

urged on to that risky experiment by the two old ladies, she insisted upon leasing the place to them on ridiculously easy terms. She would have given it to them only for their steady refusal to accept such a magnificent wedding gift from her.

The old lady was rich enough for her needs and her daughter's, and, business woman as she was, she was generous to a fault where her affections were concerned. Prudence too was satisfied with any arrangement which would take her away from the farm. Knowing what she knew of her brother, Loon Dyke, could never again be her home. So mother and daughter retired to Ainsley, and only once again did they return to their old home on the briefest of visits, and that was to assist at the function of christening the son and heir of the Chillingwoods.

Later on Prudence induced her mother to make Winnipeg her home, but though, for her daughter's sake, she acceded to the request, she was never quite at ease among her new surroundings. Nor was Sarah Gurrige, when she visited her old friend during her holidays, slow to observe this. "My dear," she told Alice, one day after her summer vacation, "Hephzibah is failing fast. She's quite old, although she is my junior by two years and three months. An idle life doesn't suit her; and as for Prudence, she wears fine clothes, and goes out in society all day and most of the night, but she's that thin and melancholy that you wouldn't know her for the same child. It's my opinion that she's pining—they are both pining. I found a letter from Hamilton when I got back home. It was from George Iredale, and I'm going to answer it at once."