

JUST IN TIME

BY ADELINE SERGEANT, AUTHOR OF "JACOB'S WIFE," "UNDER THE BIRCH TREES," ETC.

CHAPTER XXIV. (Continued.)

"I must confess," said the diary, "that I was thoroughly put out of temper by Miss D.'s interference. But there was worse to come. It seems that I am universally regarded as a sort of dry nurse, mentor, tutor—heaven knows what—to my cousin; and instead of going straight to him the good folks here come to me with his delinquencies. I had turned into the village when I was accosted, at his own garden gate, by the parish minister, Mr. Macdonald. He is a grey-haired, stern-looking man, with a great sense of duty—but also, I should imagine, a very tender heart. I had seen him several times during Bertie's illness. 'Will you step in for a few minutes?' he said. 'There's a little matter I want to talk over with you.'"

or with him after a scene of that kind. Let me set down what passed between us while the memory of it is fresh, so that I may not afterwards be deluded into thinking either that I myself was peculiarly patient, or that he would hear reason. "He came in, as I expected, about six o'clock, utterly flustered and worried. A bad moment for my remonstrance; but I had been too much irritated during the day to think of postponing it. (N. B.—My first mistake. I made plenty more before I had done.) "He did not seem satisfied by the results of his visit, whatever they may have been; and, after dinner, he threw himself down on the sofa in a dispirited sort of way and took up a newspaper. We had spoken little during our meal; I had waited until we were quite alone before I began to say what I had to say. Then—mistake number two—I made a formal opening, which put him on guard at once. "If you are at liberty, I said, 'I should be glad of a few minutes' conversation with you.' "He flung down his newspaper with an impatient groan. 'Oh, it's come at last, has it?' he said. 'I've been expecting it. Well, go on, Anthony.' "You have been expecting me to say what I think of your conduct during the last week or two, have you? I asked. "Exactly. Out with it, as fast as you can and get it over. Only I forewarn you, I mean to answer no questions. "If that is the case, I might as well hold my tongue. "I wish to heaven, Anthony, he said with sudden seriousness, 'that you would.' "This is absurd, I said, in a tone which I know now to have been far too authoritative. 'You must answer me, I have a right to ask questions, and I claim to be answered.' "What right? and what claim? "For a moment I was silent. I had the right, and I had the claim, but he did not know the full extent of either. And I did not want him to know. I answered rather lamely, 'I am older than you. I am your nearest relation. I have some right to know what you are doing.' "Oh, yes, you are my heir, said he lightly. 'I had forgotten that. But I am not doing anything prejudicial to your interests.' "I am not considering my own interests, I said, drawing myself away from his touch. You cannot wish me to expose myself to such reproach as the one you have favored me with. You and I meet for the last time as friends unless you will give me some assurance that you have not acted, and do not mean to act, dishonorably. "His face changed. He flushed violently and then he grew pale. He looked at me for a few seconds, silently, with set lips and contracted brows. 'Do me a favor, he then said, 'that you require any such assurance from me?' "After the way that you have behaved lately, I cried, 'you may think you're self-lofty if all your assurances sound in the world's ears. For myself I may believe you, but I doubt if others will.' "Then I might as well spare myself the trouble,' he said quietly, and with an entire air of self-command. "What? I said, you refuse me your word? "Most certainly I do. Your mode of asking for it is offensive. If you cannot trust me without assurances, you are not likely to do so with them. "We part then? "That must be as you please, he said. "Once more I turned to go. Again he detained me—this time by a question. "Before you go have you any specific charge to bring against me? You have spoken vaguely. What do you think I am doing? "I think, I said brutally, 'that you have fallen in love with Mrs. Drummond, are you going to jilt Lady Lillias Ruthven for Mrs. Drummond's sake.' "Ah, he said in the coolest possible tone. 'Thanks. I thought as much.' "And allow me to tell you, I continued, 'that if you do this thing you will be guilty of the blackest treachery that man could devise. Lady Lillias Ruthven has been unkind enough, from all accounts, to give you her affections; she has borne trouble and pain and banishment on your account; and yet you—after five or six months' separation from her—you can bear to insult her, to mortify her, by throwing her over for a milliner's apprentice with a pretty face and a dubious history? "That's enough. Don't insult a woman of whom you know nothing,' he said, abruptly. "Are you so infatuated? I asked. 'A word against this girl is enough to rouse you, is it? I am sorry for it. Some men would have been so angry before this—by being accused of such an act of ignominious treachery at all. You could bear that, if it seems. It needs a word against your own mistress.' "Are you mad, Anthony? he cried. But I went on. "Mad! I have been mad indeed to think that a spark of honor and manliness existed in you. I have tested you long enough. You are unworthy of the position I have let you hold—so far. If you had behaved with common honesty and fairness I would never have lifted a finger to turn you out. But you don't deserve it. You are not fit to have other men's fortunes in your hand. Glenberrie belongs to me, and before God I swear that I will have it." "I clutched the table as I spoke, for the room seemed to reel before my eyes. For a moment or two I could neither see nor hear distinctly. He uttered an exclamation of anger or astonishment—I know not which; but when I came to myself I saw that he was standing on the other side of the table, regarding me with anything but anger in his face. Indeed, there was something in it not unlike pity and anxiety, instead of the indignation I had expected to confront.

