



Prudence Says So

By Ethel Hueston,
Author of Prudence of the Parsonage

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CHAPTER II. (Continued.)

He sat down and unwrapped it himself. "They are guaranteed," he explained, passing over the little pink slips gravely, "so when they wear holes you get another pair for nothing." The twins' faces had brightened wonderfully. "I will never play that kind of a trick again, twins, so you needn't be suspicious of me. And say! Whenever you want anything so badly it makes you feel like that, come and talk it over. We'll manage some way. Of course, we're always a little hard up, but we can generally scrape up something extra from somewhere. And we will. You mustn't—well like that—about things. Just tell me about it. Girls are so—kind of funny, you know."

The twins and Connie rushed to the house to try the "feel" of the first, adored silk stockings. They donned them, admired them, petted Connie, idolized their father, and then removed them, tied them carefully in clean white tissue paper and deposited them in the safest corner of the bottom drawer of their dresser. Then they lay back on the bed, thinking happily of the next class party! Silk stockings!

"Can't you just imagine how well I look in our new white dresses, Lark, and our patent leather pumps—with silk stockings! I really feel there is nothing sets off a good complexion as well as real silk stockings!"

They were interrupted in this delightful occupation by the entrance of Fairy. The twins had quickly realized that the suggestion for the humiliating had come from her, and their hearts were sore, but being good losers—at least as good losers as real life folks can be—they wouldn't have admitted it for the world.

"Come on in, Fairy," said Lark cordially. "Aren't we lazy today?"

"Twins," said Fairy, self-conscious for the first time in the twins' knowledge of her, "I suppose you know it was I who suggested that idiotic little stocking stunt. It was awfully hateful of me, and so I bought you some real silk stockings with my own spending money, and here they are, and you needn't thank me for I never could be fond of myself again until I squared things with you."

The twins had to admit that it was really splendid of Fairy and they thanked her with unfeigned zeal.

"But papa already got us a pair and so you can take these back and get your money again. It was just as sweet of you, Fairy, and we thank you, and it was perfectly dear and darling, but—'a have papa's now, and—"

"Good for papa!" Fairy cried, and burst out laughing at the joke that proved so expensive for the perpetrators. "But you shall have my burnt offering, too. It serves us both right, but especially me, for it was my idea."

And Fairy walked away feeling very gratified and generous.

Only girls who have wanted silk stockings for a "whole lifetime" can realize the blissful state of the parsonage twins. They lay on the bed planning the most impossible but magnificent things they would do to show their gratitude, and when Aunt Grace stopped at their door they leaped up to overwhelm her with caresses just because of their gladness.

She waved them away with a laugh. "April fool, twins," she said, with a voice so soft that it took all the sting from the words. "I brought you some real silk stockings for a change." And she tossed them a package and started out of the room to escape their thanks. But she stopped in surprise when the girls burst into merry laughter.

"Oh, you silk stockings!" Carol cried. "Three pairs! You darling sweet old auntie! You would come up here to tease us, would you? But papa gave us a pair, and Fairy gave us a pair, and—"

"They did! Why, the silly things!" And the gentle woman looked as seriously vexed as she ever did look—she had so wanted to give them the first silk stocking experience herself.

"Oh, here you are," cried Prudence, stepping quickly in, and speaking very brightly to counterbalance the gloom she had expected to encounter. She started back in some dismay when she saw the twins rolling and rocking with laughter, and Aunt Grace leaning against the dresser for support, with Connie on the floor, quite speechless.

"Good for you, twins—that's the way to take hard knocks," she said. "It wasn't a very nice trick, though of course papa didn't understand how

"Why, he's still objecting to my having dates with the other boys." Fairy's voice was vibrant with grief. "He does make me wild! Aunt Grace, you can't imagine. Last fall I mentioned casually that I was sure he wouldn't object to my having a lecture course dates—I was too hard up to buy a ticket for myself; they cost four dollars, and aren't worth it, either. And what did he do but send me eight dollars to buy two sets of tickets! Then this spring, when the baseball season opened, he sent me season tickets to all the games suggesting that my financial stringency could not be pleaded as an excuse. Ever since he went to Chicago last fall we've been fighting because the boys bring me home from parties, I suppose he had to go and learn to be a pharmacist, but—it's hard on me. He wants me to patter along by myself like a—like—a hen!" Fairy said "hen" very crossly!

