

A WOMAN'S INFLUENCE



By LULU JAMISON

CHAPTER XIV—Continued.

When Margaret reached home after her ride, during which her thoughts had not ceased to dwell upon her late bitter knowledge, she found that Brian had arrived.

Relieved at the intelligence, yet fearing the impossibility of meeting him in her room, a state of mind, she determined to feign a headache. Indeed her imagination was not greatly exercised for this end as a dull pain in her temples gave reality to her excuse.

If Brian had known the moment of her arrival she would not have escaped so easily, but he was in the library at the time, and Margaret was thus enabled to reach the welcome seclusion of her own room, from which safe retreat she listened for any chance sound that might reach her ears.

Margaret had assured her that Brian had been made comfortable, and she also confided that he looked paler than usual and had been asking every five minutes if Margaret had returned.

"The old refrain," thought Margaret, with a sigh. "He can spend days away from me without regret, but if I leave him a minute he complains."

Margaret was sent with the message that Margaret was indisposed, and hoped he would excuse her for to-night. She returned with a few lines that Brian had scribbled on the fly-leaf of a book.

"Dear Margaret," they began, "I am so sorry you are not well. Let me come up and sit with you. I promise to be very quiet, and my presence cannot hurt you. I miss you so much. It is dull down here, with only my thoughts for company. My miserable thoughts. Let me see, if only for five minutes, Margaret. I am eating my dinner all alone!"

All alone! Poor Brian!

"Let him see her, if only for five minutes." A simple request, easily granted, and yet even five minutes was more than she could bear to-night. And so she answered the note. She thanked him for his sympathy. Her illness was nothing more than a headache, for which quiet was the best medicine. She could not see him to-night, though she was sorry he was lonely. She had eaten her dinner alone for two weeks.

And Brian read these written words, but he could not read between the lines.

CHAPTER XV.

MARGARET DISCOVERS HER NEED OF CHANGE

Margaret could not make her headache serve her another day without arousing suspicion, so she was forced to come home, not in the morning, where she found Brian before her. He greeted her with a warmth that expressed a variety of emotions, while she endeavored to show no change in her manner toward him.

"I hope the headache has quite gone," he said, taking his cup of coffee from her hand.

"Yes, entirely," she answered; "I feel quite well this morning."

Her appearance belied her words, and so Brian thought as he regarded her rather intently from his end of the table. Then a constrained silence fell between them. Margaret searched her mind for some reason. She found nothing, but the situation with which she regretted as soon as it had passed her lips.

"Did you enjoy yourself?"

A change passed over his face, and he answered with an embarrassed smile.

"For you," he said, "I could not enjoy it. I don't know. Sometimes I wish I could think and act like you. I would at least be spared the misery of regret, and I daresay I would be happier."

"Indeed you would," she interposed, quickly. "Not to think and act as I do precisely. I do not mean that, of course, because I could never set myself up as an example; but if you would only be different, you would not be the things which bring regret."

"General, you're right," Margaret said. "I am unfortunate in the possession of a discontented nature, and it can't be well helped now. I believe people are born to certain things, and I am born to nothing. There's Wilson. I was talking to him the other day. He's a good fellow, but a crank in his way. I call him a natural doctor. Takes to it like a duck to water, and is in his element when he's tending a lot of sick, dirty children. Of course people admire those things; call him noble, unselfish, and all that. Well, I do, too. Yet I can't do what he does. I'm of different caliber. I suppose some time ago he told me he had got into his hospital. It was a splendid opening, no doubt. Any number of fellows were hailing for it. So I told him I'd be charitable and let some other poor devil have it. He couldn't understand my refusal. Why? Because his ideas and habits are different from mine. I am sorry it is so."

"And I am sorry you have thrown away so many advantages, Brian. It is really a shame. I can have no patience with you."

Brian was silent under this outburst, Margaret's ideas might be right in the abstract, but he had no desire to practically apply them to himself.

"You blame me for a very common failing," he said after a moment. "There are many in New York to-day who have no business of any kind. They are well-to-do, of course, and they find plenty to fill their time. Here, however, it is different. There are no divisions, and one—"

"Must go to the city to seek them. I understand," said Margaret. "Under the circumstances it is surprising that you honor Elmwood at all. Why not take up your residence in New York?"

He regarded her with more than surprise.

"Would you wish such an arrangement?" he asked, with much warmth.

"Are you ready and anxious to be rid of me? How would you like the neighborhood to hear of our affairs?"

Margaret laughed bitterly. "The neighbor who has already discussed them to his heart's content. Be sure of that. I don't believe I can be hurt more than I have been on that point. As to getting rid of you, you talk without reason or sense, Brian. There's no getting rid of you, even if I regarded you in the light of a millstone around my neck; which I don't—quite. Now, I've been thinking a great deal, and I have decided that as you cannot endure life here I'll have to endure life in New York. I am going there next week."

"To New York," repeated Brian, scarcely able to credit his ears. "I thought you said it would break your heart to leave Elmwood."

REAL RURAL READING

WILL BE FOUND IN THIS DEPARTMENT.

How Green Clover Can Be Safely Stored in Barns—Relative Value of Wheat and Butter—Handy Baking Table—General Farm Reading.

Storing Green Clover in Barns.

There is some risk in storing green clover hay in a barn, it being almost impossible to shut away the air from the sides of the mow and unless this is done the clover heats, says the American Agriculturist. The escaping air inviting the entrance of fresh air from the outside a current is established, slow combustion provided for, and the clover "burns out," just as a heap of horse manure is fire-fanged.

To cure clover in a mow without previous wilting to evaporate part at least of the sap in it, requires a tight that is a close approach to a silo, so that the air cannot come in at the sides and bottom. Without a fresh supply of oxygen, there can be no combustion of the clover. The fermentation ceases, which, with a supply of fresh air, would go on until the clover was a charred mass. To get the best results, the clover mow should be boarded close on the sides and floor. The clover cut should be as clear of rain, or dew, as possible, and evenly spread over the mow. When all but two or three loads of the clover is in, make the top of the mow as level as possible and then roll strips of tarred paper over the surface, lapping the strips. Do not tread on it to break the paper; and scatter on the remaining loads for weight. A layer of boards will be as effectual as the paper. The object of this layer of boards, or paper, is to prevent the escape of the heated air, and if the air is imprisoned in the clover, there will be no entrance of fresh air from the outside. In the silo, where the walls are higher than the silage, the air that falls upon the surface is met by the ascending current, and only a few surface inches of the silage are affected. In the mow where the sides are somewhat open, the entrance of the air can be prevented to a great extent by checking the egress from the top of the heated air. This is accomplished by the lightly-weighted cover. With old hay at command, to alternate the layers of green clover with other layers of the hay, using about a third as much hay as clover, is a good plan. In curing, the escaping dampness of the green clover is absorbed by the old hay. In raking clover for hand pitching, it is not generally known that it is a great saving of "backbone" to rake the field twice. If one has two rakes, one may follow the other, and pull the windrow along a few feet. This rakes up the clover that was left untouched at the bottom of the windrow, loosens up the bunch, and makes the piling easy with no sticking of hay to the ground.

"I'd be glad to make a few remarks," was the answer, with affected meekness.

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She would have stolen away quietly, to have avoided the pain of saying good-bye to her friends, but this was not possible; so the unpleasant experience had to be encountered.

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