Jerry," protested Prudence, blushing. "Sometimes I am sure I get along quite nicely."

"I am not a bit alarmed," Duane assured her. And then to Jerry, very pleadingly, "Please wait."

Prudence had a little difficulty getting the step at first. "Is—is it a waltz?" she asked apologetically. "I never can tell the silly things apart."

He laughed at her confusion. "It's a fox-trot. Never mind. We'll get on finely, I know. Just walk. Why, your daughter was very unjust to you—you dance famously! And all my fears were groundless."

Prudence was in a desperate quandary. She so wanted to be pleasant to the poor boy, but when she talked she always lost the step. She danced conscientiously half-way around the room, before she spoke.

"I am so glad to see you again, Mr. Allerton. I—I wish things were a little different. I know we should be very good friends—if we had a chance."

"Would you mind—I suppose you would rather not call me—Duane," he said hopefully yet diffidently.

"I'd love to. It is a nice name,

isn't it? And Jerrold and I always speak of you as Duane—when we are alone."

Duane smiled a little ruefully at that. "Your husband is wonderful to me," he said. "I never met anyone like him before. He—he is just fine."

"Yes, isn't he? I knew you would like him."

Duane patiently helped her back into the rhythm, and when they were dancing smoothly again, unable to resist his great desire to talk of Jerry, he said:

"She is so beautiful, isn't she? She seems lovelier every time I see her."

"Yes, she is a beautiful girl. Everyone says so."

"She always seems so—well poised—so sophisticated. She is always sure of herself, never perturbed. Sophisticated, that is the word for it. That was what deceived me about her at first."

"Yes, she looks sophisticated, but really she is the most innocent and artless thing imaginable. You'd be surprised."

"Yes, I was."

"Girls are like that now. They get that air of advanced maturity when they are no more than children. They talk of the most intimate and—secret—things in the most outspoken manner. And they don't really know what they are talking about! They pick up a lot of superficial expressions from the books they read, from plays, from movies—they think it is quite clever to repeat what they hear—clever and just a bit shocking. At heart they are just as innocent as we were when we were young. But they sound—oh, so very much worse! If the twins had talked the way girls do now—well, I should probably have spanked them."

"I don't think the others are like Jerry, though—such an air of assurance, and such artless innocence beneath it."

"Oh, yes, Duane, most young girls are like that in the beginning. And men never understand it. They think girls really know and understand the things they talk about so freely. They don't at all. And so quite innocently they lead them on and on—"

"And whose fault, Mrs. Harmer, in the end? It was mine, I know, in our case. But I was sure she was—playing the game. I never dreamed of anything else. The way she looked, the way she talked—"

"Why, Duane, I've heard those girls, Jerry and her friends, say things to each other, discuss things, that honestly I should not dream of saying to one of my sisters—even to Jerrold! They don't know what they're talking about, I tell you. They think it's smart to appear sophisticated and wise—and at heart they are children. Oh, after a while they learn—but they haven't yet. Isn't it too bad that men don't understand them—as their mothers do?"

When they returned to Jerrold and Jerry, who were waiting for them, Prudence said brightly:

"Now, you see, Jerry, I did very well, after all! I was only out of step a time or two, wasn't I, Duane—Mr. Allerton? And we talked all the time, and you know usually I can't talk when I'm dancing. I think I may learn after all—in time."

Others came up, joined the little group, chatted a while and drifted on. When the music began again Duane turned to Jerry.

"W—will you dance?"

"Yes," she answered briefly.

When they had moved away, Jerrold turned to Prudence.

"She can say what she likes, and you may believe it if you want to. But Jerry wanted to dance with him. Half a dozen boys came up and asked her to dance, and she made excuses every time. She was just waiting for him to come back."

Prudence smiled at his stupidity and said nothing.

Jerry and Duane had danced the full length of the room without a word between them.

"Jerry," he said at last, very softly. "I realize, of course, that you were this gown mostly in defiance, but I hope it was just a little bit for remembrance too."

"Mr. Allerton, please—"

"Duane," he interrupted. "You called me Duane in New York that night."

She lifted a slender shoulder, abandoned the use of the name entirely. "I would not for the world humiliate you before other people. But you must help me. They know I met you in New York—they are watching us to gether. Make it easy for me, won't you? Stay away from me. Talk to others—"

"Jerry, how can you ask me to see anyone else when you are here?"

"Oh, please don't!"

"They danced for a while in silence. 'Jerry! Was it a little for remembrance?'"

me talk to you—just once—let me tell you—let me explain—"

"There isn't a thing in the world to tell me, a thing in the world to explain. I understand you perfectly—now. And I am not such a fool as to think you don't understand me as well. I know you do." And then she added bitterly, "With the experience you've had."

His eyes contracted sharply at the cruelty of her words. "You didn't need to turn the knife, Jerry. The first cut was sharp enough."

Again they danced in silence.

"Jerry, I love you. Doesn't that make any difference?"