"It's a shame," said Prudence sympathetically. "That's just what it is. You wouldn't say a word to his taking girls home from things, would you?"

"Hum—that's a different matter," said Fairy more thoughtfully. "He hasn't wanted to yet. You see, he's a man and can go by himself without having it look as though nobody wanted to be seen with him. And he's a stranger over there and doesn't need to get chummy with the girls. The boys here all know me, and ask me to go, and—a man, you see, can just be passive and nothing happens. But a girl's got to be downright negative, and it's no joke. One misses so many good times. You see, the cases are different, Prue."

"Yes, that's so," Prudence assented absent-mindedly, counting off ten more threads.

"Then you would object if he had dates?" queried Aunt Grace smilingly.

"Oh, no, not at all—if there was any occasion for it—but there isn't. And I think I would be justified in objecting if he deliberately made occasions for himself, don't you?"

"Yes, that would be different," Prudence chimed in, such "miles away" in her voice, that Fairy turned on her indignantly.

"Prudence Starr, you make me wild," she said. "Can't you drop that everlasting hemstitching, embroidery, tatting, crocheting, for ten minutes to talk to me? What in the world are you going to do with it all, anyhow? Are you intending to carpet your floors with it?"

"This is a napkin," Prudence explained good naturedly. "The set cost fifteen dollars." She sighed.

"Did the veil, come?" The clouds vanished magically from Fairy's face, and she leaned forward with that joy of wedding anticipation that rules in womanhood.

"Yes, it's beautiful. Come and see it. Wait until I pull four more threads. It's gorgeous."

"I still think you're making a great mistake," declared Fairy earnestly. "I don't believe in big showy church weddings. You'd better change it yet. A little home affair with just the family—that's the way to do it. All this satin gown, orange blossom elaboration with curious eyes staring up and down—ugh! It's all wrong."

Prudence dropped the precious fifteen-dollar-set napkin in her lap and gazed at Fairy anxiously. "I know you think so, Fairy," she said. "You've told me so several times." Fairy's eyes twinkled, but Prudence had no intention of sarcasm. "But I can't help it, can I? We had quite settled on the home wedding, but when the twins discovered that the members felt hurt at being left out, father thought we'd better change over."

"Well, I can't see that the members have any right to run our wedding. Besides, it wouldn't surprise me if the twins made it up because they wanted a big fuss."

"But some of the members spoke to father."

"Oh, just common members that don't count for much—and it was mighty poor manners of 'em, too, if you'll excuse me for saying so."

"And you must admit, Fairy, that it is lovely of the Ladies' Aid to give that dinner at the hotel for us."

"Well, they'll get their money's worth of talk out of it afterward. It's a big mistake. What on earth are the boys doing out there? Is that Jim Forrest with them? Listen how they are screaming with laughter! Would you ever believe those twins are past fifteen, and nearly through their junior year? They haven't as much sense put together as Connie has all alone."

"Come and see the veil," said Prudence, rising. But she dropped back on the step again as Carol came rushing toward them at full speed, with Lark and a tall young fellow trailing slowly, laughing, behind her.

"The mean things!" she gasped. "They cheated!" She dropped a handful of pennies in her aunt's lap as she lay in the hammock. "We'll take 'em to Sunday school and give 'em to the heathen, that's what we'll do. They cheated!"

"Yes, infant, who cheated, and how, and why? And whence the startling array of pennies? And why this unwonted affection for the heathen?" mocked Fairy.

