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THE DOCTOR'S RECREATION SERIES

CHARLES WELLS MOULTON
General Editor



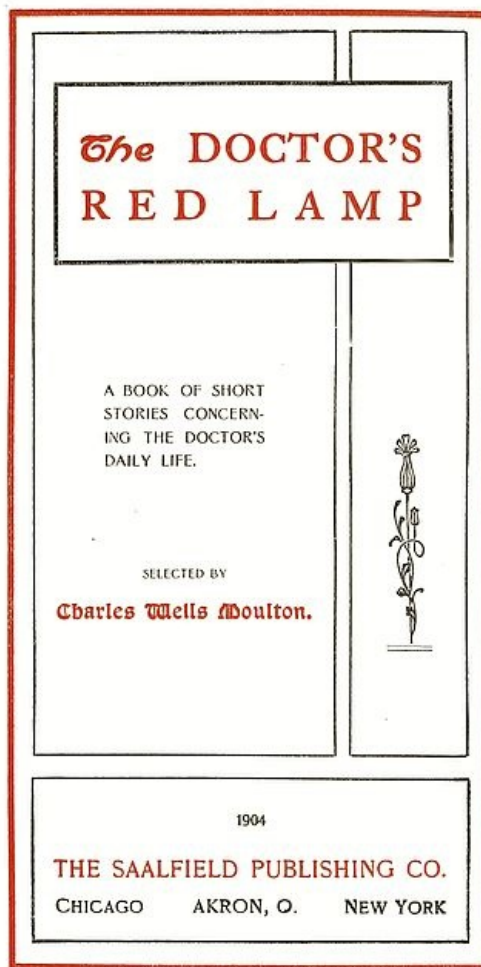
VOLUME TWO



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PREFACE

IN PREPARING this book of short stories concerning the doctor's daily life, the editor has availed himself of the counsel of his staff of editorial associates, and he trusts that this volume will prove equally acceptable as the other works in THE DOCTOR'S RECREATION SERIES.

The stories themselves are offered without critical comment. Many of them are old favorites. Many of them are by well-known and standard authors. All relate some episode in the doctor's life in a manner both striking and original. We believe this is the first volume of its kind ever offered to the public.

For the courtesy of copyright privileges extended we return thanks to S. S. McClure Co., The Century Co., Harper & Brothers, J. B. Lippincott Co., Little, Brown & Co., Macmillan & Co., John Brisben Walker, Joseph Kirkland, Dr. Conan Doyle, Lucy S. Furman, Ambrose Bierce, Rev. John Watson, Ruth McEnery Stuart, Margaret Sutton Briscoe, Henry Seton Merriman, and Maud Wilder Goodwin.

C. W. M.

BUFFALO, *March 18, 1904.*

THE DOCTOR'S RED LAMP.

I.

THE SURGEON'S MIRACLE.



'POOR Abe Dodge."

That's what they called him, though he wasn't any poorer than other folks—not so poor as some. How could he be poor, work as he did and steady as he was? Worth a whole grist of such bait as his brother, Ephe Dodge, and yet they never called Ephe poor—whatever worse name they might call him. When Ephe was off at a show in the village, Abe was following the plough, driving a straight furrow, though you wouldn't have thought it to see the way his nose pointed. In winter, when Ephe was taking the girls to singing school or spelling bee or some other foolishness—out till after nine o'clock at night, like as not—Abe was hanging over the fire, holding a book so the light would shine, first on one page and then on the other, and he turning his head as he turned the book, and reading first with one eye and then with the other.

There, the murder's out! Abe couldn't read with both eyes at once. If Abe looked straight ahead he couldn't see the furrow—nor anythin' else, for that matter. His best friend couldn't say but what Abe Dodge was the cross-eyedest cuss that ever was. Why, if you wanted to see Abe, you'd stand in front of him; but if you wanted Abe to see you, you'd got to stand behind him, or pretty near it. Homely? Well, if you mean downright "humbly," that's what he was. When one eye was in use the other was out of sight, all except the white of it. Humbly ain't no name for it: The girls used to say he had to wake up in the night to rest his face, it was so humbly. In school you'd ought to have seen him look down at his copybook. He had to cant his head clear over and cock up his chin till it pointed out of the winder and down the road. You'd really ought to have seen him, you'd have died. Head of the class, too, right along; just as near to the head as Ephe was to the foot; and that's sayin' a good deal. But to see him at his desk! He looked for all the world like a week-old chicken, peekin' at a tumble-bug! And him a grown man, too, for he stayed to school winters so long as there was anything more the teacher could teach him. You see, there wasn't anything to draw him away; no girl wouldn't look at him—lucky, too, seein' the way he looked.

Well, one term there was a new teacher come—regular high-up girl, down from Chicago. As bad luck would have it, Abe wasn't at school the first week—hadn't got through his fall work. So she got to know all the scholars, and they was awful tickled with her—everybody always was that knowed her. The first day she come in and saw Abe at his desk, she thought he was squintin' for fun, and she upped and laughed right out. Some of the scholars laughed too, at first; but most of 'em, to do 'em justice, was a leetle took back; young as they was, and cruel by nature. (Young folks is most usually always cruel—don't seem to know no better.)

Well, right in the middle of the hush, Abe gathered up his books and upped and walked outdoors, lookin' right ahead of him, and consequently seeing the handsome young teacher unbeknown to her.

She was the worst cut up you ever did see; but what could she do or say? Go and tell him she thought he was makin' up a face for fun? The girls do say that come noon-spell, when she found out about it, she cried—just fairly cried. Then she tried to be awful nice to Abe's ornery brother Ephe, and Ephe he was tickled most to death; but that didn't do Abe any good—Ephe was jest ornery enough to take care that Abe shouldn't get any comfort out of it. They do say she sent messages to Abe, and Ephe never delivered them, or else twisted 'em so as to make things worse and worse. Mebbe so. mebbe not—Ephe was ornery enough for it.

'Course the school-ma'am she was boardin' round, and pretty soon it come time to go to ol' man Dodge's, and she went; but no Abe could she ever see. He kept away, and as to meals, he never set

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by, but took a bite off by himself when he could get a chance. ('Course his mother favored him, being he was so cussed unlucky.) Then when the folks was all to bed, he'd come in and poke up the fire and peek into his book, but first one side and then the other, same as ever.

Now what does school-ma'am do but come down one night when she thought he was a-bed and asleep, and catch him unawares. Abe knowed it was her, quick as he heard the rustle of her dress, but there wasn't no help for it, so he just turned his head away and covered his cross-eyes with his hands, and she pitched in. What she said I don't know, but Abe he never said a word; only told her he didn't blame her, not a mite; he knew she couldn't help it—no more than he could. Then she asked him to come back to school, and he answered to please excuse him. After a bit she asked him if he wouldn't come to oblige her, and he said he calculated he was obligin' her more by stayin' away.

Well, come to that she didn't know what to say or do, so, woman-like, she upped and cried; and then she said he hurt her feelings. And the upshot of it was he said he'd come, and they shook hands on it.

Well, Abe kept his word and took up schoolin' as if nothing had happened; and such schoolin' as there was that winter! I don't believe any regular academy had more learnin' and teachin' that winter than what that district school did. Seemed as if all the scholars had turned over a new leaf. Even wild, ornery, no-account Ephe Dodge couldn't help but get ahead some—but then he was crazy to get the school-ma'am; and she never paid no attention to him, just went with Abe. Abe was teachin' her mathematics, seeing that was the one thing where he knowed more than she did—outside of farmin'. Folks used to say that if Ephe had Abe's head, or Abe had Ephe's face, the school-ma'am would have half of the Dodge farm whenever ol' man Dodge got through with it; but neither of them did have what the other had, and so there it was, you see.

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Well, you've heard of Squire Caton, of course; Judge Caton, they call him since he got to be Judge of the Supreme Court—and Chief Justice at that. Well, he had a farm down there not far from Fox River, and when he was there he was just a plain farmer like the rest of us, though up in Chicago he was a high-up lawyer, leader of the bar. Now it so happened that a young doctor named Brainard—Daniel Brainard—had just come to Chicago and was startin' in, and Squire Caton was helpin' him, gave him desk-room in his office and made him known to the folks—Kinzies, and Butterfields, and Ogdens, and Hamiltons, and Arnolds, and all of those folks—about all there was in Chicago in those days. Brainard had been to Paris—Paris, France, not Paris, Illinois, you understand—and knew all the doctorin' there was to know then. Well, come spring, Squire Caton had Doc Brainard down to visit him, and they shot ducks and geese and prairie chickens and some wild turkeys and deer, too—game was just swarmin' at that time. All the while Caton was doin' what law business there was to do; and Brainard thought he ought to be doin' some doctorin' to keep his hand in, so he asked Caton if there wasn't any cases he could take up—surgery cases especially he hankered after, seein' he had more carving tools than you could shake a stick at. He asked him particularly if there wasn't anybody he could treat for "strabismus." The squire hadn't heard of anybody dying of that complaint; but when the doctor explained that strabismus was French for cross-eyes, he naturally thought of poor Abe Dodge, and the young doctor was right up on his ear. He smelled the battle afar off; and 'most before you could say Jack Robinson the squire and the doctor were on horseback and down to the Dodge farm, tool-chest and all.

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Well, it so happened that nobody was at home but Abe and Ephe, and it didn't take but few words before Abe was ready to set right down, then and there, and let anybody do anything he was a mind to with his misfortunate eyes. No, he wouldn't wait till the old folks come home; he didn't want to ask no advice; he wasn't afraid of pain, nor of what anybody could do to his eyes—couldn't be made any worse than they were, whatever you did to 'em. Take 'em out and boil 'em and put 'em back if you had a mind to, only go to work. He knew he was of age and he guessed he was master of his own eyes—such as they were.

Well, there wasn't nothing else to do but go ahead. The doctor opened up his killing tools and tried to keep Abe from seeing them; but Abe he just come right over and peeked at 'em, handled 'em,

and called 'em "splendid"—and so they were, barrin' havin' them used on your own flesh and blood and bones.

Then they got some cloths and a basin, and one thing an' another, and set Abe right down in a chair. (No such thing as chloroform in those days, you'll remember.) And Squire Caton was to hold an instrument that spread the eyelid wide open, while Ephe was to hold Abe's head steady. First touch of the lancet, and first spirt of blood, and what do you think? That ornery Ephe wilted, and fell flat on the floor behind the chair!

"Squire," said Brainard, "step around and hold his head."

"I can hold my own head," says Abe, as steady as you please. But Squire Caton, he straddled over Ephe and held his head between his arms, and the two handles of the eye-spreader with his hands.

It was all over in half a minute, and then Abe he leaned forward, and shook the blood off his eye-lashes, and looked straight out of that eye for the first time since he was born. And the first words he said were:

"Thank the Lord! She's mine!"

About that time Ephe he crawled outdoors, sick as a dog; and Abe spoke up, says he:

"Now for the other eye, doctor."

"Oh," says the doctor, "we'd better take another day for that."

"All right," says Abe; "if your hands are tired of cuttin', you can make another job of it. My face ain't tired of bein' cut, I can tell you."

"Well, if you're game, I am."

So, if you'll believe me, they just set to work and operated on the other eye, Abe holding his own head, as he said he would, and the squire holding the spreader. And when it was all done, the doctor was for putting a bandage on to keep things quiet till the wounds all healed up, but Abe just begged for one sight of himself, and he stood up and walked over to the clock and looked in the glass, and says he:

"So that's the way I look, is it? Shouldn't have known my own face—never saw it before. How long must I keep the bandage on, doctor?"

"Oh, if the eyes ain't very sore when you wake up in the morning, you can take it off, if you'll be careful."

"Wake up! Do you s'pose I can sleep when such a blessing has fallen on me? I'll lay still, but if I forget it, or you, for one minute this night, I'll be so ashamed of myself that it'll wake me right up!"

Then the doctor bound up his eyes and the poor boy said "Thank God!" two or three times, and they could see the tears running down his cheeks from under the cloth. Lord! It was just as pitiful as a broken-winged bird!

How about the girl? Well; it was all right for Abe—and all wrong for Ephe—all wrong for Ephe! But that's all past and gone—past and gone. Folks come for miles and miles to see cross-eyed Abe with his eyes as straight as a loon's leg. Doctor Brainard was a great man forever after in those parts. Everywhere else, too, by what I heard.

When the doctor and the squire come to go, Abe spoke up, blind-folded as he was, and says he:

"Doc, how much do you charge a feller for savin' his life—making a man out of a poor wreck—doin' what he never thought could be done but by dyin' and goin' to kingdom come?"

"Oh," says Doc Brainard, says he, "that ain't what we look at as pay practice. You didn't call me in; I come of myself, as though it was what we call a clinic. If all goes well, and if you happen to have a barrel of apples to spare, you just send them up to Squire Caton's house in Chicago, and I'll call over and help eat 'em."

What did Abe say to that? Why, sir, he never said a word; but they do say the tears started out again, out from under the bandage and down his cheeks. But then Abe he had a five-year-old pet mare he'd raised from a colt—pretty as a picture, kind as a kitten, and fast as split lightning; and next time Doc come down Abe he just slipped out to the barn and brought the mare round and hitched her to the gate-post, and when Doc come to be going, says Abe:

"Don't forget your nag, doctor; she's hitched at the gate."

Well, sir, even then Abe had the hardest kind of a time to get Doc Brainard to take that mare; and when he did ride off, leadin' her, it wasn't half an hour before back she came, lickety-split. Doc said she

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broke away from him and put for home, but I always suspected he didn't have no use for a hoss he couldn't sell or hire out, and couldn't afford to keep in the village—that was what Chicago was then. But come along towards fall Abe he took her right up to town, and then the doctor's practice had growed so much that he was pretty glad to have her; and Abe was glad to have him have her, seeing all that had come to him through havin' eyes like other folks—that's the school-ma'am, I mean.

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How did the school-ma'am take it? Well, it was this way. After the cuttin' Abe didn't show up for a few days, till the inflammation got down and he'd had some practice handlin' his eyes, so to speak. He just kept himself to himself, enjoying himself. He'd go around doin' the chores, singin' so you could hear him a mile. He was always great on singin', Abe was, though ashamed to go to singin'-school with the rest. Then, when the poor boy began to feel like other folks, he went right over to where school-ma'am happened to be boardin' round, and walked right up to her and took her by both hands, and looked her straight in the face, and said:

"Do you know me?"

Well, she kind of smiled and blushed, and then the corners of her mouth pulled down, and she pulled one hand away, and—if you believe me—that was the third time that girl cried that season, to my certain knowledge—and all for nothin' either time!

What did she say? Why, she just said she'd have to begin all over again to get acquainted with Abe. But Ephe's nose was out of joint, and Ephe knowed it as well as anybody, Ephe did. It was Abe's eyes to Ephe's nose.

Married? Oh, yes, of course; and lived on the farm as long as the old folks lived, and afterwards, too; Ephe staying right along, like the fool he always had been. That feller never did have as much sense as a last year's bird's nest.

Alive yet? Abe? Well, no. Might have been if it hadn't been for Shiloh. When the war broke out Abe thought he'd ought to go, old as he was, so he went into the Sixth. Maybe you've seen a book written about the captain of Company K of the Sixth. It was Company K he went into—him and Ephe. And he was killed at Shiloh—just as it always seems to happen. He got killed, and his worthless brother come home. Folks thought Ephe would have liked to marry the widow, but, Lord! she never had no such an idea! Such bait as he was compared to his brother. She never chirked up, to speak of, and now she's dead too, and Ephe he just toddles round, taking care of the children—kind of a he dry-nurse that's about all he ever was good for, anyhow.