He was singularly pale, but after a few minutes' silence he spoke calmly. "If Glenberrie is yours by law," he said, "I shall be only too glad to give it up. Do you mean that you can substantiate this claim?" "I can—and I will." "He bowed his head. 'I desire nothing better,' he said simply. Then, while I stood panting a little with the overwhelming rush of emotion which my own words had caused me, confused, half-blinded thoughts, he went on with a dignity of manner which struck me even at that moment as something new and noteworthy. Where did he get it from, I wonder? In some man I should have said that it came from a consciousness of integrity; but in this case—no, that could not be. Before you go," he said, "let me give you a word of warning. It is possible that we may never meet again as friends by terms, because, as you know, you will have to take back what you have said to-night before it can be forgotten or forgiven; but one thing I will say first. You have had a hard life, a hard training, you were wronged by your kinsmen and strangers; I should say you have fought your way through as much difficulty and danger as ever fell to one man's lot, and you have been very successful. But you have not come out unscathed. You believe in no one's honesty but your own. You judge harshly and bitterly of any man whom God has put into a higher position in the world than your own. You think wealth always means wickedness. Well, that is where you are wrong. Wealth lies in that. Until you open your eyes to see men's good points as well as their bad ones you will never believe in friendship, or love, or truth. And then he walked straight out of the room without giving me the opportunity to reply. I heard his lock himself into his room. There was nothing for me to do but to go at once. "So ends the farce of friendship and cousinly affection, I suppose. I would give the world to recall what I said about Glenberrie, but it is too late now. I must go through with it. After all, I did tell him the truth. He deserved it. He deserved that he should lose a position that he has not known how to uphold worthily. I may do no better in the long-run, but at any rate I have broken no woman's heart; I have never thrown away my honor for a toy. If I could but get rid of one lurking doubt of the question— "Here the page was torn across. There was no more. TO BE CONTINUED.

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Ben Miller. Mr. Thomas Glenhill has purchased the Bonmillier store and is now in possession. Tom is right good fellow and we hope to see him do a good business. Thos. Elliott, our late merchant, is still in our midst busy collecting accounts; we believe he intends taking a situation elsewhere; he will be missed. The work on the new bridge is progressing favorably; the contractor, Mr. Hardy, had to take down the old one sooner than he intended as his timber did not arrive as soon as he expected. Most of the fall wheat in this neighborhood will be cut this week if the weather proves favorable. At the late meeting of the High Court O. P. Mr. G. Handy was appointed D. D. H. C. R. for the West Riding of Huron. We expect to hear of him organizing some new Courts shortly. "Leaves have their time to fall," says the poet; but Wild Strawberry leaves are on the rise just now, being utilized in such enormous quantities in making Dr. Fowler's Extract of Wild Strawberry—the infallible remedy for Cholera, Malaria, Diarrhoea and other Summer Complaints. The Niagara Falls, according to a Toronto traveller, is "der sublimity of vet-ness."

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Of falling health, whether in the form of Night Sweats and Nervousness, or in a sense of General Weakness and Loss of Appetite, should suggest the use of Ayer's Sarsaparilla. This preparation is most effective for giving tone and strength to the enfeebled system, promoting the digestion and assimilation of food, restoring the nervous forces to their normal condition, and for purifying, enriching, and vitalizing the blood.

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I have been greatly benefited by the prompt use of Ayer's Sarsaparilla. It tones and invigorates the system, regulates the action of the digestive and assimilative organs, and vitalizes the blood. It is, without doubt, the most reliable blood purifier yet discovered.—E. P. Johnson, 325 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

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