"Trying to be a blank verse, Fairy? Keep it up, you haven't far to go!—There they are! Look at them, Aunt Grace. They cheated. They tried to get all my hard earned pennies by nefarious methods, and—"

"And so Carol stole them all, and ran! Sit down, Jim. My, it's hot. Give me back my pennies, Carol."

"The heathen! The heathen!" insisted Carol. "Not a penny do you get. You see, Aunt Grace, we were matching pennies—you'd better not mention it to father. We've turned over a leaf now and quit for good. But we were matching—and they made a bargain that whenever it was my turn one of them would throw heads and one tails, and that way I never could win anything. And I didn't catch on until I saw Jim wink, and so of course I thought it was only right to give the pennies to the heathen."

"Mercy, Prudence," interrupted Lark. "Are you doing another napkin? This is the sixteenth dozen, isn't it? You'd better donate some of them to the parsonage, I think. I was so ashamed when Miss Marsden came to dinner. She opened her napkin out wide and her finger went right through a hole. I was mortified to death—and Carol laughed. It seems to me with three grown women in the house we could have holeless napkins, one for company, anyhow."

"How is your mother, Jim?"

"Just fine, Miss Prudence, thank you. She said to tell you she would send a basket of red junes tomorrow, if you want them. The twins can eat them, I know. Carol ate twenty-two when they were out Sunday."

"Yes, I did, and I'm glad of it," said Carol stoutly. "Such apples you never saw, Prudence. They're about as big as a thumb and two-thirds core. They're good, they're fine, I'll say that. There's nothing to them. I could have eaten as many again if Jim hadn't been counting out loud, and I got kind of ashamed because every one was laughing. If I had a ranch as big as yours, Jim, I'll bet a dollar I'd have apples bigger than a dime!"

"Bet you a dollar," quoted Fairy.

"Well, I'll wager my soul, if that sounds more like Shakespeare. Don't go, Jim, we're not fighting. This is just the way Fairy and I make love to each other. You're perfectly welcome to stay, but be careful of your grammar, for now that Fairy's a senior—well, next year, if she lives—she even tries to teach father the approved method of doing a ministerial sneeze in the pulpit."

"Think I'd better go," decided the tall good looking youth, laughing as he looked with frank boyish admiration into Carol's sparkling face. "With Fairy after my grammar, and you to criticize my manner and my morals, I see right now that the parsonage is no safe place for a farmer's son." And laughing again, he thrust his cap into his pocket, and walked quickly out the new cement parsonage walk. But at the gate he paused to call back. "Don't make a mistake, Carol, and use the heathen's pennies for candy."

The girls on the porch laughed and five pairs of eyes gazed after the tall figure rapidly disappearing.

"He's nice," said Prudence.

"Yes," assented Carol. "I've got a notion to marry him after a little. That farm of his is worth about ten thousand."

"Are you going to wait until he asks you?"

"Certainly not! Anybody can marry a man after he asks her. The thing to do, if you want to be really original and interesting, is to marry him before he asks you and surprise him."

"Yes," agreed Lark. "If you wait until he asks you he's likely to think it over once too often and not ask you at all."

"Doesn't that sound exactly like a book, Prue?" demanded Carol proudly. "Fairy couldn't have said that!"

"No," said Fairy. "I couldn't. Thank goodness! I have what is commonly known as brains. Look it up in the dictionary, twins. It's something you ought to know about."

"Oh, Prudence," cried Lark dramatically. "I forgot to tell you. You can't get married after all."

For two seconds Prudence, as well as Fairy and their aunt, stared in speechless amazement. Then Prudence smiled.

"Oh, can't I? What's the joke now?"

"Joke! It's no joke. Carol's sick, that's what's the joke. You can't be married without Carol, can you?"

A burst of gay laughter greeted this announcement.

"Carol sick! She acts sick!"

"She looks sick!"

"Where is she sick?"

Carol leaned limply back against the pillar, trying to compose her bright face into a semblance of illness. "In my tummy," she announced

weakly.

