

"THE LOVE PENDULUM"

BY MARION RUBINCAM

THE VILLAGE LIFE Chapter 8

The informal little dinner was the opening for me, into the life of Westville. I adored every bit of the little place. I had never been so happy in my life.

Winthrop did come, as he suggested, and I took him out in my car. We drove for miles and miles over the roads in the late afternoon when he had finished his office work.

For in that little town they worked until nearly 6, and 6 was the only proper hour for dinner—or supper as some called it, though it was the main meal of the day. This surprised me at first, for at my aunt's we never dined before 8, and a formal dinner was 8:30 unless we were going to the theatre. But I was glad of the early hour, for it gave me some much more evening.

And in the evenings I liked to sit out in a big couch hammock on the lawn, while a few fireflies played in and out of the trees and shrubs, and while the evening star made such a lovely bit of silver in the sky. In fact, there was nothing I liked better than to lie flat in the hammock, my hands under my head, while I looked up and into the blue-black of the summer night and watched the myriads of stars above me.

Somehow in the city we never had stars—or if we did, we never noticed them.

One evening I said something like this to Winthrop. We were in from a drive—a wonderful drive. He had come around for me after his early supper and we started off in my car, as we did now every other evening. I had kept my promise and taught him to drive, and one Saturday afternoon I showed him how the engine worked. For my aunt had made me learn very thoroughly before she allowed me to machine.

Win had the wheel this evening. We drove five miles out to a great hill and took the winding road to its top. I liked this arrangement, for then I had more time to look about. The farm houses were so quaint, the rail fences that zig-zagged around the fields, amused me so much, the children looked so chubby and dear as we passed them.

From the top of the hill we caught the sunset, and watched its perfect glory dim into a soft orange radiance. Then we drove back and the shadows turned blue and gray around us, and Win put the car up. And I sat curled up in a corner of the hammock, while Win sat on a cushion on the grass. Parker had a light in her room, otherwise the night was soft and dark.

"There are too many lights on the city streets to see the stars," I remarked. "If one looks up, there is a glare of electricity, and one can't look beyond that."

"I think that's the right idea," Winthrop said. "I'm tired of stars. I hate them. I hate this village, anyway."

"Winthrop!" I protested. "This dear place!"

"This dear place, yes! And I hate these stupid people."

"Stupid! How can you say so? They're so charming—they've been so nice to me. There's Ella—"

"Fat nose and protruding teeth and eyes, that's Ella. And the disposition of a cat."

"Margery—"

"Hated school and never knew a lesson, was crazy over the boys and married the first man she could capture. Don't say anything to me about her's unhappiness."

"Bill Edwards and Jimmy Re—" "Crazy about you, of course! Who wouldn't be? You're prettier than any girl that ever lived here, you dress differently—when you dress up in your real clothes and not those aprons. They'll all fall in love with you—"

"I hope not!" I protested. "I want them to like me, but I'm more anxious the girls should like me."

"They'd hate you for your beauty!"

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Hemford, N. S.—"I am the mother of four children and I was so weak after my last baby came that I could not do my work and suffered for months until a friend induced me to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. Since taking the Vegetable Compound my weakness has left me and the pain in my back has gone. I tell all my friends who are troubled with female weakness to take Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, for I think it is the best medicine ever sold. You may advertise my letter."—Mrs. GEORGE I. CROUSE, Hemford, N. S.

My First Child Glen Allen, Ala.—"I have been greatly benefited by taking Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound for bearing-down feelings and pains. I was troubled in this way for nearly four years following the birth of my first child, and at times could hardly stand on my feet. A neighbor recommended the Vegetable Compound to me after I had taken doctor's medicines without much benefit. It has relieved my pains and gives me strength. I recommend it and give you permission to use my testimonial."—Mrs. IDA RYE, Glen Allen, Ala. Women who suffer should write to Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., 295 North Second St., St. Paul, Minn., for a free copy of "The Pinkham Text-Book."

and the fact that the men will come around as fast as you'll let them—except that they say in the village you are an heiress to a lot of money. That will keep the women in love with you."

I sat quiet for a time. This was the first flaw in enjoyment, I had money, that was true enough. My aunt had a great deal which I would some day inherit. My father lived extravagantly, but I did not know whether he lived up to his income or not. Quite possibly he lived beyond it.

How awful to be liked for one's money! I decided on a small fib. "That's nonsense, about the money," I said. "I haven't any—that is, only enough to get along on. My aunt is supposed to be rich, but I think she spends all she has, so I'm not an heiress. You see, my car doesn't cost much to keep—and this is hired anyway—and this house is very, very cheap, and Parker is both nurse and housekeeper."

"Even so, to their ideas you are rich," he went on. "They'd think even \$2,000 a year rich." I was glad it was dark so I could smile without being seen doing it! Two thousand! My allowance was \$5,000, and my aunt bought more than that amount every year in clothes for me.