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My name? Oh, my name's Ephraim—Ephe they call me, for short; Ephe Dodge. Abe was my brother.

JOSEPH KIRKLAND.

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THE DOCTOR'S OF HOYLAND.



DR. JAMES RIPLEY was always looked upon as an exceedingly lucky dog by all of the profession who knew him. His father had preceded him in a practice in the village of Hoyland, in the north of Hampshire, and all was ready for him on the very first day that the law allowed him to put his name at the foot of a prescription. In a few years the old gentleman retired and settled on the South Coast, leaving his son in undisputed possession of the whole countryside. Save for Dr. Horton, near Basingstoke, the young surgeon had a clear run of six miles in every direction, and took his fifteen hundred pounds a year; though, as is usual in country practice, the stable swallowed up most of what the consulting-room earned.

Dr. James Ripley was two and thirty years of age, reserved, learned, unmarried, with set, rather stern, features, and a thinning of the dark hair upon the top of his head, which was worth quite a hundred a year to him. He was particularly happy in his management of ladies. He had caught the tone of bland sternness and decisive suavity which dominates without offending. Ladies, however, were not equally happy in their management of him. Professionally, he was always at their service. Socially, he was a drop of quicksilver. In vain the country mammas spread out their simple lures in front of him. Dances and picnics were not to his taste, and he preferred during his scanty leisure to shut himself up in his study, and to bury himself in Virchow's Archives and the professional journals.

Study was a passion with him, and he would have none of the rust which often gathers round a country practitioner. It was his ambition to keep his knowledge as fresh and bright as at the moment when he had stepped out of the examination hall. He prided himself on being able, at a moment's notice, to rattle off the seven ramifications of some obscure artery, or to give the exact percentage of any physiological compound. After a long day's work he would sit up half the night performing iridectomies and extractions upon the sheep's eyes sent in by the village butcher, to the horror of his housekeeper, who had to remove the *débris* next morning. His love for his work was the one fanaticism which found a place in his dry, precise nature.

It was the more to his credit that he should keep up to date in his knowledge, since he had no competition to force him to exertion. In the seven years during which he had practised in Hoyland, three rivals had pitted themselves against him; two in the village itself, and one in the neighboring hamlet of Lower Hoyland. Of these, one had sickened and wasted, being, as it was said, himself the only patient whom he had treated during his eighteen months of ruralizing. A second had bought a fourth share of a Basingstoke practice, and had departed honorably; while a third had vanished one September night, leaving a gutted house and an unpaid drug bill behind him. Since then the district had become a monopoly, and no one had dared to measure himself against the established fame of the Hoyland doctor.

It was, then, with a feeling of some surprise and considerable curiosity that, on driving through Lower Hoyland one morning, he perceived that the new house at the end of the village was occupied, and that a virgin brass plate glistened upon the swinging gate which faced the highroad. He pulled up his fifty-guinea chestnut mare, and took a good look at it. "Verrinder Smith, M. D.," was printed across it very neat, small lettering. The last man had had letters half a foot long, with a lamp like a fire station. Dr. James Ripley noted the difference, and deduced from it that the newcomer might possibly prove a more formidable opponent. He was convinced of it that evening when he came to consult the current medical directory. By it he learned that Dr. Verrinder Smith was the holder of superb degrees, that he had studied with distinction at Edinburgh, Paris, Berlin and Vienna; and, finally, that he had been awarded a gold medal and the Lee Hopkins scholarship for original research in

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recognition of an exhaustive inquiry into the functions of the anterior spinal nerve roots. Dr. Ripley passed his fingers through his thin hair in bewilderment as he read his rival's record. What on earth could so brilliant a man mean by putting up his plate in a little Hampshire hamlet?

But Dr. Ripley furnished himself with an explanation to the riddle. No doubt Dr. Verrinder Smith had simply come down there in order to pursue some scientific research in peace and quiet. The plate was up as an address rather than as an invitation to patients. Of course, that must be the true explanation. In that case the presence of this brilliant neighbor would be a splendid thing for his own studies. He had often longed for some kindred mind, some steel on which he might strike his flint. Chance had brought it to him, and he rejoiced exceedingly.

And this joy it was which led him to take a step which was quite at variance with his usual habits. It is the custom for a newcomer among medical men to call first upon the older, and the etiquette upon the subject is strict. Dr. Ripley was pedantically exact on such points, and yet he deliberately drove over next day and called upon Dr. Verrinder Smith. Such a waiving of ceremony was, he felt, a gracious act upon his part, and a fit prelude to the intimate relations which he hoped to establish with his neighbor.

The house was neat and well appointed, and Dr. Ripley was shown by a smart maid into a dapper little consulting-room. As he passed in he noticed two or three parasols and a lady's sunbonnet hanging in the hall. It was a pity that his colleague should be a married man. It would put them upon a different footing, and interfere with those long evenings of high scientific talk which he had pictured to himself. On the other hand, there was much in the consulting-room to please him. Elaborate instruments, seen more often in hospitals than in the houses of private practitioners, were scattered about. A sphygmograph stood upon the table, and a gasometer-like engine, which was new to Dr. Ripley, in the corner. A bookcase full of ponderous volumes in French and German, paper-covered for the most part, and varying in tint from the shell to the yolk of a duck's egg, caught his wondering eyes, and he was deeply absorbed in their titles when the door opened suddenly behind him. Turning round he found himself facing a little woman, whose plain, palish face was remarkable only for a pair of shrewd, humorous eyes of a blue which had two shades too much green in it. She held a *pince-nez* in her left hand and the doctor's card in her right.

"How do you do, Dr. Ripley?" said she.

"How do you do, madam?" returned the visitor. "Your husband is perhaps out?"

"I am not married," said she, simply.

"Oh, I beg your pardon! I meant the doctor—Dr. Verrinder Smith."

"I am Dr. Verrinder Smith."

Dr. Ripley was so surprised that he dropped his hat and forgot to pick it up again.

"What!" he gasped, "the Lee Hopkins prize man! You!" He had never seen a woman doctor before, and his whole conservative soul rose up in revolt at the idea. He could not recall any Biblical injunction that the man should remain ever the doctor and the woman the nurse, and yet he felt as if a blasphemy had been committed. His face betrayed his feelings only too clearly.

"I am sorry to disappoint you," said the lady, dryly.

"You certainly have surprised me," he answered, picking up his hat.

"You are not among our champions, then?"

"I cannot say that the movement has my approval."

"And why?"

"I should much prefer not to discuss it."

"But I am sure you will answer a lady's question."

"Ladies are in danger of losing their privileges when they usurp the place of the other sex. They cannot claim both."

"Why should a woman not earn her bread by her brains?"

Dr. Ripley felt irritated by the quiet manner in which the lady cross-questioned him.

"I should much prefer not to be led into a discussion, Miss Smith."

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"Dr. Smith," she interrupted.

"Well, Dr. Smith! But if you insist upon an answer, I must say that I do not think medicine a imitable profession for women, and that I have a personal objection to masculine ladies." It was an exceedingly rude speech, and he was ashamed of it the instant after he had made it. The lady, however, simply raised her eye-brows and smiled.

"It seems to me that you are begging the question," said she. "Of course, if it makes women masculine, that would be a considerable deterioration."

It was a neat little counter, and Dr. Ripley, like a picked fencer, bowed his acknowledgment. "I must go," said he.

"I am sorry that we can not come to some more friendly conclusions, since we are to be neighbors," she remarked.

He bowed again, and took a step toward the door.

"It was a singular coincidence," she continued, "that at the instant that you called I was reading your paper on 'Locomotor Ataxia' in the 'Lancet.'"

"Indeed," said he dryly.

"I thought it was a very able monograph."

"You are very good."

"But the views which you attribute to Professor Pitres of Bordeaux have been repudiated by him."

"I have his pamphlet of 1890," said Dr. Ripley, angrily.

"Here is his pamphlet of 1891." She picked it from among a litter of periodicals. "If you have time to glance your eye down this passage—"

Dr. Ripley took it from her and shot rapidly through the paragraph which she indicated. There was no denying that it completely knocked the bottom out of his own article. He threw it down, and with another frigid bow he made for the door. As he took the reins from the groom, he glanced round and saw that the lady was standing at her window, and it seemed to him that she was laughing heartily.

All day the memory of this interview haunted him. He felt that he had come very badly out of it. She had shown herself to be his superior on his own pet subject. She had been courteous while he had been rude, self-possessed when he had been angry. And then, above all, there was her presence, her monstrous intrusion, to rankle in his mind. A woman doctor had been an abstract thing before, repugnant, but distant. Now she was there in actual practice, with a brass plate up just like his own, competing for the same patients. Not that he feared the competition, but he objected to this lowering of his ideal of womanhood. She could not be more than thirty, and had a bright, mobile face too. He thought of her humorous eyes, and of her strong, well-turned chin. It revolted him the more to recall the details of her education. A man, of course, could come through such an ordeal with all his purity, but it was nothing short of shameless in a woman.

But it was not long before he learned that even her competition was a thing to be feared. The novelty of her presence had brought a few curious invalids into her consulting-rooms, and, once there, they had been so impressed by the firmness of her manner, and by the singular new-fashioned instruments with which she tapped and peered and sounded, that it formed the core of their conversation for weeks afterward. And soon there were tangible proofs of her powers upon the countryside. Farmer Eyton, whose callous ulcer had been quietly spreading over his shin for years back, under a gentle régime of zinc ointment, was painted round with blistering fluid, and found, after three blasphemous nights, that his sore was stimulated into healing. Mrs. Crowder, who had always regarded the birthmark upon her second daughter, Eliza, as a sign of the indignation of the Creator at a third helping of a raspberry tart which she had partaken of during a critical period, learned that, with the help of two galvanic needles, the mischief was not irreparable. In a month Dr. Verrinder Smith was known, and in two she was famous.

Occasionally Dr. Ripley met her as he drove upon his rounds. She had started a high dog-cart, taking the reins herself, with a little tiger behind. When they met he invariably raised his hat with punctilious politeness, but the grim severity of his face showed how formal was the courtesy. In fact, his dislike was rapidly deepening

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into absolute detestation. "The unsexed woman" was the description of her which he permitted himself to give to those of his patients who still remained staunch. But, indeed, they were a rapidly decreasing body, and every day his pride was galled by the news of some fresh defection. The lady had somehow impressed the country folk with an almost superstitious belief in her power, and from far and near they flocked to her consulting-room.

But what galled him most of all was when she did something which he had pronounced to be impracticable. For all his knowledge, he lacked nerve as an operator, and usually sent his worst cases up to London. The lady, however, had no weakness of the sort, and took everything that came in her way. It was agony to him to hear that she was about to straighten little Alec Turner's club foot, and right at the fringe of the rumor came a note from his mother, the rector's wife, asking him if he would be so good as to act as chloroformist. It would be inhumanity to refuse, as there was no other who could take the place, but it was gall and wormwood to his sensitive nature. Yet, in spite of his vexation, he could not but admire the dexterity with which the thing was done. She handled the little wax-like foot so gently, and held the tiny tenotomy knife as an artist holds his pencil. One straight incision, one snick of a tendon, and it was all over without a stain on the white towel which lay beneath. He had never seen anything more masterly, and he had the honesty to say so, though her skill increased his dislike of her. The operation spread her fame still farther at his expense, and self-preservation was added to his other grounds for detesting her.

And this very detestation it was which brought matters to a curious climax. One winter's night, just as he was rising from his lonely dinner, a groom came riding down from Squire Faircastle's, the richest man in the district, to say that his daughter had scalded her hand, and that medical help was needed on the instant.

The coachman had ridden for the lady doctor; for it mattered nothing to the squire who came, as long as it were speedily. Dr. Ripley rushed from his surgery with the determination that she should not effect an entrance into this stronghold of his if hard driving on his part could prevent it. He did not even wait to light his lamps, but sprang into his gig and flew off as fast as hoofs could rattle. He lived rather nearer to the Squire's than she did, and was convinced that he could get there well before her.

And so he would but for that whimsical element of chance, which will forever muddle up the affairs of this world and dumfound the prophets. Whether it came from the want of his lights, or from his mind being full of the thoughts of his rival, he allowed too little by half a foot in taking the sharp turn upon the Basingstoke road. The empty trap and the frightened horse clattered away into the darkness, while the Squire's groom crawled out of the ditch into which he had been shot. He struck a match, looked down at his groaning companion, and then, after the fashion of rough, strong men when they see what they have not seen before, he was very sick.

The Doctor raised himself a little on his elbow in the glint of the match. He caught a glimpse of something white and sharp bristling through his trouser-leg, half way down the shin.

"Compound!" he groaned. "A three months' job," and fainted.

When he came to himself the groom was gone, for he had scudded off to the Squire's house for help, but a small page was holding a gig-lamp in front of his injured leg, and a woman, with an open case of polished instruments gleaming in the yellow light, was deftly slitting up his trouser with a crooked pair of scissors.

"It's all right, Doctor," said she, soothingly. "I am so sorry about it. You can have Dr. Horton to-morrow, but I am sure you will allow me to help you to-night. I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw you by the roadside."

"The groom has gone for help," groaned the sufferer.

"When it comes we can move you into the gig. A little more light, John! So! Ah, dear, dear, we shall have laceration unless we reduce this before we move you. Allow me to give you a whiff of chloroform, and I have no doubt that I can secure it sufficiently to—"

Dr. Ripley never heard the end of that sentence. He tried to raise a hand and to murmur something in protest, but a sweet smell was in his nostrils, and a sense of rich peace and lethargy stole over his jangled nerves. Down he sank, through clear, cool water, ever down and down into the green shadows beneath, gently, without effort,

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while the pleasant chiming of a great belfry rose and fell in his ears. Then he rose again, up and up, and ever up, with a terrible tightness about his temples, until at last he shot out of those green shadows and was out in the light once more. Two bright shining golden spots gleamed before his dazed eyes. He blinked and blinked before he could give a name to them. They were only the two brass balls at the end posts of his bed, and he was lying in his own little room, with a head like a cannon-ball, and a leg like an iron bar. Turning his eyes, he saw the calm face of Dr. Verrinder Smith looking down at him.

"Ah, at last!" said she. "I kept you under all the way home, for I knew how painful the jolting would be. It is in good position now, with a strong side splint. I have ordered a morphia draught for you. Shall I tell your groom to ride for Dr. Horton in the morning?"

"I should prefer that you should continue the case," said Dr. Ripley feebly, and then, with a half-hysterical laugh, "You have all the rest of the parish as patients, you know, so you may as well make the thing complete by having me also." It was not a very gracious speech, but it was a look of pity and not of anger which shone in her eyes as she turned away from his bedside.

Dr. Ripley had a brother William, who was assistant surgeon at a London hospital, and who was down in Hampshire within a few hours of his hearing of the accident. He raised his brows when he heard the details.

"What! You are pestered with one of those!" he cried.

"I don't know what I should have done without her."

"I've no doubt she's an excellent nurse."

"She knows her work as well as you or I."

"Speak for yourself, James," said the London man with a sniff. "But apart from that, you know that the principle of the thing is all wrong."

