

THE AWAKENING

"Of course Dave's a fool, but it can't be helped now."

David Manson strode heavily across the piazza and sat down in a big chair. It was not time that had caused his broad shoulders to droop, nor years that had brought the listless expression to saddened eyes. Rather it was the gradual breaking down of his particularly sensitive spirit.

He drew from his pocket a picture—the picture of the girl his son had married less than an hour before.

"I wish you were big and black-eyed and managing-looking," he said, addressing it disapprovingly. "Then, maybe, Dave would be on the look out and would dodge the bit. But you little women get the reins into your hands before we suspect what you're about, and you make us feel like brutes if we try to get them back, so you do the driving. And it isn't the way 'twas intended. It isn't right."

Sighing, he thrust the picture back into his pocket and went into the kitchen to wash his sweater. It hurt Julia's side to wash sweaters.

There were always things for him to do for Julia in the house, and they seemed to be most urgent when the fieldwork called him, and when his muscles twitched with eagerness to be out in the open, directing his men, and leading in the race with storm of darkness.

His wife believed that she was not strong. To the world she was a pretty, plaintive little woman, but her greed for management was all the more rapacious because of her physical weakness; before David knew what was happening, he had been crowded into the background of his own affairs.

He was far from stupid, but it had taken him a long time to learn that his wife was not the clinging, adoring woman he thought he had married.

Now he saw in the pictured curves of Marion's pretty mouth and in the serious expression of her frank eyes the type of woman who can so easily bind a man to her chariot-wheels, and he was disappointed to think that Dave had repeated the mistake he himself had once made.

"I've prospered in spite of it," he said, grimly, as he looked out of the window to the gently rolling hills. "But I've got mighty little satisfaction out of it. And ten years ago we might have been where we are to day if I'd had my say. But my judgement wasn't worth considering. Things had to wait till Dave got through college and gave his advise. It was good, too," he ungrudgingly admitted.

He rubbed his sweater vigorously.

"If some men who have made fools of themselves reform," he reflected bitterly, "every one is happy; but if I should try to reform, I guess there'd be precious little rejoicing in this family."

When he met his wife at the station that night, his mood had softened a little.

"O David, she's sweet!" she said, in her thin, irritating voice. "I wish you had gone. I don't know what she thinks."

"Well, I spoke about it," he reminded her, patiently.

"Why, David Manson, you know you didn't have time to get new clothes after they changed the date of the wedding, and your old ones are a sight! I wouldn't have had you go in those for a hundred dollars! Goodness knows I wish you'd keep yourself in better shape!"

"If she's worth her salt, she wouldn't care what I wore," David contended.

"David," said Mrs. Manson, in her usual fretful voice, "I don't believe you realize what it means to have Dave marry Judge Blake's daughter."

"What I'm realizing is that she may not be the right kind of wife for Dave. I hope he won't begin by letting her manage him."

Mrs. Manson shot a queer glance at her husband. "I don't know what's got into you, David. But I do know that I'm tired to death, and when I get home I'm going to bed and have you bring me up some toast and tea."

David did not share in the flutter of expectancy that preceded the home-coming of Dave and his bride. And when he took Marion's hand in his, and looking into her winsome face, caught the wistfulness in her straightforward gray eyes, he stole his heart.

"She'd have me leave the haying too hold worship for her if I'd do it," he thought.

As the days went by, the conviction grew in Marion's mind that Dave's father did not like her. It troubled her more than she cared to admit; it marred the happiness of her first days on the farm.

"I wonder why he dislikes me?" she said to herself many times a day. "I've got to find out."

Her opportunity came one evening, when they were all sitting on the piazza in the long twilight.

"I must go and see to the colt," Dave said. "She was hot when I brought her in."

"Let father go," Mrs. Manson suggested. "You're tired, dear."

And Dave, who had always been influenced by his mother, looked expectantly toward his father. Mr. Manson got up slowly and started off to the barn.

