

The Louisiana Democrat.

The World is Governed Too Much.

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A WOMAN'S INFLUENCE



LULU JAMISON

CHAPTER XV—Continued.

The Colonel met them at the dining-room door, and Nell, approaching rather cautiously, gave him a half-expectant, half-questioning glance.

Her face was quite groundless, however, for as soon as he had seen Margaret, and heard that she was going to leave them so soon, he had no thought for any one else.

"I don't know how we shall do without you," he said, bending over her with kindly affection.

"Bertie told me you were going, and I have been anticipating my own loneliness. Have you grown tired of us so soon?"

He took her face between his hands and regarded it with a gentleness in which a variety of emotions found expression.

"You are in a hurry to leave us, Margaret," he added, sadly.

"Ah, no," she hastened to answer, as her eyes grew dim and a painful flush overspread her cheeks.

The gentleman did not answer for a second, during which his face worked with feeling and a tender light filled his eyes.

"You are a brave girl," he said, rather unsteadily, at last; "a true, brave girl. Heaven will bless you as you deserve."

"Don't let that sound, come near me; I might be tempted."

"You are so hard on him, Colonel. Don't—"

"Don't blame him, I suppose, Ah, Margaret, you are like the rest of your sex—always ready to defend the man who breaks your heart. Well, well, I'll not be hard, for your sake, but when I think—"

"Never mind; we'll miss you, child—every one of us. Don't quite forget the new ones half so true."

Again Margaret's eyes grew dim, and she found herself incapable of an answer.

Alice, noting her distress, broke in with some light remarks, which Nell took up, notwithstanding her uncle's formidable presence, and dismissed volubly.

Under this respite Margaret regained her self-possession, and began to speak quite calmly.

No further allusion to her going away was made during the meal, though each one seemed quite talkative, Nell particularly airing her opinions freely, and receiving no regard for her former.

But when the time came to say good-by, and Margaret was ready to go, the Colonel, disregarding the hand she held out to him, clasped her in his arms, and tenderly, almost reverently, kissed her brow.

"I knew it would be hard," she sobbed, breaking down completely. "I knew this would be the hardest of all."

"No, it shan't be, Margaret," he said, putting her gently from him. "I do not wish to pain you child, even for a moment. But I am very deeply moved to see you go from us under such circumstances. Your bravery and devotion will have its reward—be sure of that. Remember me when you need sympathy or advice, for I would not be worthy the name of friend if I could not show my affection in time of adversity as well as prosperity, and I know that not even your own father could be more anxious to help you than I am."

For many long days Margaret carried in her heart the memory of his kind words and sympathetic voice.

whimsical disposition, which took her out so late that she could not get back at a reasonable time.

"She is fully excused," rejoined Wilson, meeting her smiling glance. "We got here about ten minutes ago, and Brian left me to make himself more presentable, he said. I was admiring some of your curios when you came in. I knew you at once. Bertie's description is so accurate, and I've had the picture of you in my mind."

"I think Bertie is inclined to exaggerate sometimes, Doctor. Still I hope you have not found the original very disappointing."

"Quite the contrary, Mrs. Leigh. Brian tells me that you have only been in New York a very short time, so I suppose you have not had sufficient opportunity to see how great and important we are. But you have visited a great many places of interest, no doubt?"

"Yes, quite a number; though very far from all, I am sure. Of course it is a great deal, and no doubt a delightful one, and I am ridiculously unappreciative; but, indeed, I like some less pretentious places better. It is all noise and uproar to me. Do I quite shock you? I'm incurably devoted to country life, you see. I cannot enjoy any other. I hate any other. There, that's dreadfully childish."

She spoke rather disconnectedly, and, rather puzzled, glanced at him, rather puzzled, glanced at him, rather puzzled, glanced at him.

"You have established yourself very delightfully," he said, as if answering an argument in his own mind. "I fancy you must intend a long stay."