"You think there is nothing to be said on the other side?"

"Good heavens! do you?"

"Well, I don't know. It struck me during the night that we may have been a little narrow in our views."

"Nonsense, James. It's all very fine for women to win prizes in the lecture-room, but you know as well as I do that they are no use in an emergency. Now I warrant that this woman was all nerves when she was setting your leg. That reminds me that I had better just take a look at it and see that it is all right."

"I would rather that you did not undo it," said the patient; "I have her assurance that it is all right."

Brother William was deeply shocked.

"Of course, if a woman's assurance is of more value than the opinion of the assistant surgeon of a London hospital, there is nothing more to be said," he remarked.

"I should prefer that you did not touch it," said the patient firmly, and Dr. William went back to London that evening in a huff. The lady, who had heard of his coming, was much surprised on learning of his departure.

"We had a difference upon a point of professional etiquette," said Dr. James, and it was all the explanation he would vouchsafe.

For two long months Dr. Ripley was brought in contact with his rival every day, and he learned many things which he had not known before. She was a charming companion, as well as a most assiduous doctor. Her short presence during the long weary day was like a flower in a sand waste. What interested him was precisely what interested her, and she could meet him at every point upon equal terms. And yet under all her learning and her firmness ran a sweet, womanly nature, peeping out in her talk, shining in her greenish eyes, showing itself in a thousand subtle ways which the dullest of men could read. And he, though a bit of a prig and a pedant, was by no means dull, and had honesty enough to confess when he was in the wrong.

"I don't know how to apologize to you," he said in his shamefaced fashion one day, when he had progressed so far as to be able to sit in an armchair with his leg upon another one; "I feel that I have been quite in the wrong."

"Why, then?"

"Over this woman question. I used to think that a woman must inevitably lose something of her charm if she took up such studies."

"Oh, you don't think they are necessarily unsexed, then?" she

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cried, with a mischievous smile.

"Please don't recall my idiotic expression."

"I feel so pleased that I should have helped in changing your views. I think that it is the most sincere compliment that I have ever had paid me."

"At any rate, it is the truth," said he, and was happy all night at the remembrance of the flush of pleasure which made her pale face look quite comely for the instant.

For, indeed, he was already far past the stage when he would acknowledge her as the equal of any other woman. Already he could not disguise from himself that she had become the one woman. Her dainty skill, her gentle touch, her sweet presence, the community of their tastes, had all united to hopelessly upset his previous opinions. It was a dark day for him now when his convalescence allowed him to miss a visit, and darker still that other one which he saw approaching when all occasion for her visits would be at an end. It came around at last, however, and he felt that his whole life's fortune would hang upon the issue of that final interview. He was a direct man by nature, so he laid his hand upon hers as it felt for his pulse, and he asked her if she would be his wife.

"What, and unite the practices?" said she.

He started in pain and anger. "Surely you do not attribute any such base motive to me," he cried. "I love you as unselfishly as ever a woman was loved."

"No, I was wrong. It was a foolish speech," said she, moving her chair a little back, and tapping her stethoscope upon her knee. "Forget that I ever said it. I am so sorry to cause you any disappointment, and I appreciate most highly the honor which you do me, but what you ask is quite impossible."

With another woman he might have urged the point, but his instincts told him that it was quite useless with this one. Her tone of voice was conclusive. He said nothing, but leaned back in his chair a stricken man.

"I am so sorry," she said again. "If I had known what was passing in your mind I should have told you earlier that I intend to devote my life entirely to science. There are many women with a capacity for marriage, but few with a taste for biology. I will remain true to my own line then. I came down here while waiting for an opening in the Paris Physiological Laboratory. I have just heard that there is a vacancy for me there, and so you will be troubled no more by my intrusion upon your practice. I have done you an injustice, as you did me one. I thought you narrow and pedantic, with no good quality. I have learned during your illness to appreciate you better, and the recollection of our friendship will always be a very pleasant one to me."

And so it came about that in a very few weeks there was only one doctor in Hoyland. But folks noticed that the one had aged many years in a few months, that a weary sadness lurked always in the depths of his blue eyes, and that he was less concerned than ever with the eligible young ladies whom chance, or their careful country mammas, placed in his way.

SIR A. CONAN DOYLE.

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DOCTOR SANTOS: A CHARACTER SKETCH.



VERY one in Madrid knew Doctor Santos. He was a little bit of a man, with his beard and hair clamoring for the use of the scissors, and his clothes for benzine and a more fashionable cut. Nevertheless, he had a universal reputation for great wisdom, and his popularity in the district of Chamberi, the principal scene of his work, was beyond everything.

Possibly the peculiarities of the doctor did more than his true merit to attract the attention of the people. Perhaps some presentiment made every one consider him physically of not much account, but mentally a diamond of the purest water. It was well known that in the exercise of his profession he was a true ministering angel, and without any pretence of being a specialist or a philanthropist. People said that he was half crazy over the subject of disease, and followed the development of a fever with the same interest that others listened to or read a dramatic work, but with this exception, that it was not always necessary to be a mere spectator, that by discreetly intervening sometimes, he prepared cheerful and unexpected comedy, where otherwise there would have been the deepest tragedy.

This might have been merely scientific curiosity—we will not discuss that point—but thanks to this keen interest, if a patient were very ill, and that happened frequently, he would remain to watch by the bedside, and again,—and this happened yet more frequently, for Doctor Santos devoted himself almost exclusively to poor people—there would not be money enough to buy supper for the family or broth or medicine for the sick one; then our doctor would pull out his purse and send for whatever was necessary. His patients never lacked for what was needed to restore them to health.

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The doctor's greatest pleasure, as he always declared, was to cure sick children. It seemed impossible that a man who had no family and who, according to all accounts, had never married, and who had been adopted himself by a barber who took him from an orphan asylum, should be able to feel such absolute tenderness of heart towards little ones.

A woman, whose son the doctor had restored to health, aptly expressed the sentiments of every one: "It seems as if Doctor Santos had been a mother himself."

We will take it for granted that his life and good deeds are well known, for many a scientific work can testify to the merits of Doctor Santos; so we will not stop to give a detailed resumé or minute account of the arduous labor of many years spent in true performance of his profession.

I am now going to speak of an event in his life which, if it were not absolutely true, would seem to many people to be altogether improbable.

Doctor Santos always said that the elixir of long life was a very easy and simple thing to obtain, that it was not necessary to knock one's head against the wall in order that the electric spark of an idea should spring out of the brain, and that even the most stupid could give a solution of the problem to those who discussed it learnedly, but that not even this elixir nor any other could be applied in every case, that it was just as difficult to unite a head to the body from which it had been severed as to repair the ravages of some illnesses. In eighty cases out of a hundred, however, he was sure that the elixir would give good results.

The strangest thing was that these were not merely affirmations, but positive proofs, for in his practice he had tried the remedy and, not only eighty to a hundred, but in even greater proportion, had produced good results. He never could be made to specify the remedy, and he put an end to all questions on the subject, by saying:

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"Nothing, nothing, it is like, it is like Columbus's egg, why prove it?"

It was long after twelve o'clock one night, when Doctor Santos

entered a miserable garret in the *Salle de Fuencarral*. The door was partly open. A middle-aged man was stretched out on a rude cot. The rest of the furniture consisted of some broken, rush-bottomed chairs, and a pine table by the bedside. The sick man had no relatives in Madrid; he had arrived from Cataluña a little more than a month before and had fallen ill with pneumonia. He refused, absolutely, to go to the hospital, so a charitable neighbor, who had attended to his simple wants for some time, called in Doctor Santos. The disease had already made inroads upon the man's constitution. Although the pneumonia was helped, the doctor could not cure the quick consumption which followed and which would soon end the man's life.

When the sick man saw the doctor enter, an expression of joy passed over his features, as if now black death had no terror for him; for, in the last sad moments, a warm hand would clasp his and a loving heart would be moved to sympathy. The doctor took the sick man's hand.

"How are you, Jaime?" he asked.

"I am dying, I feel sure of it, but I wish to ask one more favor of you who have already done so many for me. Tell me how much longer I have to live. I know there is nothing that will help me, and I am almost glad that it is so, for I have suffered so much in my life. At least, I shall cease to suffer. It is true, is it not, that over there there is no more pain, all is quiet, dark, cold?"

Accustomed as Doctor Santos was to such scenes, he could scarcely keep back the tears—much to his own disgust, when he looked at the poor fellow—and he growled to himself: "A weeping doctor is a fool." But he answered the dying man very gently:

"What can I do for you, Jaime? To whom shall I write? Let me know just what you wish to be done and I promise you to do it as far as I am able, and before it slips my memory. I don't want to frighten you, but every one takes things differently. Judging from the state you are in, I am not the one just now to do you the most good, and we must soon send for one who can give you the only true consolation. After all, although this life means a great deal to us, we ought to be glad rather than sorry at the thought of leaving it, because we are all sure that God is good and will pardon us, and that he loves us. For this reason we call him Father, for if he is not better than the best on earth, what other conception can we have of him?"

"Now, I will go myself to call a priest whom I know, and in the meantime, I will see if a neighbor will stay with you."

"Oh, don't go, I beg of you. I must talk to you."

The doctor dared not say no, but he knew that the hour of death was swiftly approaching. A moment later he left the room, saying:—

"I'll return directly."

He sent a neighbor for the priest, then returned as he had promised, and sat down by the head of the bed.

Jaime asked the doctor to do him the favor to put his hand under the mattress and take out a packet which he would find there. After the doctor had pulled out the packet, Jaime began to speak:—

"Doctor, I ask you not to open this packet until after I am dead, and after that, with the help of your own conscience, you will decide what you think had best be done. I want you, if any personal advantage can come to you from it, to use it all for yourself. I have no affection for any one else, nor am I in debt to any one. If this were not my last hour on earth I should say that my soul held nothing but hatred for the evil received from those I most cherished."

The sick man seemed fatigued and the doctor told him to rest a few moments, but now the man began to make those motions of the hands, so characteristic of those about to die, and to plait and unplait the bed clothing. He did not seem to know exactly what he was saying and his eyes wandered restlessly about the room:—

"She deceived me. How much I loved her! Her beautiful black eyes! How pretty she was! And he my best friend! It was infamous, shameful! I saw them! the truth is proof enough! Ah, how much blood flowed from the wound!—he did not mind dying because he knew she loved him. And I envied him after he was dead! Ah, how hard the punishment! How dark the cell, how heavy the shackles! It is shameful! I am an assassin! Every one has left me! How blue the sky is! How fresh and green the fields! I can't get out with these

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horrible irons on my wrists!"

The priest came in time to administer the extreme unction. Jaime died shortly after and the doctor returned home with the packet under his arm. Once in his study, before going to bed, he decided to open the bundle which Jaime had give him with so much mystery. It was an easy task. He untied the paper and out fell what seemed to be a magazine. There were hundreds of leaves, but each leaf was a banknote of four thousand reals.

Daylight glimmered through the curtains. Doctor Santos had not closed his eyes. He was the owner, the rightful owner of more than four thousand pésétas (one hundred thousand dollars) and the donation was absolutely legitimate. Jaime's mind, as no one knew better than he, was perfectly clear at the time he made the gift. What should he do with all that money! He would be happy, all his friends would be happy, in fact, everyone would be happy! What a library, what a laboratory, he would have!

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Hours passed, but the doctor tossed and turned restlessly on his bed, unable to sleep for a moment. The clock struck seven. He could not stay in bed any longer; he arose, made his accustomed hasty toilet, drank his coffee and started off on his usual round of visits. He began with the very sick patients, but at ten o'clock he said to himself, he would get a friend to accompany him to the bank that he might deposit the money. He had never kept any money in a bank. The little box in his office had always held all he could spare, and he did not know exactly what legal forms were necessary in order to have it placed so that he could draw out certain sums when he wished.

His first patient lived several miles away, so he carried the precious package with him in order not to lose time in going and coming. He stopped at the patient's house. The sick man was a cabinet maker who had been trying to work with an injured hand, consequently, blood poisoning had set in and the symptoms were such that amputation seemed necessary. The poor man, strong as an oak, cried like a child.

"The maintenance of my wife and family lies in the skill of my five fingers," he said, "and now you are going to cut them off."

But Doctor Santos, more of an optimist than ever that day, brought the bright light of hope into the sad hearts of the afflicted family. They might rely upon him for support and help as long as they needed it.

He then went to see a talented journalist who had not prospered since he began to have ideas and tastes of his own instead of praising those of other people. The journalist had lost his place because he had published, without first consulting the director, an article in which he said that what Marruecos most needed was some powerful nation to civilize it, that our position in the matter was like that of the gardener's dog, keeping others from doing what we could not do ourselves; that it would be better to be annexed to a rich country than a poor one, to have a cultivated country instead of a semi-savage one; and a hundred other barbarities besides.

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As one might well imagine, the journalist had trouble with his head, he was worn out by fatigue and had the beginning of softening of the brain. Doctor Santos had ordered rest, a quiet, regular life, early hours, and horseback riding.

The journalist sent out to a store for a pasteboard horse, and when the doctor called to see him, the sick man said:—

"This is the only horse I can afford."

Of course, he plainly showed his insanity by this act, but Doctor Santos did not look upon it in that light. He begged the man's pardon for having advised him to buy what he could not afford.

A little later, he visited a widow with three children. She was young and pretty; her husband had been a sculptor of some talent. He was not rich, but he had earned enough to support his family decently. He died and for the first year the wife managed to live fairly well, by dint of great economy. The second year, the widow sold her husband's art treasures; the third year, she lived on the gifts of relatives and friends, which gave out before the fourth year, and the family went from the second floor to the garret, from wholesome food to scanty scraps, from warm clothing to rags. Last of all came sickness.

Doctor Santos felt inspired: "If this little woman goes to the bad, whose fault will it be? Her sewing brings in so little!" Pulling out a

banknote, he handed it to the widow, telling her to live where she could have fresh air and sunlight, to buy nourishing food and look after the little ones.

The doctor left that poverty-stricken place, his plain face so radiant with happiness that it seemed almost beautiful. He thought to himself, as he went along, that if Jaime had used some of this money for himself and had lived properly, he would not have died of consumption. "That devilish avarice!" he muttered. "A millionaire living and dying like a beggar in order not to spend his money. What is the good of money if it is not to spend?"

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Suddenly two ideas flashed into his head. "Suppose this is stolen money! What if the bills are false?"

He stopped. The package fell from his hand.

"Sir, you have dropped something," said a poor woman who was passing. The doctor picked up the bundle and, turning around, went home.

"Stolen or false," he muttered grimly. "There is no other solution."

The words and the ideas sounded in his ears, they hurt him, as if some one had struck him on the head with a hammer.

He reached his home, told his old servant that he would see no one, then changed his mind, sent the woman off on an errand, and shut himself up in his office.

The doctor had in his house two banknotes of a thousand pésétas (two hundred and fifty dollars) each.

"We will begin with the hypothesis that I can prove them false," he said. He took out his own banknotes and laid them on the table; took another out of the package and placed it between the first two.

"They must have been stolen," he said, "for all three are alike, the same block, the same print."

He turned them over, they were exactly alike. Well, there was nothing to be done but to advertise and await the rightful owner, and he would have to word the advertisement so that every Spaniard in the country should not appear to claim the money.