But I wanted to be liked for myself. I must stop that "heiress" story, and I wondered how I could do it.

I GROW MORE POPULAR Chapter 9

I grow happier and happier as the days went on. I planned a little routine, and followed it every day as though it were a gay adventure.

I suppose people will smile when they hear what the "adventure" was. I know my family would have smiled—unless they would have been furiously angry at the idea of a Bennett—one of The Bennetts—doing housework.

I had my breakfast in bed—Parker insisted on that. But then I made up the bed myself, swept and dusted my room and the living room downstairs, and an hour in the city garden I had insisted on planting.

For this work I wore one of the big, short sleeved cretonne aprons I had purchased. Then Parker insisted that I rest until luncheon, but I helped cook luncheon, and after it, I had my bath and dressed and went outdoors to lie in the shade and read or work.

Usually I worked. Mrs. Taylor often came around and showed me how to do plain sewing and to darn and mend.

"And I'll teach you to knit too," she promised to my delight.

Towards the end of the day, the village woke to life. Up to four o'clock housework, gardens or office work kept most of the people busy.

Four o'clock was the lull in the day. That was "my hour" as Winthrop called it.

For I began serving tea then—hot or cold, as my guests liked it and cakes that I baked myself in the morning. Parker brought out a tray and placed it on a wicker table that we kept on the lawn. This was drawn up to my big hammock, where I could lean back in the corner with all the cushions piled behind me, and yet be able to reach all the tea things.

Mrs. Taylor was often there, Margery and Ella came often. These were two girls I like most of those I met. They were cousins, one was married, the other engaged.

"I shall miss sitting here and playing lady when you go, Connie. Ella said once as we idled over the tea."

"I'll miss the gossip, I hear such a lot of it here," Margery announced, helping herself to another muffin. "Say Con, have you met Ben Marlowe and his wife yet? They're the swells of the village—"

"Don't say anything to me about her's unhappiness," I said. "I know she doesn't like it, only she's too sweet to say so."

"I wouldn't call her Con if I didn't like her. I always give my best friends nicknames."

"Oh, but I like it," I protested, afraid of an argument.

"Margery is so frank," Ella began. This was a favorite complaint of hers. "She always tells every one just what she thinks. I wish you would take a lesson in manners from—"

"From Con! You might take a lesson from her yourself!"

"But I'm the one taking lessons! I put in. Look here, I'm making a dress, Parker is showing me how to join the seams with fagoting."

This diverted the talk for a moment. The dress was carefully examined, and some other people came in for tea.

"It's nice batiste," Ella remarked. "You didn't get it here."

"No, that stuff is a dollar a yard. I got some with that silky finish when I was in New York—"

one woman said. "This was an old dress flipped up and made over," I hastened to explain. "An idea came to me then if I pretended to make over my old clothes, surely they would not think me an heiress!"

But Margery was examining the dress. "You do nice work," she said. "I wish I had the patience to sew. So nervous when I sit down to work alone I want to scream. So I have to jump up and do housework, or go out and see somebody."

"Come here and sew when I do," I suggested. "We'll work together. They can talk to me and you won't get nervous."

"I'll come after lunch tomorrow," she said. The sewing party grew. Several of the young girls living near me developed the habit of coming over with their work about 2 o'clock, and from 2 until 4 we all sewed, under the trees. At 4 I served tea and for almost an hour we talked. Mrs. Taylor came often to these "afternoon parties" as she called them.

"You like the girls," she remarked once as we sat alone.

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"Oh, very much," I answered. "Ella is so sweet she never says a word against anyone. And Margery is so frank and outspoken—"

"Yes, that's her great fault. Margery has no tact. Of course her husband is disagreeable—"

"Poor girl," I said. "But I like frankness. I know how I stand with her. If she didn't like me she'd tell me as soon as she would tell anyone else."

"Sooner," Mrs. Taylor laughed. "Well, so much the better. She's so wholesome—after the girls I've known."

"She likes you a great deal. They all do—and those that don't know you want to meet you—"

"Oh, let's have a party and ask them all—"

Mrs. Taylor laughed, but the suggestion was taken up by Ella, and next week, she gave a reception for me, and I was introduced to nearly everyone in Wellsville. I was very happy—then.

WIN COMES TO CALL Chapter 10

As I look back I marvel more and more at the happiness of those first days in Wellsville. Part of it was the sweetness and freshness and plainness of my little house. Part of it was the fact that for once in my life I was quiet and at peace.

Constance Bennett, spoken of in the papers as "one of the prettiest of the coming debutantes" actually revelled in the privilege of going to bed at 9 o'clock!

