

# Women AND THEIR INTERESTS

## What Happened to Jane

By Virginia Terhune Van de Water

### CHAPTER III.

(Copyright 1915, Star Company.)  
 Augustus Reeves lingered on the church steps talking with Mr. Evans, the minister, longer than Ezra Hardy had expected him to. The deacon had seemed quite impatient to get away from the sanctuary when he had hoped to have Jane's presence, as well as her father's company on the way home. Now he recalled many details of parish business that he wished to discuss with his pastor. At last Ezra made a move as if to start homeward.

"I must be going," he remarked, "for Maria'll be wondering what's happened to me."  
 "All right, I'll walk along with you," Augustus Reeves said. He told the minister good-night and fell into step beside Ezra. "I told Jane that perhaps I'd stop in for a little call, you know," he remarked, "so she may be expecting me."  
 His companion was conscious of a vague resentment of this suggestion. His mind was not analytical enough for him to understand this feeling. He wondered why he felt as he did and why he did not really like Augustus thoroughly. He remembered that, even as boy, "Gus" had never been a favorite of his. Somehow he had not quite trusted him even then.

Gus had always been self-satisfied and sure of himself. Well—maybe that was because he had always been a success. His father's farm had been the model farm of the neighborhood, and when he died he left it to his only son. While

still young, Augustus had been wise enough to marry a rich girl who had lived but a short year after her wedding day and had, in turn, left all her money to her husband. Yes, success had come easy to this man. He had been widower now for ten years, and until lately had seemed to avoid the numerous girls in the neighborhood.

Really it was proof of how attractive Jane was, the father now reflected, that the man should seek her out. Then he remembered what Maria had said two hours ago.

"But she don't love him," she had objected.

Could she ever love him? The father asked himself. And, as though he read this unspoken question, the man at his side began to talk of himself and his plans—tentatively, "as if," Ezra thought, "trying to find out the lay of the land."

Augustus Find Life Rather Lonely.  
 "Do you know, Mr. Hardy," he said, "I'm finding my life at the house up here on the hill pretty lonely. It's ten years since I lost my wife, and it's six years since my son died. For a while I got along pretty good—but lately I've begun to think I'm foolish to spend my days like I do."

"Is that so?" his companion queried mildly. It appeared at the time the safest remark to make.

"Yes, that's the way I feel about it," Augustus continued. "And I've about made up my mind to think of marrying again."

Ezra was no diplomat and he cudgled his brains in vain for some suitable reply to this speech. Then he fell back once more on his last unoriginal, but cautious response.

"Is that so?" he said again.

But this time his sentence was ignored. Augustus Reeves was well launched on talk of himself, and as long as there was somebody to listen to him nothing else mattered for the moment. He explained to Ezra that he has always led an exemplary life; that he was a regular church member and church worker; that he gave largely to the church; that the minister had often told him that he considered him one of the most important of his flock; that he was a sum laid aside in various banks; that he had never been in any man's debt; that he had never been in any woman's debt; that he had never been in any man's debt; that he had never been in any woman's debt.

He paused as if for comment at last.

"I suppose she will," Ezra observed.

"I've been thinking," resumed Augustus after a prolonged pause, "that I'd rather marry a real young woman, one I can teach my ways, rather than a woman near my own age. Forty-five is young in a man, but it's not young in a woman."

"No, it's not," Ezra admitted. He felt suddenly frightened. Was this man going to tell him that he would like to keep company with Jane? If so, what was the father saying to him? The notion of Jane as Augustus Hardy's wife did not seem so attractive now to Ezra as it had a while ago. The idea of his child being taught and trained by Augustus!

"A young girl," the widower had resumed, "who married me would be safe from poverty. In these times, when money's tight and so many are looking for work, it's a good thing for a person to be sure of having a good home and enough to keep them always."

Ezra switches off to a safer topic.

"Yes," assented Ezra. Reeves's statement contained a painful truth which he himself had often dwelt upon in his thoughts of Jane. But he could not trust himself to think of it now.

"Have you noticed," he said irrelevantly, "how high the corn is in Smith's field. Now, my corn's kinder backward in the ear. What do you suppose ails it?"

The question was well chosen, for it gave Augustus Reeves a chance to express his opinion on the cultivation of corn, thus sparing his listener further speech upon a delicate topic.

Edward Sanderson, seated on the Hardy porch, discerned the two men approaching far down the moonlit road, and he rose to his feet.

"I must be going," he announced. "I have to catch an early train in the morning—and here comes Miss Hardy's caller." He laughed, shook hands with the two hostesses, and took his departure.

The girl turned impulsively to her mother. "Oh," she murmured, "this evening has been too nice to be spoiled by talking to a man who bores me. Just say to Mr. Reeves that I'm tired and have gone to my room—won't you, dear?"

And, kissing her mother quickly, she hurried into the house.

Thus it came about that Augustus Reeves, greeting Mrs. Hardy for Jane was told that the child had come home from church tired and had gone to bed.

(To Be Continued.)

**Poe Reincarnated Seen at Colonial in Artistic Masterpiece—"The Raven"**

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—From "The Raven," by Edgar Allan Poe.

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