He took a magnifying glass and began to make methodical observations. First, the paper, its quality, its transparency; then the engravings; the letters, letter by letter, the signatures. But even with the help of the glass, which magnified the size six or eight times, he could detect no difference between the bills.

"From whom could Jaime have stolen them? Had blood been shed on account of those bits of paper? Had Jaime robbed the government or a bank?"

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The doctor thought and thought. He studied, with the aid of a glass, every detail, even the smallest.

"Is it possible," he exclaimed, "that each one can be so perfect? They have been stolen, undoubtedly stolen," he said, at the end of a quarter of an hour of close observation. Ten times, already, he had compared the numeration, but he turned again to look at it.

"They all look alike," he said again, but when he took away the crystal he doubted the certainty of his own vision. He brought out a delicate compass and measured the numbers of his old bills. He placed the compass on the new, there was absolutely no difference.

He was not satisfied with the length alone, but he even measured the width of the lines.

"They have been stolen," he repeated mechanically. Then, as if answering himself, he spoke slowly:—

"Where could he have stolen them? No, they are counterfeit, false, false. Ah, thou Catalan rogue, who art in the infernal regions. I hope that thou art making false notes with thy skin of Barrabas!"

"I have learned the secret," thought the doctor. "There is no doubt of it."

He still looked exclusively at the numbers, the false ones looked larger, they really were not, but as the lines were more delicate, it made the ciphers look larger.

"Those poor people are now in prison," said Doctor Santos sorrowfully. "They have denounced me and the police will shortly come to arrest me, and no one will believe they were ever given to me!"

He raised the stove cover. "No, that won't do. The embers and ashes will remain. They can smell the smoke and burnt paper."

The doctor had a dove-cot: a dove just then lighted on the

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window sill. A bright idea came to him. He took two tin boxes—such as are used for cut tobacco—and stuffed them both full with bank notes, climbed up to the dove-cot and looked through the garret window. No one could see him. He raised some tiles and hid the boxes, then covered them up, leaving all as it was before. Breathing heavily, his heart thumping furiously, he descended the staircase which led to the second floor and dropping into a chair, opened a huge volume which he held before his face, while he tried to recover his usual composure.

If he had been surprised and arrested, the inspector would have noticed that the book was upside down, the two old bills, with the magnifying glass and compass, were still on the table, and that the lappels and sleeves of his coat were covered with earth and whitewash.

After several hours had passed, the old servant had returned, and as no one else had appeared, the doctor began to think that perhaps the bills had not yet been changed and, by virtue of such a supposition, he hurried to the widow's house with the pious intention of substituting one of his old bank notes in place of the supposed false one. The bill had been changed; the widow and her children were having a little party in honor of their great good luck. They were not alone, as they generally were, but had asked several of their friends to share their joy. They were so profuse in their expressions of gratitude that the good old doctor did not know what to say nor how to explain his sudden return.

"Now be sure you take a room where you can have sunlight and give the children a dose of castor oil," he said as he hurried away.

Doctor Santos did not recover his usual composure for a long time. He seemed taciturn although he continued in his accustomed mode of living. After a while, however, he became more like himself.

The cabinet maker, for whom the doctor had obtained a lucrative position, wished to make a public manifestation of his gratitude, but the doctor forbade him to even mention that he had received help. Nevertheless, it was murmured continually, that Doctor Santos, on account of his relations with persons of high rank, had given many a one a modest pension, while he had restored others to health by giving to them the money to procure a change of climate and a much needed rest.

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Notwithstanding his friends of high rank, the doctor still lived in his modest apartment and had moreover, dismissed his only servant. He now took his meals at a neighboring tavern. He still kept the dove-cot, and he had bought an expensive therapeutical apparatus and costly instruments. He had a laboratory and a fine medical library.

He earned enough and he had innumerable friends who gave him money to help cases of true necessity, owing to his fame of discerning where help was really needed. Happily society is not so completely decayed that it does not produce, with frequent spontaneity, the flower of Christian charity.

When Doctor Santos changed his habits of living, his character also changed. Formerly, he had been cheerful and lively, fond of an occasional visit to the theatre, and especially fond of a good table. But when he might have had all this he became gloomy and moody, and reduced his personal expenses, in spite of his large earnings, to an extent almost miserly.

The years rolled by, the doctor's hair was snowy white, and he scarcely spoke. As he was no longer young and paid so little attention to his own comfort, his health began to fail. The cold was intense that winter and Doctor Santos, in spite of himself, had to keep his bed many a day.

His medical confrères visited him, and one, in particular, earnestly urged him to go to a warm climate.

"Must I go away, leave my work and occupations to die, not of sickness, but of ennui?" "But," argued his friend, "no one likes better than you to send people off for a change of air during the winter."

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The doctor did not reply, but he remained in Madrid, passing sleepless nights and coughing ceaselessly.

His friends, the only family he possessed, took turns, for a long time in caring for him, but, as the days lengthened into weeks, the weeks into months and each one gradually began to find that his own cares absorbed his time, it was agreed upon that the best thing

to do was to have a sister of charity come and nurse the doctor.

Henceforth, his friends' visits grew less frequent, and there were days at a time when his door bell did not ring once.

Sor Luz, as the sister of charity was called, proved to be a perfect substitute for all his other attendants. Although the doctor had never cared for women's society, he found Sor Luz such a charming companion that he refused to receive other people, if it were possible.

Her white head-dress and the undulations of her soft gown, seemed to him like the motions of a dove's wings.

Doctor Santos followed her with an affectionate and grateful glance, thus repaying the tender and solicitous care which only maternal and Christian love could give with such absolute abnegation and perseverance.

About the last of November, that harvest time of death, when a few golden leaves still clung to the trees, when the mountain tops were covered with silver and the cold, northerly wind penetrated the crevices of doors and windows, Doctor Santos began to grow worse.

He declared in his will, dated years before, that he had no property and that whatever was found in the house belonged, by right, to the poor. That he wished to have a humble funeral and be buried in the public cemetery.

In looking over his papers and effects, a tin box was found containing forty banknotes of one thousand pésétas each.

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His friends declared that he had died of avarice. Sor Luz said that she had never known any one who had passed away with more tranquil, resigned Christian spirit than Doctor Santos.

Nevertheless, she often spoke of some phrases of the doctor's which were utterly incomprehensible to her and for which she could not account.

"When there was yet time," he said, "I had the means to cure myself. It would have been so easy, that if it had been any one else I should have done so. I did not do it because I wished to preserve my own self-respect and to have some merit when God called me to a better life."

—*From the Spanish of Gustavo Morales, by*

JEAN RAYMOND BIDWELL.

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THE CURING OF KATE NEGLEY.



TOLD you once," said Mrs. Melissa Allgood, "about the time Kate Negley took that leading on the lodge line, and locked the doctor out of the house one night when he was meeting with the Masons, and hollered at him scornful-like, when he come home, to 'get in with his lodge-key;' and how the doctor smashed up her fine front door with an ax. Well, all the Station thought that might be the end of Kate's foolishness, and that maybe she would take her religion and sanctification comfortable after that, same as other folks. And everybody was glad Dr. Negley broke that door in, because it ain't good for Kate Negley or any other human to have their own way all the time.

"So Kate went along quiet and peaceable after that for two or three months, and never had no new leadings to tell about in meeting, and never did a thing to show she had heartfelt religion except to wear her hair straight down her back, according to Paul. And ma she said to me one day she believed Kate had come to the end of her line, and was going to act like sensible folks the rest of her days. But I told ma not to waste her breath in vain babblings; that I bet Kate Negley was just setting on a new nest, and for ma to wait for the hatching.

"I hadn't hardly spoke the words before it come. The very next Sunday, when Brother Cheatham got through preaching and called for experiences and testimonies, Kate she rose and said she was mightily moved to rebuke a faithless and perverse generation, puffed up in its fleshly mind, loving unrighteousness, and abominable in wickedness. She said she had been wandering in the way of destruction like the rest, and putting her faith in lies, till the last few weeks, when light begun to dawn on her, and she commenced to search the Scriptures more. She said she was fully persuaded now, halleluia! and wanted all them that desired to be wholly sanctified to enter the strait and narrow path with her. She said the gospel she had to preach to them that morning was the gospel of healing by prayer and faith, and not by medicines or doctors; that though she had lain among the pots, like the rest of them, yet now was her soul like the wings of a dove, and forever risen above all such works of the devil as ipecac and quinine and calomel; that only in the Great Physician did she place her trust; that as for earthly doctors, she could only say to them, in the words of Job: 'Ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value.' She said yea, verily, all they was good for was to 'beguile unstable souls, and bewitch the people with sorceries;' and not only that, but, like Jeremiah says, 'They help forward the affliction.' She said she never meant to say anything against doctors as *men*, but as *doctors* they was vessels of wrath, corrupters of souls, firebrands of the devil, and the liveliest stumble-stones in the path of righteousness. She said for them benighted folks that put their faith in physic to listen to Jeremiah's point-blank words, 'Thou hast *no* healing medicines,' and again, 'In vain shalt thou use many medicines; for thou shalt not be healed.' She said from lid to lid of the Bible there wasn't a single case of anybody being cured of anything by either doctors or medicine; and that ought to be enough for the earnest Christian, without looking any farther. But, she said, knowing their hard-heartedness, she had studied every verse of the Scriptures before she got up to speak.

"She said when the disciples was sent out, they was told to preach the gospel, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, and cast out devils; and they did it. She said she'd like to know how many that called themselves disciples nowadays so bigotty, and claimed the in-dwelling of holiness, ever even tried to do any of them things, except talk, let alone do them. She said it was because they were so poor-spirited they didn't have faith to lay hold of the promise, though there it was in plain words: 'Ask, and ye shall receive;' 'According to your faith be it unto you;' 'For I will restore health to thee, saith the Lord;' 'I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal.' She said, bless the Lord, her spiritual eyes was open now, and the

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only medicines she would ever take was prayer and faith. She said James's prescription was good enough for her: 'Pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much;' and that she wanted every soul in the Station to get to the same point. But, she said, until they did, she wanted it known that there was one righteous soul in Sodom, that was going to start out on the war-path against the devil and all his doctors. She said she was going to lay hold of the promise of James: 'Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.' She said she wanted it published abroad that anybody that took sick was welcome to her services and prayers, without money and without price. She said for all her hearers to put on the breastplate of faith and the armor of righteousness, and enter in at the strait and narrow path that opened into her front door, and keep out of the broad way that led to the doctor's office. She said she had a big bottle of sweet-oil, and faith to remove mountains.

"Well, all the congregation was thunderstruck at the idea of Kate Negley setting up in opposition to her own husband, Dr. Negley being the only doctor at the Station. Ma said that anybody could have knocked her down with a feather; and I know it made me right weak in my knees, though, of course, I felt like Kate was doing right to follow her leadings, and thought she was mighty courageous. I never could have done it myself, especially if I'd had such a good husband as Kate. I have traveled about more than Kate, and I know that hen's teeth ain't scarcer than good men; yea, like Solomon says, 'One among a thousand have I found.' But of course a woman never appreciates what she has, and Kate she always took all the doctor's kindness and spoiling like it was her birthright, and dinged at him all the time about his not having any religion or sanctification. Now, I reckon you've lived long enough to know that there are three kinds of sanctified; them that are sanctified and know it, humble-like—such as me; them that are sanctified and don't know or even suspicion it; and them that are sanctified and know it too well. And I have told ma many a time that Dr. Negley is one of the kind that is sanctified and don't know it, and that Kate might pattern after the doctor in *some* ways, to her edification. Somehow, I've always felt like ten or eleven children might have took some of the foolishness out of Kate; but, not having any, she was just on a high horse about something or other all the time.

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"The evening after Kate did that talking in church, ma saw the doctor riding by, and she called him to the fence and asked him if he had heard about Kate's talk, and what he thought about it. And he said yes, Brother Jones and them had told him about it down at the post-office, and it had tickled him might'ly; that he thought it was very funny. Ma told him she should think it would make him mad for Kate to get up and talk that away about doctors and medicine. 'Mrs. Garry,' he says, 'women are women; and one of their charms is that nobody knows what they're going to do next. And if my wife,' he says, 'has a extry allowance of charm, I certainly ought to feel thankful for it.' He said if Kate wanted to quarrel with her bread and butter, and talk away his practice, he wasn't going to raise any objections; that he needed to take a rest anyhow, having worked too hard all his life. He said, another thing, a woman that took as many notions as Kate couldn't hold on to any one of them very long, but was bound to get cured of it before much harm was done.

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"Ma she told me what he said, and that, in her opinion, Dr. Negley could give Job lessons in patience.

"Then we commenced to have times in the Station. The first thing Kate did was to get up one night after the doctor had gone to sleep, and go down-stairs and across the yard to his office, and hunt up his saddle-bags, and stamp on them, and smash every bottle in them, and then sling them over in pa's cornfield. Pa he found them out there in the morning after breakfast, and took them to the doctor's office; and he said the doctor did some tall swearing when he saw them. But I believe that was a slander of pa's, because I know the way the doctor acted afterwards. At dinner-time he went up to the house mighty peaceful, and eat his dinner, and then he says to Kate, very cheerful and polite: 'I see that my saddle-bags have met with a little accident. It's an ill wind that blows nobody good,' he says, 'and I don't know but what it's a fine thing for my patients, some of them medicines being powerful stale. But it's mighty unfortunate for you, Kate,' he says, 'for I will be obliged to use up all your missionary

money for the next year and a half to replenish them saddle-bags, times being so hard,' he says.

"You know Kate always give more money to missions than any woman in the Station,—doctor just couldn't deny her anything,—and she prided herself a heap on it, righteous pride, of course. She was just speechless with wrath at what he said, and she saw she'd have to change her warfare and fall back on the outposts.

"So she started out and went to see the women in the Station, and prayed with them, and strengthened their faith, and tried to make them promise to send for her if anybody got sick, and not for the doctor, and worked on them till they got plumb unsettled in their minds. Some of them went to Brother Cheatham and asked him about it, and he said it was a question everybody must decide for themselves, but there certainly was Scripture for it, he couldn't deny. It's a funny thing what poor hands some preachers are at practicing. Brother Cheatham couldn't get so much as a crook in his little finger but what Dr. Negley must come, double-quick, day and night. I've always felt like getting their doctoring for nothing was a big drawback to preachers' faith.

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"Kate didn't only go about in the Station, but she would keep on the watch, and when the doctor got a call to the country, Kate would saddle her bay mare and follow after him, sometimes ten or fifteen miles. By the time she would get to the sick one's house, the doctor would be setting by the bed, feeling the patient's pulse, or some such; and Kate would sail across the room, with never so much as 'Howdy' to the doctor, and go down on her knees the other side of the bed, and dab a little sweet-oil on the sick person, and pray at the top of her voice, and exhort the patient to throw away the vile concoctions of the devil, and swing out on the promise of James. And the doctor wouldn't pay no more attention to her than she did to him, but would dose out the medicine and go on about his business, as pleasant as could be. After he was gone, Kate would smash up all the bottles in sight, if the folks wasn't mighty careful; and then she would follow the doctor to the next place, never any more noticing him or speaking to him than if he was a fence-post. She said when the doctor was at home, he was her husband, though unregenerate, and she was going to treat him according to Scripture, and as polite as she knew how: but when he was out dosing the sick, he was an angel of darkness, and not fit to be so much as looked at by the saved and sanctified.