This called forth more laughter. "It's her conscience," said Fairy. "It's matching pennies. Maybe she swallowed one."

"It's probably those two pieces of pie she ate for dinner and the one that vanished from the pantry shortly after," suggested Aunt Grace.

Carol sat up quickly. "Welcome home, Aunt Grace!" she cried. "Did you have a pleasant visit?"

"Carol," reproved Prudence. "I didn't mean it for impudence, auntie," said Carol, getting up and bending affectionately over the hammock, gently caressing the brown hair just beginning to silver about her forehead. "But it does amuse me to hear a lady of your age and dignity indulge in such lavish conversational exercises."

Lark swallowed with a forced effort. "Did it hurt, Carol? How did you get it all out in one breath?"

"Lark, I do wish you wouldn't gulp that way when folks use big words," said Fairy. "It looks awful."

"Well, I won't when I get to be as old and crabby as—father," said Lark. "Sit down, Carol, and remember you're sick."

Carol obediently sat down and looked sicker than ever.

"You can laugh if you like," she said. "I am sick, at least, I was this afternoon. I've been feeling very queer for three or four days. I don't think I'm quite over it yet."

"Fie! You were right, Aunt Grace! That's the way pie works." "It's not pie at all," declared Carol heatedly. "And I didn't take that piece out of the pantry, at least, not exactly. I caught Connie sneaking it, and I gave her a good calling down, and she hung her head and slunk away in disgrace. But she had taken such big bites that it looked sort of unsanitary, so I thought I'd better finish it before it gathered any germs. But, it's my head where I was sick. Don't you remember, Lark, I said my head ached?"

"Yes, and her eyes got red and bleary when she was reading. And—there was something else, too, Carol, what?"

"Your eyes are bloodshot, Carol. They do look bad," Prudence examined them closely. "Now, Carol Starr, don't you touch another book or magazine until after the wedding. If you think I want a bloodshot bridesmaid, you're mistaken."

They all turned to look across the yard at Connie, just coming in. Connie always walked, as Carol said, "as if she mostly wasn't there." But she usually "arrived" by the time she got within speaking distance of her sister.

"Goodness, Prue, aren't you going to do nothing but eat after you move to Des Moines? Carol and I were counting the napkins last night—was it a hundred and sixty-six, Carol, or—some awful number I know. Carol piled them up in two piles and we kneeled on them to say our prayers, and—I can't say for sure, but I think Carol pushed me. Anyhow, I lost my balance, and usually I'm pretty well balanced. I toppled over right after 'God save,' and Carol screamed 'the napkins'—Prue's wedding napkins! It was an awfully funny effect; I couldn't finish my prayers."

"Carol Starr! Fifteen years old and—"

"That's a very much exaggerated story, Prue. Connie blamed it on me as usual. She piled them up herself to see if there were two feet of them—she put her stockings on the floor first so the dust wouldn't rub off. It was Lark's turn to sweep and you know how Lark sweeps, and Connie was very careful, indeed, and—"

"Come on, Fairy, and see the veil!"

"The veil! Did it come?"

With a joyous undignified whoop the parsonage girls scrambled to their feet and rushed indoors in a fine Kilkenny jumble. Aunt Grace looked after them thoughtfully, smiling for a second, and then with a girlish shrug of her slender shoulders she slipped out and followed them inside.

The last thing that night, before she said her prayers, Prudence carried a big bottle of witch hazel into the twins' room. Both were sleeping, but she roused Carol and Lark turned over to listen.

"You must bathe your eyes with this, Carol. I forgot to tell you. What would Jerry say if he had a bleary eyed bridesmaid!"

And although the twins grumbled and mumbled about the idiotic nonsense of getting married folks, Carol obediently bathed the bloodshot eyes. For in their heart of hearts, every one of the parsonage girls held this wedding to be the affair of prime importance, national and international, as well as just plain Methodist.

(To be continued.)

Children's Evening Story

UNCLE WIGGILY AND THE BOYS.