Marion flushed and rose. "I'm going with your father," she said.

Dave started to follow, but she said, "Stay where you are, Dave," and ran down the path.

"Why didn't you come to my wedding, and why don't you like me?" she asked, breathlessly when she had overtaken Mr. Manson.

"Well, you see," he explained slowly, "I could n't get any new clothes in time."

"As if I would have cared about clothes!"

"Who says I don't like you?"

"You do, every time you look at me. But let's not talk about that now. I've seldom been on a farm till now, and I'm going to love it. I want you to tell me all about it."

"Get Dave to."

"Dave's all right, Mr. Manson, but do you suppose I would study music with the village teacher if I could have a real musician? Compared to you, Dave knows nothing whatever about this farm, its romance—"

"You'll find, young woman, that there's a good deal more than romance in farming."

She was thoughtful. "Of course there's been death—"

"My father and mother," he said, simply.

"And life—"

"There's Dave" and hopes and struggles and achievements."

His face became sad; of most of these he had been cheated.

For a long time they talked—till the shadows grew dim and were finally blotted out.

Before they had done he knew all about her motherless years and her loneliness since her father's death, five years earlier. And she, almost a stranger, knew more of him than his nearest kinsfolk did—more, perhaps, than he himself knew of his crushed desires. She was silent while they walked back to the house.

Dave's form loomed up on the dark piazza.

"Where have you people been?" he asked.

"We've been sitting on a the pole of a hay wagon, getting acquainted," Marion replied.

David Manson went in to the house. He was unaccountably light-hearted.

"Dave," said Marion, "do you know your father is splendid?"

Women Suffer More than Men

Women have more than their share of the aches and pains that afflict humanity. They must "keep up," in spite of constantly aching backs, or headaches, dizzy spells, Edward Calwood of 123 S. Harold Street Fort William, Ont., says:

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"Why, of course he is. If he could have stayed in college he would certainly have been an honor man."

"He's an honor man right now."

"What's that?" Mrs. Manson's thin voice penetrated the darkness. She came out swathed in a white shawl.

"Marion's singing father's praises."

"Well, she ought to," Mrs. Manson said. "He's the best man that ever breathed. But I do wish he'd fix himself up a little, and seem to care about things. He's terribly careless about his appearance." Mrs. Manson sighed.

"Sometimes I'm so ashamed!"

Marion was silent. "They don't know," she said to herself. "The pity of it!"

The next morning Marion, unable to sleep, was downstairs before she heard any one stirring in the house. When she entered the kitchen, she came upon Mr. Manson kneading a mass of dough. She stopped astonished.

"What are you doing?"

The old impenetrable shell of reserve dropped over him.

"It hurts Julia's side to knead bread," he explained.

Marion thought swiftly, "I'm afraid I'm going to dislike Julia." Aloud she said, "Let me do that. I've studied cookery and here's my chance to see what I know."

He remonstrated, but her hands were soon in the dough.

"Mr. Manson," she had suddenly stopped, and her cheeks had flushed. "Please don't think me inquisitive, but is this necessary?" Could we afford help?"

"Plenty of it," he answered.

"Then why—"

"Julia's particular, and—" he hesitated.

"I understand," Marion said. "And the foreman's wife? She couldn't help out?"

"No, she boards the help," he explained.

Continued next week.

Women In Hungary To Get Right To Vote.

BUDAPEST, Hungary, March 7.—The Lower House of the Hungarian Parliament adopted the suffrage reform bill, introduced by the government, by which a large number of women are enfranchised.

The Hungarian capital was crowded with troops during the debate, in consequence of threats uttered by the Socialists to begin a general strike throughout the country, as a protest against the non-introduction of universal suffrage.

It is easier to keep out of trouble than to find the way out after you're once in.

One of the mysteries of life is why ignorance always possesses a loud voice and a set of leather lungs.

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