"Mary Alice Welden was one of the first to take up with Kate's notions—I've always believed it was because Dick Welden scoffed at them. If Dick had been a quick man, he never would have done it, knowing well that the only way to get Mary Alice to do like he wanted her to was for him to come out strong on the opposite side. But it takes a hundred years to learn some men anything; and what did Dick do that Sunday but laugh at Kate's notions on healing. Ever since Mary Alice had shook the red rag at Satan by getting up and shouting in church one time when Dick had told her point-blank she shouldn't, she had enjoyed a heap of liberty, and Dick he had been diminished, like the Bible says. So when Dick laughed at Kate, Mary Alice fired right up and told Dick Welden that never another doctor or bottle of medicine should ever step over her door-sill, and that the next time any of her household got sick, prayer or nothing should cure them.

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"So the next time her little Philury had spasms, Mary Alice sent over for Kate; and when Dick come home for dinner, he found all the doors locked, and looked in at a window, and there was Philury in fits on the bed, and Kate and Mary Alice praying loud and long on both sides. Dick was just crazy, and he ran up the street for the doctor, and they come back and broke in the window, and there was Philury laying quiet and peaceful and breathing regular, and Kate and Mary Alice shouting and glorifying God for casting a devil out of Philury. That gave Kate a big reputation, and stirred the Station to the dregs. And even the doctor said it was only by the grace of God that Philury pulled through under the circumstances.

"Sister Sally Barnes had been laying up for nearly a year with a misery in her back, and the doctor had give her physic, and she had took up all the patent medicines she could borrow or raise money to buy, but there she laid, and expected to lay the rest of her days. Kate went up there one day and expounded Bible to her and anointed her with that oil, and prayed over her for about two hours, and then told her to rise and cook dinner, that the Lord had healed her. And up Sister Sally got, and has been up ever since. Of course

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everybody was excited and talking about it. Ma asked Dr. Negley one day what he thought about it, and he said it was a mighty fine thing for Sister Sally's family, and that Kate's medicine was certainly better for *some* folks than his.

"That healing gave Kate a big name, and folks begun to send for her right and left. Some would send for her and the doctor both, thinking it just as well to be on the safe side and not neglect either faith or works. I reckon it did the sick good just to lay eyes on Kate, she was such a fine, healthy, rosy-checked woman, and never had had a day's sickness to pull her down.

"Then come along the time for Sister Nickins' shingles. For seven years old Sister Nickins, Tommy T.'s ma, had took down regular, every Washington's Birthday, at ten o'clock in the morning, with the shingles. Everybody thought a duck could as soon get along without water as Sister Nickins without her shingles; and she never dreamt of such a thing as not having them. They never got to the breaking-out stage with her but once, but she was scared to death every time for fear they would break out, and run all around her and meet, and of course that will kill anybody dead. So she used to make her will and give away her gray mule every year, beforehand.

"This time Kate sent Sister Nickins word not to make no will or give away the mule; that she was going to cast them shingles into the bottomless pit by prayer. So, at sun-up on the 22d, Kate went up to Sister Nickins's house, and set into praying and anointing, and by ten o'clock she had Sister Nickins so full of grace and glory that the devil or the shingles couldn't get within a mile of her, and she never felt a single pain. And of all the halleluiahs times, that was one. You could hear the shouting all over town, and nearly all the Station went up there. I went myself, and saw Sister Nickins with my own eyes, up and about, and full of rejoicings, and not a shingle to her name. I thought it was wonderful. It seemed just like Bible times over again. And Sister Nickins was so lifted up over it that she mounted her gray mule after dinner and started out on a three months' visitation through the county, to spread the news abroad amongst her kin and friends.

"That was the winter I felt the inward call to preach, but never got no outward invitations. So, while I was having that trial of patience, I thought I might as well help Kate some, though I knew my call was to preach, and not to heal. And I would go around a good deal with Kate, though I never was just as rampant as she was, or as Mary Alice Welden, and always allowed that doctors *might* have their uses.

"One day Kate came by for me to go up with her to pray over old Mis' Gerton's rheumatism. So up we went, and Kate told old Mis' Gerton what we come for, and Mis' Gerton said she never had no objections, that prayer certainly couldn't do no harm, and oil was good for the joints. So I poured on the oil, and Kate did the praying. In about an hour Kate jumped up and told old Mis' Gerton to get up and walk, that the prayer of faith had healed her. 'No such a thing,' old Mis' Gerton says; 'them knees is worse than when you commenced.' Kate got red in the face, and said of course the grace was thrown away on them that wouldn't accept of it. Old Mis' Gerton said she couldn't tell no lies; that she felt worse instead of better; that pain was pain, and rheumatism was rheumatism, as well they knew that had it. She said she never meant no disrespect, but that in her opinion prayer couldn't hold a candle to Dr. Hayhurst's Wildcat Liniment as a pain-killer. Of course Kate was horror-struck, and she wiped the dust of old Mis' Gerton's house off of her feet when we went out.

"Then what should pa do about that time but take down with the yellow janders. You know, and everybody knows, that pa never did have a bit of religion. I would hate to say such a thing about an own relation, but pa being my stepfather, and the second one at that, I feel like he's kind of far-removed. Well, ma would have been a mighty religious woman if she hadn't been unequally yoked together with unbelievers three times. That's enough to wear a woman's religion to a frazzle, goodness knows; and I have always made excuses for ma. So when pa got sick and told ma to send for the doctor, ma, being one of those women that is always trying to serve two masters, her husband and her religion, sent for the doctor and Kate both. And when I got there, a few minutes later, there set the doctor by pa's bed, and Kate and ma back in the kitchen, and every time Kate would start over the door-sill into pa's room, to pour the oil on him and pray over him, pa would set up in bed and shake his

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fist at her, and swear a blue streak, and tell her not to come another step. Ma and me we nearly went through the earth for shame at pa; and of course he never would have done it if his liver had been right, for I will say this for pa, he is a polite, mild-mannered man, and slow to wrath, when he hasn't got the janders. Then Kate would flop down on the kitchen floor and thank the Lord she was being persecuted for righteousness' sake. And a good many people dropped in, hearing the noise; and everybody was plumb scandalized at pa, and said he was a downright infidel, and all their sympathies was roused for Kate.

"After that she had a bigger business than ever, in spite of a setback or two, like old Mis' Gerton's rheumatism, and Brother Gilly Jones's baby dying one night of the croup when him and Kate was praying over it and wouldn't send for the doctor. Kate said that it was the Lord's will, and the baby's appointed time to die; and Brother Gilly Jones, being sanctified, and having eight more children anyhow, he agreed with Kate, and said he felt perfectly resigned; though Sister Jones, poor thing, never has got reconciled to this day.

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"Of course those things never fazed Kate, and she was just on the top notch all the time, and going day and night. And every Sunday there would be testimonials in church about healings, and faith begun to take hold on both sanctified and sinner, till it actually got to the point that folks' religion was doubted if they sent for a doctor. And when spring opened up, the doctor said his occupation was so near gone that he felt justified in going on that camp-hunt he had been wanting to make for fourteen years; so he made up a party of men—Masons and such—and went down on Green River for two weeks' hunting.

"Well, you ought to have seen Kate that morning the doctor left. He wasn't out of sight before she turned loose a-shouting over the triumph of righteousness, and over having actually run the devil out of town; and she held a thanks-meeting up at her house that night, and we had a full-salvation time.

"Kate invited me to stay with her while the doctor was gone; so I shooed my chickens down to ma's, so's I could have my mind free from worldly cares, and shut up my house, and went. We had a mighty joyful, edifying time for two days.

"The third night Kate woke me up sudden from a good sleep, about three o'clock in the morning. 'Melissy,' she says, 'get up and light the lamp. I don't know what on earth's the matter with me,' she says; 'I feel awful, and have got all the aches there is inside of me.' 'For goodness' sake, Kate,' I says, rolling out of bed, 'I reckon you are getting the grippe.' She groaned. 'It's worse than the grippe, Melissy Allgood,' she says; 'I feel like I'm going to die.' I lit the lamp and brought it over by the bed. 'I do believe you have got some fever, Kate,' I says. 'I am eat up with it,' she says, 'and with aches, and have a terrible gone feeling all over. I tell you, Melissy, I'm an awful sick woman. Oh, what shall I do—what shall I do?' 'Do?' I says, no little surprised. 'Why, *pray*, of course.' 'Well,' she says, kind of faint-like, 'you'd better be about it.'

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"I was a little outdone by her lukewarmness, but I got down on my knees and went to praying. Kate kept up a consid'able groaning. In about five minutes she says: 'Get up from there, Melissy Allgood, and do something for me. I'm a terrible sick woman,' she says. 'Gracious sakes alive, Kate,' I says, 'there ain't another thing I *can* do but anoint you with the oil.' I run and brought the sweet-oil. 'Take it away!' she says. 'The smell of it makes me sick! I won't have it!' I was completely dazed, and it seemed to me like the world was turning upside down. But what can you expect of a woman that don't know what the feeling of pain is, and never had a sick day since she was a young child and got through the catching age? I fell down on my knees and went to praying again, not knowing just what to do. Kate stopped me again. 'Melissy Allgood,' she says, 'are you going to let me lay here and *die*, and not stretch out even a finger to help me?' she says. 'Why, Kate,' I says, plumb petrified, 'you know I'm doing the very best that can be done.' I says: 'You must have patience and faith, and wait on the time of the Lord.' 'Oh!' she says, fairly crying, 'what on earth made the doctor go off and leave me? He might have known something would happen to me. He ought to have stayed here, where he belongs! *He'd* know what to do for me if *he* was here,' she says. 'He wouldn't let his own dear wife lay here and die!'

"'Kate,' I says, 'you are wandering, the worst kind. I'm going

after Mary Alice Welden.' So I slipped on my shoes and dress and run down the street to Mary Alice's, and we hurried back as fast as we could. I told Mary Alice that Kate was sick, and out of her mind to that extent she was calling for the doctor. Mary Alice said she certainly must be mighty bad off, and that we must pray with abounding faith, and be firm. When we got back, Kate was still a-groaning and crying. Mary Alice told her to cease her complainings and put her trust in One who was mighty to save. Then Mary Alice snatched up the bottle of sweet-oil that set there on the table, and started at Kate with it. 'She won't have it on her,' I says, 'it ain't no use to try.' 'She's *got* to have it,' Mary Alice says, 'whether she wants it or not. It's a part of James's directions.' Kate begun to holler and throw out her arms when she saw the oil coming. 'Take it away,' she says; 'it makes me sick!' 'You hold her hands,' Mary Alice says, 'while I pour it on her.' So I set down and took a good grip on Kate's hands, and Mary Alice poured the oil on her, and it went all over her face and head and the pillow, she kept threshing around so lively, and hollering till her mouth was full. Then Kate she cried and carried on, and said we were treating her shameful, and would be sorry for it when she was dead and gone: We never paid any attention to her, of course, but got down on both sides of the bed and went to praying as loud and earnest as we could, so as to drown the groaning. Then Kate said she didn't want to be prayed for nohow, that what she wanted was the doctor. Mary Alice told her she was plumb out of her senses, and didn't know what she was talking about. And Kate said, no such a thing; that she was a mighty sick woman, but she was in her right mind, and knew what she wanted, and that it was the doctor. She said the doctor was the only friend she had on earth. She said the doctor wouldn't stand by and see her die and never lift a hand, and she knew it. She said he would know of something to give her that would ease them aches and pains, and let her die in peace. But she said of course if the *doctor* was there she wouldn't *need* to die—that he would save her. She set up in bed. 'Melissy Allgood,' she says, 'run over and tell your pa to mount his horse and ride for the doctor,' she says, 'and never stop till he finds him!' 'Land of the living, Kate,' I says, 'you know the doctor is thirty mile and more away, and nobody knows where he's at by now.' 'Tell Mr. Garry I say not to stop till he finds him!' Kate says. 'And to keep life in me till he gets here,' she says, 'I want old Dr. Pegram, at Dixie, sent for immediate. He ought to get here in three hours' time. You tell Tommy T. Nickins to take my mare and go for him, quick!' she says. 'And Mary Alice Welden, you go down in the cellar and bring me one of those bottles of blackberry cordial, to keep up my strength till Dr. Pegram comes.'

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"Mary Alice and me were smitten dumb right there where we was at, on our knees. 'Kate Negley,' I got the voice to say, 'are you sure them are your right-minded wishes, and not the devil speaking through you?' 'I tell you to do what I say, and hurry up!' Kate says. 'Do you reckon I want to die?'

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"Mary Alice rose and walked out with never a word; but if I ever saw complete disgust wrote on anybody's face, it was hers. I had to go down and get the blackberry cordial myself, and you ought to have seen Kate make away with it. Then I went out and started off Tommy T. and pa.

"Old Dr. Pegram was there inside of three hours, dosing out big pills for Kate to take every half-hour, and powders every fifteen minutes; and it looked like Kate couldn't swallow them fast enough to suit her. Dr. Pegram told ma and me that Kate had a mild case of the gripple, and there wasn't no earthly danger.

"When Dr. Negley and pa come poking in after midnight that night, wore out and muddy, you never saw as happy a woman in your life as Kate. She laughed and she cried, and she hugged the doctor, and she kissed him, and she said there never was anybody like him, that he was her sweet angel from heaven, and the dearest darling on earth, and she knew she wouldn't have no chance to die, now he had come and would know just what to do for her. And I reckon the doctor was the worst-astonished man that ever was; but he was a heap too polite and kind to let on, and went on dosing out physic for her just as if there wasn't anything out of the common. And never a word did he ever say to her, either, about having his camp-hunt broke up; and that's the reason I *know* he's sanctified, for, like I told ma, what sainted martyr could do better?

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"Of course the Station was shaken to the foundations over Kate acting that way, and there was a big time of rejoicing amongst the

scoffers. And Mary Alice Welden hasn't spoken to Kate since, and says she never will. But I tell Mary Alice she ought to be ashamed of herself; that she's too ready in her judgments, and needs to make allowance for humans being humans, and for folks changing with circumstances."

LUCY S. FURMAN.

A DOCTOR'S STORY.



CROFT HOUSE, at the end of the village, that had stood vacant so long, was let at last. A ladder leaned against the wall; a painter was painting the shutters, a gardener digging in the garden.

Day by day the aspect of the place improved. Soft muslin shades shrouded the windows, flowers bloomed where only weeds had grown; the garden paths were laid with gravel. One night a travelling carriage was driven rapidly through the village and in at the gate leading to Croft House.

Whence came the vehicle? Who its occupants? No one knew, but everyone desired to know. Nothing that took place within that dwelling transpired outside. In passing by, one saw only that the standard roses flourished and that the grass grew greener. What comments were made on the mysterious and invisible inhabitants! What strange tales circulated!

I, the village doctor, concerned myself little enough about the matter. The occupants of Croft House were no doubt human beings, and as such must suffer some of the ills that flesh is heir to; in that case my services would be required. I waited patiently.

A week went by; and one morning before I set off on my rounds, a messenger arrived requesting me to call on Mr. Wilton of Croft House. Dressing myself with more than ordinary care, I crossed the village green. I was young, and felt important.