But the night of the party we stayed up until much later. When the village had a party it went into it with all its soul, and it was willing to make up its rest the following evening. The night of the morning I danced until late in the morning—in fact, until Mrs. Taylor noticed my pallor and sent me home. Ella had a photograph, as had many of the people around me, and we danced out on her broad porch.

I sent for a photograph too, and a lot of records, and gave a party the next week, clearing my living room of furniture so a dozen of my old room to dance. I wore the batiste dress I had made myself.

"And you are the plainest dressed person here," Ella remarked in great disappointment. "Connie, where's the heavenly blue tulle with the silver you showed me once? Wear that!"

"Oh, I don't like that, it's so fancy," I protested. It was a lovely gown, my aunt had paid hundreds for it, and I should have worn it the night of my coming-out ball—had not a merciful Providence intervened to make me ill and send me out here.

"I think you are being very sweet and not wearing it because some of the girls can't dress like that," Mrs. Taylor told me. But I shook my head.

"It isn't appropriate for midsummer or a small dance," I said. "Besides I don't like such elaborate things. I prefer this dress that I made myself. I feel this belongs to me. What right have I to these other clothes?"

"Now you're talking like a socialist or a communist, I don't know which," Win teased, coming up to greet us.

"I don't know which either," I answered. "I must get some books on socialism and communism and read up on them."

Win looked surprised. "Now why do you want to fill your head with such serious things?" he asked, and began to laugh. "Don't grow serious because your hair is growing longer. Connie, you don't look so much like a small boy, you're beginning to look like a half-grown child now."

I blushed a little and turned to the mirror. My hair was growing fast, it waved in little ringlets all over my head, it was inches long. And I was growing stouter and my face had regained most of its nice color, so I no longer looked like the thin and white china doll of my invalid days.

It was a happy evening. Win danced very well indeed, with a natural grace that I had rarely found among the men I had met. And when I told him that I meant it as

high praise, for many of the men I met had been trained to dance well before they had been trained to have a sensible idea on any subject at all.

That was a short evening too. My party went home early. But before they went, I had promised to teach Ted and Margery and some of the others the new steps.

"We don't get them here until they've stopped dancing them every other place," Ella said, as she tried a new step I had been doing with Winthrop.

So a dancing class was formed that evening, to meet at my place every Wednesday evening.

This evening I sent Mrs. Taylor home in my car with Winthrop to drive her.

"You're too tired to walk," I told her, and Winthrop drives very well now. You need not worry about him."

"I'll bring the car back and put it away. You need not wait up," Win said as he left.

But I was sitting up when he came back with the machine. The last of my guests had just gone, and I slipped a coat on and went out to the hammock, wanting to be quiet a few moments and enjoy the lovely freshness of the night before I went indoors.

Winthrop drove the car into the garage attached to my little house, fixed it and locked the garage. To return home he had to walk around the corner of my little property, as my house was on the corner. He had to pass its side, then turn left and pass its front. Instead of going along the pavement, he crossed the lawn.

There was nothing surprising in this—it was a short-cut. But as he crossed, he turned and looked up at the windows of my room, and stood a moment there, quite quiet. My room of course was dark and the windows were open. I was in the shadows of the trees so he could not see me, but was outlined against the light—Parker was still up and her room had a lamp burning.

Win turned away towards the street. I called his name softly.

WIN STAYS AWHILE Chapter 11

I had not meant to call. After all, it was 10 o'clock, late enough by the standards of time and conduct in the little village. But—I could not explain the impulse. There he was, his tall figure a silhouette against the light of Parker's window. There was something so wistful in his attitude—I do not, or did not, quite know what it was.

He turned instantly at the sound of my voice and came to the chairs under the trees.

"I supposed you were safely in bed," he remarked. "Doesn't the dragon Parker carry you off as soon as the last guest leaves—and some times before? She's looked daggers at me when I've stayed too late."

"Parker has a detective story, a regular melodrama, she'll read all night, or until she has finished," I answered, laughing a little. "Parker's one weakness is melodrama. She revels in blood and gore."

"I know. Why do you suppose that gentle amiable soul so detests upon description of her fellow beings chopped into bits, or beautiful ladies falling off cliffs?"

"That's why. She never has an adventure herself. She's never known anything more thrilling than to see Tad Barker pulled out of the river last summer. And then they found the water was so shallow he was standing up, so he could not have drowned. We all want to be the things we aren't, or to have the things we never can possess, so we take out our desire by reading about it."

"I'm sure Parker, as a nurse, would not revel in seeing bodies chopped into small bits—"

"No, and she would not want to be thrown over a cliff by an enraged villain or tied to the railroad tracks with the express due in 10 minutes because she would not reveal the secret of her father's papers! She merely never has had a thrill in her life and she wants one. Reading thrills is less intense than living them, so she has to make up for it by reading—"

"Very thrilling thrills!" Winthrop finished for me, and we laughed.

