

PRUDENCE

(Continued.)

VII.

Mrs. Crane was looking at the large mass of color representing that most pathetic, marvellous moment in the life of Christ, Prudence was also studying the picture, but with the air of one ready to slip into smiles at anything more interesting and attractively personal.

"Oh, Jonas," said Mrs. Crane, brightly, "as she extended a cordial hand—Prudence looked delighted, and made room for Jonas at her side."

"Now," said Mrs. Crane, "this is just what a clergyman ought to like, and isn't it wonderful? Just look at those Jewish women, and those children—! That dear little thing—there! Isn't it perfect?"

Jonas looked. "There is a great deal of color, he said, critically. "Oh, but you know," said Mrs. Crane, "that's what they like so over here now. Don't you remark it?—They make color a perfect—a perfect idol."

Jonas, whose eyes had unconsciously been filled with the tender harmonies in Cornwall Gardens, answered nothing for a moment. Then he said, studying the picture.

"Well, it isn't my idea of the scene. And he turned to Miss Marlett. "Prudence looks very tired," he said, smiling.

"Oh, no wonder," said Mrs. Crane. "She's been to such a ball. She's bewildered with invitations and attentions, and now Lady Frances Holbrook wants to go to her ball, and she's in the country. Really I had no idea, until I came over, the English were so cordial."

"They're perfectly lovely," said Prudence. "Don't you want to come and have some lunch with us? If I'm tired, so do you. Come, Aunt Rebecca, do remember all this to be done before this evening."

Mrs. Crane stood up with a pleased sort of importance. "Yes," she said, looking at Jonas for approbation, "Prudence is regularly in society."

Prudence laughed. It was her old gay laugh, yet her eyes sought those of Jonas with a furtive air. "Aren't you proud of me, Jonas?" she said, coaxingly.

"Of course," he answered, gravely; "but I wish you looked less tired." He stood up and followed the ladies down stairs, where they took a cab, and Jonas, sitting opposite to Mrs. Crane, listened to her discourse upon London society, now and then glancing at Prudence, who was looking at him with a faint smile to read in it some expression of sympathy with his distrust. But there was none. The girl was contented, supremely happy. She ate her luncheon, and talked about the afternoon, freely imparting her plans to Jonas, displaying a little note-book full of engagements, and wondering whether she should enjoy the theatre. Mrs. Crane touched Jonas's arm with a significant smile.

"Of course she will," he said, radiantly. "We know who'll be there, and that young Mr. Simonson. Did you know, Jonas, his uncle is a real lord over here, and one day he is to have the title."

"I know," said Jonas. "Well," said Mrs. Crane, drawing a long breath, "I think if some people in London would hear of our doings, they would be surprised."

"I am writing home to-night," said Jonas, a little grimly. "What shall I say?"

"Oh, what you like. Tell them about Prudence's success here."

It was the second time he had heard the word applied to the girl who was so much in vogue with the world with his very life, but coming from Mrs. Crane it had a boldness and a reality which he could not resist.

"How am I to say that, Prue?" he said, smiling across the table upon Prue's contented countenance.

"Oh," said the girl gayly, "call it fun—that's what it is. Tell them I'm having a perfectly splendid time."

"I am writing to George Mayberry," said Jonas, "and I won't forget your message."

In spite of his many obligations, the ladies declared after luncheon they had an hour or two on their hands, and went like young ladies to take a walk to see something. He was eager enough for their service, and standing in the Abbey Street, hurriedly examined the places as he considered likely to interest them. Westminster occurred to them first as peculiarly congenial. The Abbey was one of the spots which Jonas had frequently discussed with Prudence in a remote way, added by stereoscopic views and a magazine article or two they read together during the winter evenings. It hurt him a little to see that the calm radiance of his face remained unchanged while he made his suggestion, and when they were in a cab whirling toward the Abbey she said, with her lovely smile, "Westminster, isn't it? And almost before Jonas answers to her kind words, she turned to ask some trivial question of her aunt."

But in the Abbey Prudence's flitting thoughts concentrated; solennized by the silent, hidden presences to which Jonas conducted her, reverencing, he could lift his face up to the very vault of Heaven with bare head, but he stood among them. Prue looked, asked questions, and listened to Jonas with respectful attention; but what would he not have given for an hour of the old sweet companionship, in which the girl gave freely all that she had to give, while he unlocked the store-house of his mind lavished on her his long train of deep, whole-souled nature! There had not been no promise for the future exchanged between them, had only seemed to strengthen his devotion and her trustful dependence. She knew—their hearts had known long ago—she was only waiting to speak until she was older, in obedience to a promise made her dead brother. Six months ago he and Prudence would have stood in this grand old monastery with that one feeling, and now the girl was listening and looking because she knew it was a part of her education, and it would be silly to forget the names and the tombs, and Jonas's descriptions were more interesting than the guide-book, or even a venter. As for Jonas, he seemed himself bravely to the subtle change in their relationship, and went on, elaborating if possible more than he would have done had his heart been less sad. Mrs. Crane was brilliant, alert, and smilingly sarcastic in her remarks. She meant to write home very well and solemnly on the subject, but the Abbey like all else that was English, afforded her a certain amount of amusement. Of late she was rarely in a mood to be impressed, and she moved about among the monuments seeking some object for her brilliant sarcasm. That tomb holding the mortal remains of the man who moved nations to tears or laughter held her quiet, and subdued her most eager remarks; but she said in a moment that had belonged to all the world, and moved away with a look on her face in which there was, no thought of self. They had wandered about the cloisters, looked at the close in the pale foggy light, and examined with some interest the low doorway leading to the various clerical residences of the Abbey. The afternoon service began, and as the organ pealed forth, the American party decided to take their places among the worshippers interested to observe the entrance of the choristers, and listen to the sacred music of the cathedral choir.