I was shown into the drawing-room. It was gay with summer flowers, redolent of their perfume. On a couch lay a young girl, in appearance almost a child. She was pale, delicate looking, and very lovely. In front of her knelt a young man of two or three and twenty—one of the handsomest young fellows I had ever seen. He held the hands of the beautiful girl, and they were looking into each other's eyes. As I approached he rose, bowed, and welcomed me with an easy grace that won my heart.

"I confess I expected to find the village doctor an older man," he said with a frank smile as he offered me his hand. "It is for my wife I desired your attendance," he continued, looking at her with the deepest affection. "Una is not strong."

Then at a sign from him, I sat down beside the couch of my interesting patient.

"You are very young, Mrs. Wilton," I remarked. It was certainly rather a leading question.

"I am seventeen, doctor," she answered simply. "We have been married only a few months. We are strangers here, and wish to be so. Oh, Charlie, please explain," she asked, turning to her husband with a faint blush. "You can do it better far than I."

He bent over, kissed her on the forehead, then straightening himself and looking at me, said: "In attending my wife, Dr. Gray, I must ask you to undertake a double duty. We have decided to tell you our secret—in part—so that while *we* are your patients, I trust we may look upon *you* as our friend—one who will assist us in keeping our secret and in living the entirely secluded life we desire to lead here. Wilton is an assumed name. My father refused to acknowledge my marriage with the girl I love. *Her* father withheld his consent to his daughter marrying into a family too proud to receive her. We would have waited any reasonable time; but, when our parents sought to separate us entirely, we took our lives into our own hands. We married, and hope—in time—to be forgiven."

They had both spoken to me with the candour of youth, of love, and of inexperience. It takes very little sometimes to bring a doctor into close relations with his patients. I seemed to become the friend of this interesting young couple at once. I assured them they need not fear being intruded upon by the villagers, and the only gentlemen's residences within calling distance were tenantless at that season of the year, the owners either being up in London or travelling abroad. As to the vicar, he was a man whose advanced age and infirmities effectually precluded him from visiting more than was absolutely necessary among his parishioners.

"If you go to the church—a mile from here," said I, "he may or may not call upon you. If you do not go, I think I may safely say he will not consider it necessary. In that case you will probably never meet."

Mr. and Mrs. Wilton thanked me warmly, pressing me to come to see them frequently, which I did with ever-increasing pleasure as the beautiful romance of these two loving hearts unfolded itself. I soon discovered that Mr. Wilton had received a college education; I also gleaned that "Una" was somewhat his inferior in social position, and that since their runaway marriage they had been travelling abroad. It was no business of mine to know more than they chose to tell. I respected their secret, and asked no questions.

One morning—my visits had become almost daily now—I saw at once that there was something wrong with Mrs. Wilton, and she saw also that I perceived it.

"You need not feel my pulse, doctor; it is my heart," she said in answer to my looks. "You will think me foolishly weak, I know," she added, forcing a smile, "but I am miserable because my husband is going to leave me."

"Leave you! For how long?" I inquired anxiously.

She blushed, and, looking down, answered shyly, "Till this evening. Ah, don't laugh," she implored; "we have never been separated for so long since we were married. I am nervous and fanciful, I suppose, but I scarcely slept last night for thinking of it, and when I did, a dreadful dream kept repeating itself—

"Oh, you must not mind dreams," I answered.

"I never did much before, but this—ah, Charlie!" she cried, as Mr. Wilton came in booted and spurred, "I will come and see you mount."

I saw the parting from the drawing-room window where I stood—saw her husband place his hands on either side of the sweet face, and gaze down into it with a look of unutterable love; saw their lips meet together for a moment; after that he kissed her forehead and her beautiful fair hair, then sprang into the saddle, and rode off swiftly as though he could not trust himself to linger longer. At the gate, turning, he waved a last farewell.

She came into the drawing-room presently.

"Doctor, excuse me. I think I will lie down," she said, her large blue eyes looking peculiarly plaintive, brimming as they were with tears. My presence was not needed then. I bowed and took my leave.

But the evening of that day I was sent for to Croft House.

"He has not returned," were the first words spoken by Mrs. Wilton, as I entered the drawing-room. "And, oh! what a day it has been," she continued feverishly; "so long, so sad! I seem to have lived a cruel lifetime in each hour."

"But it is not late. You said Mr. Wilton would not return till evening," I urged.

"It has been evening a long time now. See, the sun is setting. Then it will be night." She shuddered.

I sat with her an hour, perhaps, trying in vain to distract her thoughts. And I too—knowing not how or why—became uneasy. She told me her husband had gone to D—, the nearest town, for letters he expected to find at the post-office. I knew that I could have ridden there and back easily in the time. Still, a thousand simple causes might have delayed him. I begged her to take courage, suggesting she would probably laugh to-morrow at the fears she had entertained to-day. But she shook her head.

"I suffer too much ever to laugh at such feelings as these," she said in a half-whisper. "I do not wish to think it, but it is as though I *knew* something dreadful was—Oh, I cannot, I dare not clothe the terrible thought in words. That would make it seem so real—so almost certain. Dr. Gray, can this be the punishment for my disobedience—*come so soon?*" she asked in awe-struck tones.

I could not answer her, but proposed that she should wrap a mantle round her and come with me into the garden to watch for her husband. She thanked me gratefully, and I carried a basket seat out for her and placed it on the lawn.

Sitting with her hands clasped about her knees—paler, more fragile, more childish looking than I had ever seen her—of a sudden I felt, rather than saw, that a change had come to her. She bent forward as though listening intently, and at the same moment a

distant sound struck on my ear—the galloping of a horse on the high road.

Was there ever before on human countenance such a beatified expression as that which dawned and deepened on Mrs. Wilton's as the sound approached? It was close to us now, but the trees in the garden hid the road from our view. Without slackening speed the horse galloped in at the open gate.

"Oh, Charlie, Charlie! Oh, thank God!" cried the girl, in what seemed a wild, ungovernable ecstasy of gratitude and joy. But I pulled her back or the horse would have been upon her.

Then I saw that the animal was riderless, covered with dust and foam; that the bridle hung loose, dragging on the gravel.

A groom who had been on the watch came out. In another moment all the household were assembled on the lawn.

Mrs. Wilton had fallen back, as I thought fainting, in my arms. But no, her senses had not forsaken her. She raised herself and pointed in the direction the horse had come.

"He lies there, there!" she cried, and pushing me from her, ran forward towards the gate. I bade the servants bring lanterns and follow me. To Mrs. Wilton, who was out in the road by this time, I said all I could say to dissuade her from going with me; but my words fell on deaf ears. Feeling it was useless—in one sense cruel—to persist, I compelled her to take my arm. Endowed for the time, by excitement, with almost superhuman strength, she seemed to drag me forward rather than to lean on me. After proceeding about a mile, we came to a bit of level road which for some distance in front showed clear and distinct in the moonlight. Here, I felt certain, we had lost all trace of the horse's shoe marks, which hitherto had been every now and again perceptible in the dusty highway.

"There is a shorter cut—if he knew of it," I said, and stopped.

"Then if there is he would come by it—he would be sure to find out and come by it," she cried.

And I led her back a little distance to a gate at the entrance of a wood, where sure enough were traces sufficient to show we were again on the right track. Servants with lanterns had overtaken us by this time; so, calling out at intervals and listening in vain for a response, we entered the dark wood. Through it was an almost unfrequented bridle path, considered somewhat unsafe by day but particularly so at night; the gnarled roots of trees forming a raised network upon the ground. It was with considerable difficulty we made our way. Mrs. Wilton stumbled many times, would have fallen but for my support. At last she loosed my arm and ran forward, signing me not to follow her. In another moment the wood resounded with a wild and piercing cry. She had seen what the rest of us had failed to see, and when I came up to her she was kneeling beside her husband, her arms clasped about his neck, her face close pressed to his. One agonized look she gave me as I bent over them: "My dream!" she said. I understood.

There was an ugly wound on the back of poor Charlie Wilton's head; the body was still warm, but the heart had ceased to beat. Though Mrs. Wilton did not speak again, she never completely lost her senses, but her mind seemed stunned. We put some hurdles together and carried him back thus to Croft House.

An inquest was held, every particular of which was minutely reported in the county newspaper, to appear in condensed form in most of the journals of the day. But no friends of the dead man ever came forward, nor was it satisfactorily proved whether his death had been the result of violence or of an accidental fall from his horse in the dangerous pathway through the wood.

The post-office officials at D— perfectly remembered the deceased calling for letters on the day in question, giving the name of Wilton; but there were none for him. In the bank was lodged to his credit some five or six thousand pounds.

I took upon myself the arrangements for the funeral as of everything else. Mrs. Wilton's mind had not sufficiently recovered from the shock it had received on that terrible night to understand or care for what went on around her. Only once—when I urged writing to her friends—did she even momentarily rouse herself to answer me. "My father will never forgive me," she said. "I acted in defiance of his commands. No, I cannot write to him." Then she added: "He has married again," which perhaps in part explained.

A month later a baby was born—a boy whom she called Charlie—

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and when she spoke the name, tears sprang to her eyes for the first time. It was not until I saw those tears that I had the slightest hope of her mind rallying from the shock; but then I knew that the living child would save her. She looked upon him as having been sent direct from heaven to solace her for her loss. She regarded him as an emanation from the departed spirit of her husband. There was certainly something uncommon about the child. He was pretty, but not engaging. He never cried; but it may also be said, he never smiled. He did not suffer, but there was about him none of the joyousness of childhood. It seemed as though the thunder-cloud that had burst over the mother's head had left its shadow on the child.

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Between two and three years after Mr. Wilton's death a change seemed likely to occur in my own prospects. A rich relation—a physician of high standing—wrote urging me to come to London immediately, on a matter, so he said, of the greatest importance to myself. There was nothing to prevent my complying with his request. The village was in a healthy state; my outside practice might be made to spare me. I wrote stating I would be with him on the following day.

I went to Croft House to say good-bye. It was summer. Mrs. Wilton was sitting out on the lawn with Charlie on a rug close at her feet. She made room for me beside her, and we talked together for a short time of her affairs and of the child. It was not until I had risen to go that I broached the subject of my departure. She looked surprised, alarmed.

"But, Charlie," she said; "if he should be ill?"

"I would not go if he were ill. I will return at once if he should need me," I answered earnestly. "But is he not the picture of health? Why, he seems exempt from every childish trouble."

I told her my relative's address, knowing she only cared to have it in case she needed me for her boy; then I lifted the child in my arms and kissed him. "Good-bye, little man!" I said cheerfully. He was a splendid little fellow, of whom his mother might well be proud; he resembled his father, too, and was growing more like him every day.

I was about to set the child down, but something—some feeling I cannot define—impelled me to hold him closer; to look into his face—his eyes—more scrutinizingly than I had ever done. And so looking, I shuddered at the thought that then assailed me. Great powers! Could fate be so cruel? Had heaven no pity for this poor mother who, so young, had already surely borne enough of sorrow? I put the boy down quickly and turned away.

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Perhaps—perhaps after all I may have been mistaken!

I reached London, and Dr. B—'s residence that evening, and my worthy relative quickly explained the object of his summons. He wished me to undertake, with his supervision, a case requiring the utmost care and consideration; one which rendered it necessary that a medical man should reside for a time beneath the same roof as his patient, and be with him night and day.

This patient was Lord Welbury, a self-made man so far as his immense wealth was concerned; but he came of an ancient and honourable race.

I accepted the munificent conditions offered, and within a couple of hours of my arrival in town was driven to Lord Welbury's house in Belgravia, and entered upon the duties of my post.

For some days and nights my responsibilities absorbed all my attention. The life of a sick man hung on a thread, my medical capacity was taxed to its utmost; I knew not, nor cared I, for the time being, what went on outside that chamber.

The crisis passed, my patient began rapidly to recover. The first day that he was able to sit up in his room he asked me a startling question. He said: "Doctor, am I sane?"

"Your mind has never been affected," I answered unhesitatingly. "Your lordship is as sane as I am."

"Good. Therefore a will made by me now could not be invalid?"

"Most certainly not on the ground of incompetency."

"Then my will must be made to-morrow or next day at latest. This illness has warned me to delay no longer. My niece's child will be my heir."

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His words set me musing and turning over in my mind how this could be.

"Your lordship is childless, then?" The remark slipped from me

almost unawares; but they were fateful words, as the result proved. "I beg your pardon," I added, seeing surprise and some annoyance written on his face.

"Not at all," he answered courteously. "I supposed you were acquainted with my family affairs, for they are no secret. I *have* a son, though no communication has passed between us for nearly four years. He set me and my wishes at defiance by marrying beneath him, consequently will inherit little more than an empty title. I mean to leave my fortune to my niece's child. The boy was committed to my care when his parents went to India, two years ago. He is a fine little fellow, and it shows how close in attendance you have been on me if you did not even know he was in the house —"

"Was your son's name Charles—that of the girl he married Una?" I asked, scarcely heeding his last words. My heart was beating faster than it should, my voice in my earnestness less steady than it ought to be.

"Yes. But why these questions?"

I knew he was well enough now to hear the truth, therefore I answered: "Because it is my belief your lordship's son is dead. I will relate to you a sad story; when I have finished you will be able to judge whether or not you are concerned in it." Then I told, as briefly as I could, the Croft House tragedy; and as I did so, read in the ever-increasing interest with which he listened to my tale that my suspicions were correct.

That the man I had to deal with was of a proud, egotistical, unsympathetic nature I was well aware; that the death of his only son would not vitally affect him I had rightly guessed; but I was scarcely prepared for the interest he displayed on learning of the existence of his grandchild. The better nature of the man seemed touched. I spoke of little Charles's beauty, his likeness to his father, even hinted at a resemblance to Lord Welbury himself. With the feverish impatience of an invalid he demanded that the boy should be sent for at once.

"He cannot come without his mother. The two lives are bound together as one."

"Then write to the mother and bid her bring him," was the imperious reply. And the speaker turned his face away as though to intimate no more was to be said. The affair was settled.

On quitting the room I encountered a nurse leading a smiling, rosy little urchin, clad in velvet and rich lace.

"Speak prettily to the kind doctor, Georgie," said the nurse. "This is the little heir, sir," she whispered to me.

Three days later Mrs. Wilton—I must still call her so—and her son arrived. I met them at the station and took them in one of his lordship's carriages to the house. The boy, exhausted apparently by the journey, was asleep when he entered it; he was still sleeping when his mother carried him across the threshold of Lord Welbury's door.

His lordship's reception of her was not ungracious. Could he fail to feel touched at sight of this gentle, beautiful young creature, who had loved his son so well! But it was evident he resented the fact that his grandson, whom he had specially desired to welcome, could not be prevailed upon to notice him, or enticed to leave his mother's arms.

"Excuse him. He is so tired," pleaded the young mother, reading the disappointment on her father-in-law's face.

"Well, well. Off to bed with him, then. Bring him to me bright and smiling in the morning."

Bright and smiling! Somehow the words struck me—even haunted me—they were so totally inapplicable to Charlie. I tried to remember if I had ever seen a smile upon that grave baby-face, but tried in vain.

When I entered Lord Welbury's room next day—my presence there at nights was now dispensed with—the old man, in dressing-gown and slippers, was reclining in an easy chair. In front of him stood Mrs. Wilton, with Charlie clinging to her long black draperies.

"Come here, Gray," exclaimed his lordship, irritably. "I cannot get my grandson to notice me. What is to be done?"