"Well," said the monkey after the bear had run away, "I guess we can now sit down and talk quietly together, eh, Uncle Wiggily?"

"Yes," said the old gentleman rabbit. "But what is it that you want me to do? I heard you sing that funny little song, about the boys coming in the tent. But I don't exactly understand."

"That's just it," replied the monkey. "You see, it's this way. I have a little sort of a circus show here, and the troublesome boys don't want to pay any money to get in. So when my back is turned they crawl under the tent and so they see the show for nothing—just like at the circus."

"Oh, so that's how it is?" asked Uncle Wiggily. "And you want me to keep out the boys?"

"That's it," said the monkey. "Here's a big stick, with which to tickle the boys who crawl in under the tent without paying. Now I'll practice my tricks."

So the monkey did a lot of tricks. He stood on his head and he hung by his tail, and he danced around in a circle. Then he pounded the drum, not so hard as to hurt it, but hard enough to make a noise, and he played the fiddle and blew on the horn, and then he ran inside the tent and jumped over a bench, making believe it was an elephant, and he did all sorts of funny tricks like that. He even stood on his head and made a funny face.

"That will make a very nice show," said Uncle Wiggily after he had watched the monkey. "Now I'll stay outside, and keep the boys from coming in unless they pay their money. And you can be inside, doing the tricks."

"And, I'll give you money for working for me," said the monkey. "Then perhaps you can make your fortune, and besides that, I'll give you a cocoon and you can make a cocoon pie with it."

"That will be fine!" cried Uncle Wiggily. So he and the monkey practiced to get ready for their show. It was a nice little tent in which it was to be given, and there were seats for the people, who would come and a platform and flying rings and trapeze bars and paper hoops, and all things like that, just the same as in a real circus. Well, finally the time came for the show. It was the day after Uncle Wiggily got to the place where the tent was, and he had slept that night in a hammock put up between two trees.

"Now we're almost ready for the show," said the monkey to the old gentleman rabbit, after a bit, "so I hope you will be sure to keep out the troublesome boys. They always creep under the tent and see the show for nothing. I can't have that going on if I'm to make any money."

"Oh, I'll stop them!" declared Uncle Wiggily.

"And here's the club to do it with," said the monkey handing Uncle Wiggily a stick.

"Oh, I don't know about that," answered the rabbit. "I never hurt the boys if I can help it. Perhaps I shall not need the club. I'll leave it here."

So Uncle Wiggily hid the club under an apple tree, but the monkey said it would be needed and he wanted Uncle Wiggily to keep it, and take a whip, too. But the old rabbit shook his head.

"I'll try being kind to the boys," he said. "You let me have my way, Mr. Monkey."

Well, pretty soon, not so very long, the show began. The monkey went inside the tent, and he blew on the horn and he made music on the fiddle and sang a funny song about a little great big pussy, who had a red balloon. She stuck a pin inside it, and it played a go-bang! tune.

Of course, as soon as the show started the people came crowding up to the tent, just as they do at the circus. There were men and women, and little boys and girls, and big boys and girls, and they all wanted to get inside to see what the monkey was doing. But, do you know, I believe all that he was doing was playing monkey-doodle tricks—but, of course, I might be mistaken.

Well, as it always happens, some boys didn't have any money with which to pay their way inside the tent. And, of course, as it will sometimes happen, one boy said to another: "Hey! I know a way we can crawl in under the tent and see the show, and not have anything to pay."

"But that wouldn't be fair," spoke the other boy. "It would be cheating, and there's nothing meaner in this world than to cheat, whether it's playing a baseball game or going to a circus."

"I guess you're right," said the first boy. "What shall we do, though? I want to see the show."

"Well, we must be fair, anyhow," spoke the second boy. "We can't crawl in under the tent, but perhaps if we ask the monkey to let us in for

nothing he'll do it."

"Very well, we will," said the first boy. So they went up to the monkey and asked if they could go in for nothing, but, of course, he wouldn't let them.

"May we crawl in under the tent, then?" asked the second boy.