"Yes, it may be. That is, I don't know. I hope—"

"It depends on circumstances, I think. She spoke rather disconnectedly, and, anxious to divert any impression her words might make upon him she hastened to add:

"Don't misunderstand me, please. I don't wish you to think I actually dislike the city. I find it interesting in many ways, but I have not that fascination which some people feel for it. I was born in the country, and all my associations hold the memory of green fields and bright skies. I think that must account for my tastes. I know that brick walls and paved streets tire my eyes, and I feel a longing to rest them on something that is not here. Sometimes I am almost determined to go to Elmwood just for a day. It isn't far from here, you know, but then I remember that I should have to leave after the day was over, and that would be hard. So I think I must always put that thought aside. Brian is so different in his tastes; he likes this busy life. He finds the country dull and lonely, and Elmwood has not the same attraction for him that it has for me. He simply endures it, but I—well, I could live there forever, because it is home and—I love it."

The last words were spoken in a lower tone, but Wilson understood the meaning they held, and his next remark was in a more feeling vein.

"We will have to teach you to love New York for something more than its paved streets and brick walls. We Gothamites are very proud. We think that all things good and delightful are to be found in this great noisy city of ours."

Margaret smiled. "You have many desirable advantages, that is certain; but while you are proud of your wealth you should not forget your poverty."

"True. And we have enough of it. The condition of the poor in this city is miserable in the extreme, and perhaps, what is more incredible, the most opposite conditions of prosperity and want exist in such close proximity. I was most forcibly impressed with this fact a few days ago. I was passing along one of the streets just off from Fifth avenue. There were elegant mansions all around me, and handsomely dressed children playing under the eyes of watchful nurses. Yet a little further on I passed into a scene so different that I could scarcely credit the testimony of my eyes. Within an actual stone's throw of splendor and prosperity, poverty, misery, and sin were running riot. It is terrible to think of it. A physician whose practice lies amid such scenes is obliged to see so much of the heartaches of life."

"I suppose so," returned Margaret, with a sigh. "Such an experience wouldn't do for me at all; so much wealth on one side and so much want on the other would make me lose my faith in God. It is dreadful to say it, I know. I have taken myself to task for even thinking of it, but my sense of justice cannot be reconciled. There is some wise decree, no doubt, in what seems so unwise, but—"

Tell me. Don't you ever feel like taking the world to pieces and making it over again?"

He smiled, amused at the question and the expression which accompanied it.

"I have often thought it might be changed to advantage, but I do not know that I could manage it successfully."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Offensively Frigid.

There is very little probability that the play written by an American lady, which the English Examiner of Plays has refused to license, contains anything either "gross or coarse, indecent or indelicate," although the Examiner affirms that it does.

The fussy personage who says what shall upon it. Indelicate, she felt a quickening of her sympathies and feelings, an indefinite attraction toward this man, whose very appearance compelled her admiration.

During her scarcely perceptible pause in the doorway, the stranger, with a swift but critical glance, had taken in the sweet face and girlish form. Then he started forward with the half question, half assertion:

"Mrs. Leigh? I am not mistaken."

She held out her hand with a smile of welcome.

"No, you are not mistaken," she said, with the easy, gracious manner that made her personality so winning. "I am Mrs. Leigh, and you are Dr. Wilson, I know. I am very glad to meet you, and doubly glad to welcome you to my home, because I really cannot feel that you are a stranger, but rather an old friend whom I have heard of and talked of so often."

Her words gratified him very much. "You honor me too highly," he answered, pressing the hand she offered him. "To be numbered among your friends is a privilege I esteem most deeply. Brian and I have been friends of such long standing that the pleasure I feel of meeting his wife is twofold."

"I'm afraid you find his wife very restless," put in Margaret, flushing brightly, and seating herself in the chair placed for her. "She must really ask your pardon for not being at home when you arrived. Not only because she is a very whimsical disposition, which took her out so late that she could not get back at a reasonable time."

"She is fully excused," rejoined Wilson, meeting her smiling glance. "We got here about ten minutes ago, and Brian left me to make himself more presentable, he said. I was admiring some of your curios when you came in. I knew you at once. Bertie's description is so accurate, and I've had the picture of you in my mind."

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