"No. If you love me—it does not make any difference."

After a long interval he said, very softly: "Jerry, tell me, when you are with me—like this—doesn't it make you think a little bit—of that night in the studio? You were so sweet, Jerry. You were the loveliest thing I ever saw. I shall never forget the feeling I had when you first looked up at me—the flame-colored gown—your cloudy black hair—and, most of all, that brave, glad brightness in your eyes. Oh, Jerry, it was a wonderful night—you can't deny that—it was a beautiful night—you can't—"

"Don't do that!" Jerry's voice was very low, very intense. "Don't! I am trying—so hard—to let things go—When you talk to me—like that—I've just got to be insulting to you to keep—"

"To keep from loving me, Jerry," he finished, when her voice faltered.

Jerry lifted her misty blue eyes under the shadowing fringe of the dark lashes, looked at him, directly, very frankly, and answered surprisingly:

"Yes."

"Oh, Jerry," he pleaded. "You love me already. You can't put me off any longer, you—"

A slight, almost imperceptible movement, and Jerry was free of his arm. She called softly across to Newton Macklin, standing near them:

"Oh, Newton, we have been looking everywhere for you." When he had joined them she slipped her fingers in his arm. She looked at Duane with ice-cold eyes, and smiled, with ice-cold lips. "It was a wonderful dance, Mr. Allerton. Will you tell mother I am going with Newton to find Rae Forsythe, and that I shall stay with the girls for a while? Thank you so much."

Duane merely bowed, said nothing, and turned away.

"Newton," Jerry whispered faintly, "I feel sick. Will you take me home? Mother is having such a nice time I don't want to bother her. Will you take me home, and then come back and tell her later on?"

CHAPTER X

Jerry's Plaything

In the first week of December there was a heavy Middle West blizzard, and for two days the city covered under stinging winds and cutting sleet. After that came a still, biting cold, that warmed gradually to a blanketing snowfall. And on the fifth day when the streets were packed to a slick but solid bottom, Jerry, unable to endure the brooding loneliness of her thoughts any longer, got out the roadster and went for a careful ice-cold ride between fields of dazzling whiteness, along roadways flanked with snow-bowed trees.

It was late in the afternoon when she turned back. As she drove through town, at the corner of Sixth and Locust streets she was held up by the traffic officer, standing foremost of the cars awaiting his signal. Jerry waited, as always, with alert eyes on the officer's hand, her foot poised for a sharp pressure on the gas throttle to make the quick get-away on which she prided herself, when the tide of the traffic was turned.

"Jerry! You beautiful thing!" The half-tender, half-mocking voice was directly beside her. Jerry caught her breath. She did not turn her head, did not waver her intent gaze upon the detaining officer. She knew without looking that he was close to the car, leaning toward her, his chin grimly set, his eyes unsmiling. Jerry knew she could endure no more.

In that moment she received the signal. She flung the car into gear, pressed hard upon the throttle, and the "Baby" sprang forward like a catapult. Jerry heard a warning whistle from the officer to reprove her for her reckless speed, but she did not pause nor look behind. She drove with wild, iron-set muscles up the beautiful, glistening avenue, and whirled into the garage behind the house. Jerry had reached the end of her resistance. As in her childish days she had struggled with the broken toy until convinced of her impotency, so now she realized the ineffectiveness of her struggle against the love of this man. She would leave it to Prudence and Jerrold.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Meerschaum Pipes

Meerschaum is the name given to one of the silicates of magnesium. It is a mineral of white, creamy color, and receives its name from its appearance and the position in which it is sometimes found, suggesting that it was petrified foam from the sea. It is obtained from various places, but the best quality comes from Asia Minor. Rich deposits of it exist at a place called Sepeteh, about twenty miles from Eskichehr. It is soft when dug, but becomes hard when dry. Most of it is sent to Vienna, or was before the war, where it was made into tobacco pipes, many of them highly artistic. Similar pipes are made in London and Paris. The pipes are cut into shape and afterward polished.



SHE EXPLAINS

Mabel—You and Harold seem inseparable.
Gertrude—We are together a great deal; you see, Mabel, I take a peculiar interest in him.
Mabel—Oh, you do?
Gertrude—Yes. I was engaged to him at one time, and in love with him at another.

Efficiency

"Er . . . Peters—on passing the servants' hall today—I am under the impression that I—er—saw you—ah—embracing one of the maids."
"Yes, madam—what time would that be, madam?"
"About three o'clock."
"Oh, yes, madam. That would have been Ellen, madam!"—Passing Show.

HAD UTILIZED THE FAT



"What attraction can you find in that fathead you go with, Maud?"
"That fathead has made soap enough to net a million, my dear."

Hopeless Crudity

We turn to vitamins so strong
As a nutritious means,
Yet in our secret hearts we long
For plain old pork and beans.