Then the talk dropped. It was cool and dark and wonderful under the trees and the perfume from the flowers and the clear freshness of the air from the hills made a marvelous combination.

Winthrop leaned back in an armchair and lit a cigarette. For an instant, in the flash of the match flame, his face was illuminated against the dark background of the night. He was not handsome, his

features were too irregular for that. But his hair was thick and his eyes were wide and intelligent, his mouth was firm, he carried himself well. Properly dressed, Win could pass anywhere.

After a time he spoke. "How wise you are after all, Constance. You pretend to be so ignorant. You go about making everyone teach you something, and all the time you know a great deal more life and about characters than we do. You've had a much broader experience."

"I've met a lot of odd people and a lot of different kinds of people and I've traveled a little," I said. "But I'm badly educated and I don't know anything useful at all."

"You think sewing and cooking and garden work are useful. I think they're the least essential things to know. You let my own darling mother patronize you by teaching you biscuit making. You let your own housekeeper lord it over you because you can't sew. You pretend to the girls around here that you don't know anything. They really are beginning to think you are a dear little ignoramus. Yet you can talk French, and they can't even slang English! Listen to the master they use! You can—"

"Win, don't list all my virtues and vices," I laughed and pulled my fur coat closer. "I'll list them for you!—I, Constance Bennett, being in the twentieth year of my age and my right mind, do hereby declare that I can play a good game of golf, a poor one of tennis, that I can drive a horse and a car, ride at home shows, wear foolishly expensive dresses, spend money as fast as I have it given to me, dance well, chatter polite nothings to young men who chatter polite nothings to me—"

"We began to laugh at my nonsense. Win took it up. "You can talk French and make a try at some other languages as well, and sing in Italian. You play the piano and you know a lot about music—good music such as we hear only on the phonograph. You have been abroad. You can talk about art—we think art means a plaster statue on a pedestal. You have a way of talking, a way of sitting, that's different. You shine like a star—"

"Winthrop!" I interrupted, laughing and feeling embarrassed by all

this, yet feeling wonderfully warmed and pleased by it.

"Don't act like Ella when someone tells her she dances well!" he said. "Why should you pretend you're not all these things? You know you are."

"I know I'm ignorant about the real things of life," I answered seriously. "I may be more proficient in the silly, social things—"

"What do you call real things?" he demanded standing up.

"The real things," I repeated. "Well, your mother knows the real things of life. She grew up learning them. Then when she was old enough she was able to put them into practise. She knows what it is to love and take care of—of someone she loved," I added lamely. "She knows what it is to keep a charming home, to bring up a child to be a strong and healthy man. Surely these things are the real things in life! Her husband's health and happiness and comfort depended upon her proficiency and knowledge; your whole well-being depended on her. What is it to be able to talk three languages and to sing and dance a little, to say the right thing at the right moment, to run a car—or do the worthless things I have done?"

Winthrop said nothing. Then I went on again. "If one of us had to die, which would the world miss most—I, who have been trained to be an ornament, or Ella who looks after a whole family of little brothers and sisters?"

Winthrop laughed and dropped down on the couch beside me. "I'd spare Ella to have you!" he laughed. He smoked awhile. Then he began. "I want to go to the city to live. But as you can see, Mother won't let me. She's a very charming, lovely lady, and I am very fond of her. But she still thinks I'm not grown up and she won't let me go to the city."

"She thinks something would hap-



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pen to me. At the same time, she won't go along, because she has always lived here in Wellsville and she would be like a cat in a strange garret anywhere else. She would not even live in any other house in the town, and when they were going to build a row of houses opposite our place, she bought up the whole block at an exorbitant price to keep it as it was!"

"That's the beauty of it, it puts things on a firm, solid basis. Oh Win, if you know how tired I am of the little sham and deceit, and the empty life of the city, the silly men and rapid girls, the late hours, the women with painted faces and the men with shifty eyes! I adore this place, it has sunshine and sweetness in every corner of it!"

"Connie dear, you almost make me like it. Somehow as I was speaking, I had put out my hand. Win took it suddenly.

I sank back against the big pillows, weak and trembling in an instant.

He had called Connie dear! he had taken my hand, and was holding it. I felt for an instant as though everything in life were coming towards me. I turned towards him, still acting, not logically, but instinctively.

And I turned to meet his arms. It happened so quickly, so unexpectedly, that even now I don't see how it happened that way at all. We were talking of shams and realities—and there, all at once, he had his arms around me.

"Connie, sweetheart," he said, "you are the only real thing in life!"

The only real thing in life!

(Continued on Page 2)

ventilated dance halls and drinking and eating indigestible foods. They don't try to dress and act as though they had more money than they really have. It isn't necessary—"

"It isn't possible. Everyone in Wellsville knows what everyone else is making."

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