"If Uncle Wiggily will let you," answered the monkey, blinking his two eyes and wrapping his tail around his neck.

So those boys tried to crawl in under the tent, and as soon as Uncle Wiggily saw them he rushed up and caught them.

"Hey! Hold on there! Nobody must go under the tent. You must buy a ticket," and he shook a feather at the boys and, instead of hitting them, he only tickled them, and didn't hurt them a bit, for they sneezed.

Well, those boys were very troublesome. They kept on trying to crawl under the tent, and Uncle Wiggily rushed here, there and around the corner trying to stop them, and he cracked the lash on his whip, just like the man in the circus ring. But those boys kept on trying to crawl under the tent, for the monkey had given them permission, you see.

"So finally Uncle Wiggily said: 'I'll give those boys a little show myself, outside the tent, for nothing. Then maybe they'll stop bothering me.'"

So he stood on his left ear, and then on his right ear, and then he jumped through a hoop, and rolled over and barked like a dog, and all the boys that had tried to crawl under the tent to see the monkey show for nothing, ran out to see Uncle Wiggily's show.

And he did lots of tricks and kept them all from crawling in under the tent, and he even ate a popcorn ball, standing on his hind legs, and wiggling his left ear with a pin wheel on it. Then, after a while, the monkey show was all over, and the monkey said: "Uncle Wiggily, you did very well. You treated those troublesome boys just fine! So I'll give you ten pennies and perhaps they will make you a good fortune."

Then the monkey gave Uncle Wiggily ten pennies and he went to sleep in a feather bed, while the old gentleman rabbit went down to the drug store to get an ice cream soda.

And what happened after the show was over, and what Uncle Wiggily did after he had his ice cream, I'll tell you in the next story which will be about Uncle Wiggily in a balloon. That is, if our pussy cat doesn't get all covered with red paint, and look like a tomato growing on a strawberry vine. So watch out and don't let that happen.

LIBERTYVILLE.

Mrs. Ed Rodabaugh of Missouri is here visiting with relatives and friends.

Mrs. Lewis Klemm of Missouri is visiting with her daughter Mrs. Isaac Newland and other relatives.

Little Eugene Swanson is on the sick list.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Stodghill visited several days last week with relatives in Mt. Pleasant.

Mrs. Wallace Friday entertained the L. L. G. club Friday afternoon at her home in Libertyville. A pleasant afternoon was spent in fancy work and light refreshments were served. The out of town guests were Mrs. Maria Davis and children and Mrs. John Cunningham of Fairfield. The club will meet with Mrs. Walter Harlan Friday afternoon Oct. 6.

Miss Lucile Turnipseed will be hostess to the Rebekah Embroidery club Friday afternoon Sept. 29.

George Thompson and his wife, Miss Martha Gearhart came home Thursday from the Fairfield hospital where they were operated on for appendicitis.

Mrs. C. L. McGaw of Fairfield visited a few days last week with her daughter Mrs. C. Vaught.

Mr. and Mrs. J. O. Boyd and Mr. and Mrs. M. Williams motored to Des Moines for a few days' visit.

Floyd Robertson of Davenport spent Sunday here with relatives.

Born, last week, to Mr. and Mrs. Manning, a baby girl. Mrs. Manning was formerly Miss Georgia Petzinger.

Mrs. Mary Rose Caldwell passed away Thursday evening at her home in Libertyville after an illness of several years. The funeral services were held Saturday afternoon at the Methodist church and the interment was made in the Abingdon cemetery. Her two sons, Roy from Oklahoma and one from South Dakota were at her bedside.

CLARKE APPOINTS DAY A DELEGATE

D. A. Jay of the Waveland farm at Blakesburg has received a commission from Gov. G. W. Clarke as delegate from Iowa to the eleventh annual soil products exposition that is to be held at El Paso, Tex., from October 17 to 26. Mr. Jay, who is well known as a breeder of shorthorn cattle, expects to attend the exposition.