Development

They were having one of those little spats so common among married couples.
"And to think," sniffed the wife, "that when you married me you used to call me a 'little dear.'"
"Perhaps I did," hubby grimly replied, "but since then you've developed into a big expense."

Bad Start

"I love you with my whole heart," averred the young man.
"No, you don't," said the girl.
"Huh?"
"One does not love with his heart, but with his brain."
"Well, do you mean to imply that I have none?"

Honesty

Mrs. Hoyle—You have a car, of course?
Mrs. Doyle—Yes.
Mrs. Hoyle—What make is it?
Mrs. Doyle—The same as the others on the trolley line.

Shopping

"It's so hard to find what you want when you're shopping."
"Isn't it, though? Especially, if you don't know what you want."

MONSTER



Wife—I have to do all my work single-handed!
Hubbie—Have you hurt one of your hands, dear?

Helpful!

Lives of great men all remind us
We should all be great also
If we only had behind us
What it was that made them go.

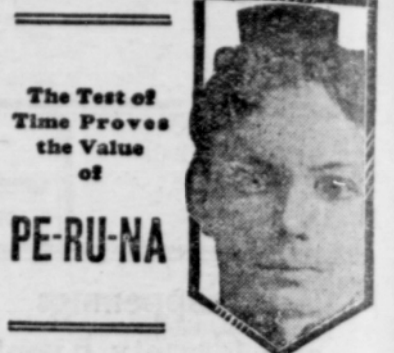
Hopeful

Teller—Sorry, madam, but I can't cash this check unless you get some responsible person to indorse it for you.
Mrs. Newed—Oh, won't you do that, please? You look responsible enough for me.

Argument for Divorce

"What makes you say your husband is domineering?"
"Your honor, he wants me to bait my own hook when fishing."

All Other Remedies Failed



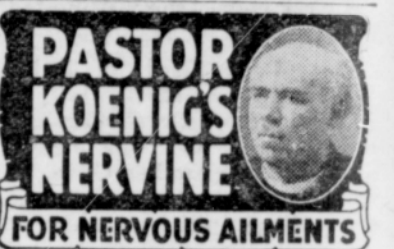
The Test of Time Proves the Value of PE-RU-NA

Under the date of March 6, 1902, Mrs. Maggie Durbin, 139 Riverside Ave., Little Rock, Arkansas, has this to say about her experience: "I was troubled for five years with a chronic disease. I tried everything I heard of, but nothing did me any good. Some doctors said my trouble was catarrh of the bowels, others consumption of the bowels. The medicine I took did no good. A friend advised me to try PE-RU-NA. I did. After taking two bottles I found it was helping me and continued. Am now sound and well."

A letter from Mrs. Durbin, dated December 12, 1923, shows that, even after twenty-two years, she is in the best of health: "I still recommend PE-RU-NA to my friends who need a good medicine and everybody is pleased. I thank you many times for what PE-RU-NA has done for me."

There is nothing strange in this experience of Mrs. Durbin. It has been repeated thousands of times by sufferers from catarrh and catarrhal diseases.

For sale everywhere in tablet or liquid form
Send 4 cents postage to the PE-RU-NA COMPANY, Columbus, Ohio, for booklet on catarrh.



PRICE \$1.50
Write for FREE BOOKLET
If your druggist cannot supply, you order forwarding charges prepaid, from KOENIG MEDICINE CO., 1048 N. WELLS ST., CHICAGO, ILL.

New Idea in Night Clubs

In the large cities where they have "night clubs," which are in reality only exclusive or semi-exclusive cafes for dancing and entertainment, a tiny baby grand piano has been placed on rollers and the player rolls it around the floor, playing particular pieces of music for the guests as they may request. The piano is small enough to be rolled in between the tables and its tones are eminently satisfactory, it is said.

Build Up Your Health With DR. PIERCE'S GOLDEN MEDICAL DISCOVERY

If You Would Avoid COUGHS, COLDS, GRIPPE.

A Tonic which Dr. Pierce prescribed when in active practice 60 years ago.
In Liquid or Tablets, at your Dealers.
Send 10c to Dr. Pierce's Invalids' Hotel, Buffalo, N. Y., for trial pink Tablets.

The Master Mind

Peck—Where are you going, my dear?
Mrs. Peck—Where I please.
Peck—But when will you be back?
Mrs. Peck—When I choose.
Peck—Ah, yes! Of course! But not a moment later; I forbid it!—Boston Transcript.

Burning Skin Diseases

quickly relieved and healed by Cole's Carbolic Acid. Leaves no scars. No medicine chest complete without it. 50c and 80c at druggists or J. W. Cole Co., 127 S. Euclid Ave., Oak Park, Ill.—Adv.

Submarine Cables

The submarine cables that supply Penang, Straits Settlements, with current from the new power station at Penang, are the longest ever manufactured in one length, each being four and one-half miles long.

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BELLANS FOR INDIGESTION 25¢ and 75¢ Pkgs. Sold Everywhere

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Soap, Ointment, Talcum sold everywhere