"Charlie is shy. He has been used to no one but me," murmured the mother, raising her eyes with an appealing look in them to mine.

"Madam, I fear you are spoiling him," said Lord Welbury sharply.

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"The other child took to me at once, but this—"

"Send for the other, sir," I suggested, and presently "the little heir," with whom I had previously made acquaintance, was brought in by his nurse. The latter sat down in a far corner with some knitting. The child—as apparently he had been accustomed to do—ran to the old man and scrambled at his knee. "I love 'ou, I love 'ou," he cried.

Lord Welbury's face was radiant.

"Now, Charlie, my man," said he, as the other child after his affectionate greeting scampered off to play beside his nurse.

Charlie was placed on his grandfather's knee.

"Say 'I love you,'" whispered Mrs. Wilton, as she tried to clasp her own child's arms about Lord Welbury's neck.

"Say I love 'ou," echoed the boy mechanically; then dropped his head and lay quite placidly as though he slept.

"Ha, ha, the young rascal! He's making himself at home at last," observed Lord Welbury, well pleased. "And now that I come to see him more closely, he's not unlike what his father was at the same age, only quieter. Do you know he almost strikes me as being a little dull. Have you found him so, madam?"

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"I have been too sad a companion for him, sir. I know—I feel it now," sighed the poor mother, her eyes wandering from her own boy to follow the antics of the other, who astride a stick, was careering merrily about the room.

"That can be soon remedied," said Lord Welbury, putting Charlie off his knee; "let the two youngsters romp together. I warrant they'll make friends if let alone."

And in order to try the experiment, we three sat apart and kept up some desultory talk. This lasted but a short time, however. It was broken in upon by a startled cry from the younger boy, Georgie, who, apparently terror stricken, rushed across the room.

"Naughty boy, naughty boy! Send him away. He's making faces at me," cried the spoilt child in an outburst of passion, pointing with outstretched finger at his little companion.

The nurse dropped her knitting, and rose instantly. "I have seen it from the first," she said, calmly confronting us. "The child is half an idiot, my lord."

All eyes were turned at poor Charlie, who stood among some broken toys, his features distorted into the ghastly semblance of a smile.

Mrs. Wilton, running to her boy, shielded him with her arms. "My darling, my darling! Has God no pity?" she cried, and bore him from the room. She had prayed day and night—this unhappy mother—to see either a smile on her baby's lips or a tear in his eye, and hitherto her prayer had been denied. It was granted now. The poor dulled senses of the child, roused into something like activity by the antics of his little lively playfellow, had caused the lips to smile. But what a smile!

Lord Welbury turned pale. A look of disgust, not unmixed with anger, settled on his face.

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"There is no doubt the boy is imbecile," he said, as I was about to follow Mrs. Wilton from the room. "Dr. Gray, were you aware of this when you allowed him to be brought here?"

"I was not aware of it," I replied readily. For the sad foreboding that first assailed me on the lawn at Croft House had received no confirmation hitherto. "But even if the case is as we fear," I added earnestly, "it may be curable."

"Excuse me, doctor," he interrupted. "No man who has seen that child as we have seen him can have the slightest doubt but that he is an idiot for life."

"On the contrary, my lord, we must regard the matter from another point. Remember the shadow that rested on his mother before his birth. Where there is no hereditary taint—"

"What then? On the mere chance of the child being curable, do you suppose I am going to leave my money to him? No!" he cried excitedly. "My own life is too precarious for me to delay longer the settling of my affairs. My niece's child is still my heir. I regard the other as *non est*. For heaven's sake don't let me have my feelings harrowed by the sight of that poor idiot any more. The mother shall have a handsome annuity. I pity her."

And that day Lord Welbury made his will, leaving his immense

fortune as he had said.

Once more I returned to my country practice; Mrs. Wilton and Charlie to Croft House.

Never was grief grander in its simplicity, or more nobly borne than that of Mrs. Wilton. She still prayed—prayed with the faith which we are told will move mountains. Her eyes, when not raised to heaven, were bent on her child, ever seeking for the dawning of that intelligence which she believed must come in answer to her prayers. She tried to teach him his childish lessons; she read, she talked to him; even chanted in a low, sad voice the nursery rhymes that happy mothers sing.

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At last, one day, exercising over herself a supreme control, she told her son the story of his father's death, told it in simple, child-like language, but with a pathos that might have moved a heart of stone.

The boy was standing at her knee, she holding his unresponsive hand. But, as she proceeded with her narration, he pressed gradually closer to her side. With a thrill of rapture she looked at the drooped eyelids, hoping, praying to see a tear glisten on the dark curled lashes. Trembling, she reached the climax of her sad tale, and bending over him:

"Charlie," she whispered, "Charlie, he was *dead!* you understand?"

Alas, she knew then, even ere she had done speaking that the boy was incapable of understanding her. His eyes were closed. He slept!

And he seemed for ever thus. Whether the beautiful but expressionless eyes were open or closed his mental faculties were in that dulled dormant state, it might be said they slept.

"He is like that little statue of Jesus now," she once said to me, pointing to a marble figure of Christ, "but some day God will awaken his soul. Ah, doctor, shall I live to see that day?"

I scarcely thought she could, but did not tell her so.

From the day on which she related the story of her husband's death, she herself drooped visibly.

But grief kills very slowly. Five years passed by. Lord Welbury was dead. His wealth—with the exception of the annuity to his son's widow—was left to his niece's child; his title now by right became his grandson's.

The boy grew fast; he was eight years old, but his mind still slumbered. He knew the sound of his mother's voice, would come to the side of her couch when called; would lie for hours folded in her arms, whispering back her loving words, repeating her gentle admonitions like an echo. The words apparently conveyed no meaning, but they touched some hidden chord.

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Weaker and weaker grew Mrs. Wilton.

On one of my daily visits the sick nurse, who was in constant attendance now, whispered to me that the end was near. I was startled, shocked, to perceive *how* near!

"Doctor, dear friend," she gasped very faintly, as I pressed her poor transparent hand; but her whole attention was riveted on her son; she was gazing at him with eyes out of which the light of earth was fading fast. It was evident she desired to say something, but it was some time before the words would come. At last, gathering strength, she said in a low, penetrating voice that scarcely faltered: "I am going to leave you, Charlie. *Here* I could not help you, but when in heaven I see our dear Lord face to face—when on my knees before the great white throne—"

For an instant an expression of rapture irradiated her features; the next, with a slight sigh she sank back upon the pillow.

I touched Charlie on the shoulder. He dropped upon his knees and, unprompted, joined his trembling hands in prayer. His gaze was directed upward. His countenance assumed a look of intensity I had never seen on it before. Quite suddenly he rose, and flinging himself sobbing across the bed, "Oh, mother, mother! Do not leave me all alone," he cried.

"See! Your son is saved!" I whispered, bending over Mrs. Wilton. But I was speaking to the dead.

And yet, even as I looked upon the still white face, the lips seemed parting into a smile of the most holy, calm, ineffable content. Could it be as she herself had said? Was she already

kneeling before the great white throne—had God listened to her prayer at last?

A few more words and this “o’er true tale” is ended.

From the moment of his mother’s death, the mists that had obscured poor Charlie’s mind dispersed.

I took him to live with me, and watched his young intelligence grow day by day to healthy vigour. Not even a shadowy semblance of a cloud rests now upon his mind. He has succeeded to his grandfather’s wealth as well as to the title, for “the niece’s child” is dead.

The present Lord Welbury ranks amongst England’s noblest sons—he is one of the greatest philanthropists of the day.

E. M. DAVY.

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JOHN BARTINE'S WATCH: THE DOCTOR'S STORY.



THE exact time? Good heavens! my friend, why do you insist? One would think—but what does it matter; it is easily bed-time—isn't that near enough? But, here, if you must set your watch, take mine and see for yourself."

With that, he detached his watch—a tremendously heavy, old-fashioned one—from the chain and handed it to me, then turned away and, walking across the room to a shelf of books, began an examination of their backs. His agitation and evident distress surprised me; they appeared altogether reasonless. Having set my watch by his, I stepped over to where he stood and said, "Thank you."

As he took his watch and re-attached it to the guard, I observed that his hands were unsteady. A slight pallor had come into his face. With a tact, upon which I greatly prided myself, I sauntered carelessly to the sideboard and took some brandy and water, then, begging his pardon for my thoughtlessness, asked him to have some and went back to my seat by the fire, leaving him to help himself, as was our custom. He did so, and presently joined me at the hearth, as tranquil as if nothing unusual had happened.

This odd little incident occurred in my apartment, where John Bartine was passing an evening. We had dined together at the club, had come home in a hack and, in short, everything had been done in the most prosaic way; and why John Bartine should break in upon the natural and established order of things to make himself spectacular with a display of emotion, apparently for his own entertainment, I could nowise understand.

The more I thought of it, while his brilliant conversational gifts were commending themselves to my inattention, the more curious I grew and, of course, had no difficulty in persuading myself that my curiosity was friendly solicitude. That is the disguise that curiosity commonly assumes to evade resentment. So I ruined one of the finest sentences of his monologue by cutting it short without ceremony.

"John Bartine," I said, "you must try to forgive me, if I am wrong; but with the light that I have at present I cannot concede your right to go all to pieces when asked the time o'night. I cannot admit that it is proper to experience a mysterious reluctance to look your own watch in the face, and to cherish in my presence, without explanation, painful emotions which are denied to me and which are none of my business."

To this ridiculous speech, Bartine made no immediate reply, but sat looking gravely into the fire. Fearing that I had offended, I was about to apologize and beg him to think no more about the matter, when, looking me calmly in the eyes, he said:

"My dear fellow, the levity of your manner does not at all disguise the hidden impudence of your demand; but happily I had already decided to tell you what you wish to know, and no manifestation of your unworthiness to hear it shall alter my decision. Be good enough to persuade me to have a fresh cigar and you shall hear all that I can tell you about the matter.

"This watch," he said, "had been in my family for three generations before it fell to me. Its original owner, for whom it was made, was my great-grandfather, Bramwell Olcott Bartine, a wealthy planter of Colonial Virginia and as stanch a Tory as every lay awake nights contriving new kinds of maledictions for the head of Mr. Washington, and new methods of aiding and abetting good King George. One day this worthy gentleman had the deep misfortune to perform for his cause a service of capital importance which was not recognized by those who suffered its disadvantages as legitimate. It does not matter what it was; but among its minor consequences was my excellent ancestor's arrest one night in his own house by a party of Mr. Washington's rebels. He was permitted to say farewell to his weeping family and was then marched away

into the darkness, which swallowed him up forever.

"Not the slenderest clew to his fate was ever found. After the war the most diligent inquiry and the offer of large rewards failed to turn up any of his captors or any fact concerning him. He had disappeared, and that was all."

Something in John Bartine's manner that was not in his words—I hardly knew what it was, or how it manifested itself—prompted me to ask:

"What is your view of the matter, Bartine—of the justice of it?"

"My view of it," he flamed out, bringing his clenched hand down upon the table as if he had been in a public-house dicing with blackguards—"my view of it is that it was a characteristically dastardly assassination by that d—d traitor, Washington, and his ragamuffin rebels!"

For some minutes nothing was said; Bartine was recovering his temper, and I waited. Then I said:

"Was that all?"

"No—there was something else. A few weeks after my great-grandfather's arrest his watch was found lying on the porch at the front door of his dwelling. It was wrapped in a sheet of letter-paper bearing the name of Elizabeth Bartine, his only daughter, my grandmother. I am wearing that watch."

Bartine paused. His usually restless black eyes were staring fixedly into the grate, a point of red light in each, reflected from the glowing coals. He seemed to have forgotten my existence.

A sudden threshing of the branches of a tree outside one of the windows, and almost at the same instant a rattle of rain against the glass, recalled him to a sense of his surroundings. A storm had risen, heralded by a single gust of wind, and in a few moments the steady splash of the water on the pavement was distinctly audible. I hardly know why I relate that incident; it seemed somehow to have a certain significance and relevancy which I am enabled now to discern. It at least added an element of seriousness, almost solemnity. Bartine resumed:

"I have a singular feeling towards this watch—a kind of affection for it; I like to have it about me; though partly from its weight, and partly for a reason that I shall now explain, I seldom carry it. The reason is this: Every evening when I have it with me I feel an unaccountable desire to open it and consult it, even if I can think of no reason for wishing to know the time. But if I yield to it, the moment my eyes rest upon the dial I am filled with a mysterious apprehension—a sense of imminent calamity. And this is the more unsupportable the nearer it is to eleven o'clock—by this watch, no matter what the actual hour may be. After the hands have registered eleven the desire to look is gone; I am entirely indifferent. But then I can consult the thing as often as I like, with no more emotion than you feel in looking at your own.

"Naturally, I have trained myself not to look at that watch in the evening before eleven; nothing could induce me. Your insistence this evening upset me a trifle. I felt very much as I suppose an opium-eater might feel if his yearning for his special and particular kind of hell were re-enforced by opportunity and advice.

"Now, that is my story, and I have told it in the interest of your trumpery science; but if on any evening hereafter you observe me wearing this damnable watch, and you have the thoughtfulness to ask me the hour, I shall beg leave to put you to the inconvenience of being knocked down."

His humour did not amuse me. I could see that in relating his hallucination he was again somewhat disturbed. His concluding smile was positively ghastly, and his eyes had resumed something more than their old restlessness; they shifted hither and thither about the room with apparent aimlessness, and I fancied had taken on a wild expression, such as is sometimes observed in cases of dementia. Perhaps this was my own imagination; but at any rate I was now persuaded that my friend was afflicted with a most singular monomania.

Without, I trust, any abatement of my affectionate solicitude for him as a friend, I began to regard him as a patient rich in possibilities of profitable study. Why not? Had he not described his delusion in the interest of science? Ah, poor fellow, he was doing more for science than he knew; not only his story but himself was in evidence. I should cure him if I could, of course, but first I should

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make a little experiment in psychology—nay, the experiment itself might be a step in his restoration.

“That is very frank and friendly of you, Bartine,” I said cordially, “and I’m rather proud of your confidence. It is all very odd, certainly. Do you mind showing me the watch?”

He detached it from his waistcoat, chain and all, and passed it to me without a word. The case was of gold, very thick and strong, and curiously engraved. After examining the dial and observing that it was nearly twelve o’clock, I opened it at the back and was interested to observe an inner case of ivory, upon which was painted a miniature portrait in that exquisite and delicate manner which was in vogue during the eighteenth century.

“Why, bless my soul!” I exclaimed, experiencing the keenest artistic delight—“how under the sun did you get that done? I thought miniature painting on ivory was a lost art.”

“That,” he replied, gravely smiling, “is not I; it is my excellent great-grandfather, the late Bramwell Olcott Bartine, Esquire, of Virginia. He was younger then than later—about my age, in fact. It is said to resemble me; do you think so?”

“Resemble you? I should say so! Barring the costume, which I supposed you to have assumed out of compliment to the art—or for vraisemblance, so to say—and the no mustache, that face is yours in every feature, line and expression.”

No more was said at that time. Bartine took a book from the table and began reading.

I heard outside the incessant splash of the rain in the street. There was occasional hurried footfalls on the sidewalks; and once a slower, heavier tread seemed to cease at my door—a policeman, I thought, seeking shelter in the doorway. The boughs of the trees tapped significantly on the window-panes, as if asking for admittance. I remember it all through these years and years of a wiser, graver life.