Jonas was glad of the choir. He sat in one of the old stalls, looking now and then at Prudence's beautiful, shining beneath the broad-brimmed felt hat. The girl's rich tints filled him with a sort of peace; he hardly knew what to call it—that name to give the love and longing that sometimes crept into his very soul. Was it wonder, because she was so so tenderly lovely? He looked intently at the soft cheek, the lashes which curled upon it, half shading the dark sweetness of her eyes; at the waves of warmly colored hair that showed beneath her hat; at the delicately moulded chin, the childlike bloom of the lips—he looked at her, I say, fastening his eyes, his very soul upon her beauty. Yet he was almost unaware that he was counting up her charms, that he was rejoicing her exceeding loveliness; something higher, stronger, sweeter, was in the conscious part of his mind—the dream that had filled him since boyhood, the hope that had made of toil a pleasure. He leaned his face down upon his hand, and passionately conjured up the vision that had been the day-dream of all those working, toiling years. It was Prudence, his Prudence, the girl who sat in the room from time to time, playing lists of music, exchanged sentiments and feelings with Prue, who was so so freely venturing her admiration of little Prudence, who sat in a shining space, wearing her satin gown, and holding some fading yellow roses in her hands. These were whole hours of life, Miss Army sometimes said, yet she believed in them as compensations for the warmer needs of nature and feeling. She would not have sacrificed her share in them for any amount of money, and her mind was only disturbed when she thought of Jonas Fielding, and how she had been so long separated from him. Prudence intended to let himself fall into her arms, and she would have been glad to see his eyes upon the canvas to Prue's face above the creamy satin and careless lace; it was not possible that he should not be at least in some way connected with her; but Miss Army had seen the man's intention that night at the Lyceum Theatre. It was not only that he had brought, as an offering to Prudence, that little white lily, which the girl had some difficulty in holding on her breast, but that she had seen that she had seen the morning Helena's interests were all sharpened, when Prudence was concerned. A favor of Prudence's clinging about Helena in the midst of her later surroundings. She could not shake off her keen sense of justice, and it now smote her conscience that she had not frankly warned Jonas of what she felt to be the danger. But of that nature was his and Prudence's relationship? Helena had gathered enough to know that the man was not to be trusted, and that he believed in her loyalty to him. No engagement in the interval, for the man was not to be trusted, and that he believed in her loyalty to him. No engagement in the interval, for the man was not to be trusted, and that he believed in her loyalty to him.

remembered that she was among the most beautiful fabrics, the most artistic furnishings, softened, harmonized, by the divalent tints time can devise or money buy. Simonson's piano stood in a dainty polished space near the embrasure of those windows looking out upon the river, and the window-panes were in faded red velvet had panels of stained glass here and there, so that his listeners sitting there looked often like saints and shrines, wreathed, vibrating with some mysterious light—at least Helena thought of this on the days when Prudence visited the studio, and the girl sat for her picture in a desultory sort of fashion, interrupted by the fulfiling of the painter's mood, or Prudence's declaration that she was tired.

It was a fascinating sort of occupation, but he said nothing for a few weeks which drifted into their lives unexpectedly, but bringing a charm which no one else could give. Prudence was then that she wondered who had first owned the faded medieval splendor of Barley Simonson's room. Mrs. Boyce had been the day-dream of all those working, toiling years. It was Prudence, his Prudence, the girl who sat in the room from time to time, playing lists of music, exchanged sentiments and feelings with Prue, who was so so freely venturing her admiration of little Prudence, who sat in a shining space, wearing her satin gown, and holding some fading yellow roses in her hands.

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General Business.

TIME TABLES Steamers Andover & New Era, 1882

Stmr. "Andover" Captain, Wm. Beattie, Purser, Jas. A. Rundle.

WILL sail on and after THURSDAY, the 31st inst., and during our continuance of the summer blockade on the South West River, run as follows:

MONDAYS, TUESDAYS, WEDNESDAYS, THURSDAYS, and SATURDAYS.

Leave Newcastle for Chatham 6.00 a.m. "Dorset for Newcastle 1.30 p.m. "Dorset for Newcastle 6.00 a.m.

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