Seeing myself unobserved, I took the old-fashioned watch key from the chain and quickly turned back the hands of the watch a full hour; then, closing the case, I handed Bartine his property, and saw him replace it.

“I think you said,” I began, with assumed carelessness, “that after eleven the sight of the dial no longer affects you. As it is now nearly twelve”—looking at my own timepiece—“perhaps, if you don’t resent my pursuit of proof, you will look at it now.”

He smiled good-humoredly, pulled out the watch again, opened it, and instantly sprang to his feet with a cry that Heaven has not had the mercy to permit me to forget! His eyes, their blackness strikingly intensified by the absolute pallor of his face, were fixed upon the watch, which he clutched in both hands.

For some time he remained in that attitude without uttering another sound; then, in a voice that I should not have recognized as his, he said:

“D—n you! it is two minutes to eleven.”

I was not unprepared for some such outbreak, and without rising replied, calmly enough:

“I beg your pardon; I must have misread your watch in setting my own by it.”

He shut the case with a sharp snap and put the watch in his pocket. He looked at me and made an attempt to smile; but his lower lip quivered and he seemed unable to close his mouth. His hands, also, were shaking and he thrust them clenched into his coat pockets.

The courageous spirit was manifestly endeavoring to subdue the coward body. The effort was too great. He began to sway from side to side, as from vertigo; and before I could spring from my chair to support him his knees gave way and he pitched awkwardly forward and fell upon his face—dead!

The post-mortem examination disclosed nothing; every organ was normal and sound. But when the body had been prepared for burial a faint, dark circle, as if made by contusion, was seen to have developed about the neck; at least, I was so assured by several persons who said they saw it; but of my own knowledge I cannot say if that was true.

Nor can I affirm my knowledge of the limitations of the principle of heredity. I do not know that in the spiritual, as in the temporal, world natural laws have no post-facto validity. Surely, if I were to

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guess at the fate of Bramwell Olcott Bartine, I should guess that he was hanged at eleven o'clock in the evening, and that he had been allowed several hours in which to prepare for the change.

As to John Bartine, my friend, my patient for five minutes, and—Heaven forgive me!—my victim for eternity, there is no more to say. He is buried, and his watch with him; I saw to that. May God rest his soul in Paradise and the soul of his unfortunate Virginian ancestor, if, indeed, they are two souls.

AMBROSE BIERCE.

TWO WILLS.



R. BROWN had returned home late from a visit to one of his patients. It was a serious case—doubly so for Brown—for not only had his notoriously sure diagnosis failed him in this case, but the patient was one of a family with which he had been on an intimate footing for years, and consequently his personal interest was awakened. The doctor saw no hope whatever for the sick woman. Since early morning he had hourly expected her death. Weary and dispirited, after a light and hasty supper, he sat down at his writing-table, and once more passed in review the whole course of his patient's illness. Every circumstance was recalled.

"Unaccountable! perfectly unaccountable!" he murmured over and over again, and, with each repetition, he shook his grey head.

"Doctor!" Brown started up in alarm. He had not dreamed that anyone beside himself was in the room. As he looked up, he saw a lady standing by the door, dressed in a peculiar nightrobe with only a light shawl thrown over it.

"My God! What is that?"

It was indeed the subject of his thoughts. Amazed beyond expression, Brown sprang from his armchair and hastened toward the intruder. "My dear Madam! Mrs. Morley, in heaven's name, why are you here?"

"Never mind, doctor. Sit down and write what I tell you."

Brown mechanically obeyed the command. There was something in the look and bearing of his visitor which forbade contradiction. Strangely thrilled, Brown took up his pen and wrote at her dictation the following words: "I hereby direct that, in case of my death, my body be opened, and the cause of my illness and final demise be officially and authoritatively stated by a competent physician. I am convinced that I am poisoned, and that by my own husband, and only through such a statement as the aforesaid will it be put out of his power to get possession of the property coming to my only child, his step-daughter. My will relating to this property is in the hands of my lawyer, Mr. Batt, in London. Mr. Batt is, as I have unfortunately only lately discovered, a man open to bribery, and my husband counts upon this characteristic for the attainment of his object: that is to say, he hopes to induce this lawyer, by pure falsification, to make the will read in his favor. I believe he has already succeeded in doing this, for, when, yesterday, I desired to see a lawyer of this town, in order to have him take down my last wishes, my husband put every obstacle in the way of his coming. I have put a sealed copy of my will in the double bottom of the little box which stands always upon the table at my bedside. The ostensible contents of the box are my daughter's first cap and a lock of my father's hair."

Dr. Brown had driven his pen as if under the domination of a higher power. He was not conscious of having once lifted it from the paper to the inkstand, and yet there stood the written characters, black and clear, upon the white paper, and reminded him that he was not alone; furthermore, that the head and heart whose wish and request these characters had recorded, belonged to an existence which held his own being, thought, and will in its power.

He made an heroic effort to regain the mastery of himself, and with a powerful shake, as if to free himself from the grasp of this strange will, he arose. "Madam, I—"

"Yes, but, doctor, the master sent me to tell you to come right away. Mrs. Morley has been lying for two hours like dead, and the master thinks it must be nearly over with her."

Brown staggered back in amazement, and stared so vacantly at the waiting coachman that the man was struck dumb.

"Jan? Where did you come from? Mrs. Morley is not yet——"

"Dead? No, doctor, not yet, but the master says she can't last much longer."

"Very well. You see to the horses, and I'll come right away."

Dr. Brown put his hands to his head. He had need to convince

himself by some such means of his own mortal existence. Then he seized his hat and coat and hurried after the coachman.

Drawing his coat tightly about him, he leaned back in the corner of the carriage and racked his brain over the strange occurrence, but to no purpose. The doctor was a hard-headed, practical man, and if any one had related to him the events of the past day, he would have laughed him to scorn; but, earnestly as he tried to do so now, it was impossible for him to conjure up a smile. The carriage stopped and Mr. Morley was at the door to receive him.

"I am glad you have come, doctor. I was afraid you would be too late. As the clock struck twelve, there was absolutely no breath nor pulse, and not until half-an-hour ago did she seem to come back a little to life. She has just asked for you."

These words were spoken outside the sick-room door. The doctor laid aside his coat and went in, followed by Mr. Morley. The physician felt something like horror at being in the near presence of this man, who since half-an-hour ago had figured in his mind as the murderer of his wife; and here in the sick-room while looking upon the dying woman, in whose features he again saw plainly his recent guest, even here, did he feel again that compelling force which had put the pen in his hand at home.

The sick woman seemed to have been anxiously awaiting his coming, for her great, earnest eyes fastened themselves upon him, as he entered the room, and as he bent over her, he heard distinctly the low whispered words: "Doctor, my child!" and in the same low whisper Dr. Brown replied: "I will see that your will is executed."

Then he raised his head and encountered a look from those eyes which spoke a world of gratitude; and this was the last conscious look which lighted them, for as Mr. Morley now softly approached, she looked wandringly at him, and then her eyelids closed, and her muscles relaxed, and with a gentle sigh her heart ceased to beat.

"All is over," said the doctor, as he stepped back to give place to the mourning husband, who threw himself down beside his wife.

When he arose and turned toward the doctor, a tear glittered on his lashes. His voice was hoarse and tremulous when he thanked the physician for all the pains which he had taken during the long illness of his wife, concluding with, "I shall never forget it!"

Dr. Brown only shook his head. He was thinking of the dead woman's will, and answered evasively: "I could not have helped your wife much, since I never discovered the real cause of her illness."

"No self-reproaches, doctor! You did what you could, and whether this disease can be exactly diagnosed seems to me, from what I know of it, altogether doubtful."

"Every disease," replied the doctor, "must finally disclose its cause to the patient and thorough investigator; but in this case there were so many accompanying phenomena that it was quite impossible to discover the exact cause of the predominant disorder, at least in the living body."

The doctor, as he said this, looked sharply at his companion, over whose countenance a slight cloud seemed to pass; yet there was scarcely any discernible change in his voice as he replied: "No, no, doctor, we won't do that! The beloved body was sufficiently tormented in life; in death at least it shall be at rest!"

"Yes, but it was the wish of the dead; and isn't there any direction as to that in the will?"

"No!—yet perhaps—I don't know. Anyway the will is to be read tomorrow, and should any such direction be found there—well, I suppose I shall have to carry it out. I will send immediately an announcement of the death to our attorney, Mr. Batt of London. You will be present at the opening of the will, will you not?"

"Most certainly!"

The doctor during this conversation had again approached the bed of death. He carefully scrutinized the surroundings and, as if in an absent-minded manner, picked up a little box from the table which stood beside the bed and carelessly pushed back the cover. At sight of the contents he could hardly restrain an exclamation; for there, exactly as had been described to him, were a baby's cap, yellow with time, and a lock of hair, tied with a ribbon.

"Probably some of your wife's keepsakes?" he remarked, turning inquiringly to Morley.

"Yes, and as such they must be given into the hands of her daughter."

"Will you allow me the pleasure of sending them to her by my sister who is going to Switzerland to-morrow?"

"I suppose it would be more proper that she should receive them at my hands; and yet, as I shall have to remain here for some time yet, and a journey home in her delicate state of health would be hard for the child, I shall be very much obliged to you if you will send them to her. Give her my blessing with them, and tell her that from this time forth I shall be more a father to her than ever."

Dr. Brown thrust the little box deep into his breast-pocket, and took his leave with the assurance that he would faithfully execute Mr. Morley's commission.

Once at home under the light of the lamp, he was not long in searching for the further contents of the box, and he was filled with both horror and astonishment as his search brought to light, from beneath a cunningly-contrived double floor, the will as it had been described to him—a clear, correct copy. After this discovery, the doctor awaited with feverish anxiety the hour for the announced opening of the will.

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At last it arrived, and Brown had to acknowledge to himself that its contents agreed exactly with the copy in his hands until it came to the names of the heirs. Here appeared clearly and plainly, "my daughter, Mara Dix;" and there, just as plainly, "my husband, John Morley." No directions with regard to an inquest or autopsy appeared therein.

"I demand proof of the genuineness of that will!" rang loud and clear through the room. No one could imagine from whom the words proceeded. The will had been drawn up and carefully preserved by a prominent attorney in London, and the family involved was one of the first in the country; and now came this demand, which, as everybody knew, was an unmitigated insult. Who had brought it forward? The chairman looked all about the room. There he stood—Dr. Brown! He had again, quite unconsciously, come under the spell of that mysterious power, and in obedience to its behest had called out those words; now that they were spoken, he would not recall them. Standing upright, the doctor repeated: "I demand an examination of the will!" As he spoke, he had the comfortable feeling of having kept a promise.

"By what authority?" asked the attorney.

"As the guardian of the deceased's daughter."

"Have you anything to offer in support of this request?"

"Yes, a copy of the original will."

"Will?"

"And this has reference to an entirely different party."

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"Allow me to look at the document."

Dr. Brown handed over the copy. A committee retired with it to another room. On their return the chairman announced that in accordance with Dr. Brown's request, a preliminary examination of the will having been made, the judge had decided to enter a complaint against Attorney Batt of London for having falsified the will, and at the same time to place the property of the heiress-at-law under legal protection.

"Dr. Brown, have you anything further to say in the matter?"

"I beg you will order an autopsy."

"On what grounds?"

"It was the wish of the deceased."

"Is that your only reason?"

"No, but because I have a strong suspicion that the deceased came to her death through slow and protracted poisoning."

All present were filled with horror.

Again the court withdrew, and again the decision was a fulfilment of the doctor's request; and when the verdict at the ensuing inquest was brought in, it was expressed in one word: Poison!

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A DOCTOR OF THE OLD SCHOOL.

A GENERAL PRACTITIONER.

DRUMTOCHTY was accustomed to break every law of health, except wholesome food and fresh air, and yet had reduced the Psalmist's farthest limit to an average life-rate. Our men made no difference in their clothes for summer or winter, Drumsheugh and one or two of the larger farmers condescending to a topcoat on Sabbath, as a penalty of their position, and without regard to temperature. They wore their blacks at a funeral, refusing to cover them with anything, out of respect to the deceased, and standing longest in the kirkyard when the north wind was blowing across a hundred miles of snow. If the rain was pouring at the Junction, then Drumtochty stood two minutes longer through sheer native dourness till each man had a cascade from the tail of his coat, and hazarded the suggestion, hal-fway to Kildrummie, that it had been "a bit scrowie;" a "scrowie" being as far short of a "shoor" as a "shoor" fell below "weet."

This sustained defiance of the elements provoked occasional judgments in the shape of a "hoast" (cough), and the head of the house was then exhorted by his women folk to "change his feet" if he happened to walk through a burn on his way home, and was pestered generally with sanitary precautions. It is right to add that the gudeman treated such advice with contempt, regarding it as suitable for the effeminacy of towns, but not seriously intended for Drumtochty. Sandy Stewart "napped" stones on the road in his shirt sleeves, wet or fair, summer and winter, till he was persuaded to retire from active duty at eighty-five, and he spent ten years more in regretting his hastiness and criticising his successor. The ordinary course of life, with fine air and contented minds, was to do a full share of work till seventy, and then to look after "orra" (odd) jobs well into the eighties, and to "slip awa" within sight of ninety. Persons above ninety were understood to be acquitting themselves with credit, and assumed airs of authority, brushing aside the opinions of seventy as immature, and confirming their conclusions with illustrations drawn from the end of last century.



A SPOONFUL EVERY HOUR

When Hillocks' brother so far forgot himself as to "slip awa" at sixty, that worthy man was scandalized, and offered laboured explanations at the "beerial."

"It's an awfu' business ony wy ye look at it, an' a sair trial tae us a'. A' never heard tell o' sic a thing in oor family afore, an' it's no

easy accountin' for't.

"The gudewife was sayin' he wes never the same sin' a weet nicht he lost himsel on the muir and slept below a bush; but that's neither here nor there. A'm thinkin' he sappit his constitution thae twa years he wes grieve (steward) aboot England. That wes thirty years syne, but ye're never the same aifter thae foreign climates."

Drumtochty listened patiently to Hillocks' apologia, but was not satisfied.

"It's clean havers aboot the muir. Losh keep's (Lord, keep us), we've a' sleepit oot and never been a hair the waur.

"A' admit that England micht hae dune the job; it's no cannie stravagin' (strolling) yon wy frae place tae place, but Drums never complained tae me as if he hed been nippit in the Sooth."

The parish had, in fact, lost confidence in Drums after his wayward experiment with a potato-digging machine, which turned out a lamentable failure, and his premature departure confirmed our vague impression of his character.

"He's awa noo," Drumsheugh summed up, after opinion had time to form; "an' there were waur fouk than Drums, but there's nae doot he wes a wee flichty."

When illness had the audacity to attack a Drumtochty man, it was described as a "whup," and was treated by the men with a fine negligence. Hillocks was sitting in the post office one afternoon when I looked in for my letters, and the right side of his face was blazing red. His subject of discourse was the prospects of the turnip "breer," but he casually explained that he was waiting for medical advice.

"The gudewife is keepin' up a ding-dong frae mornin' till nicht aboot ma face, and a'm fair deaved (deafened), so a'm watchin' for MacLure tae get a bottle as he comes wast (west); yon's him noo."

The doctor made his diagnosis from horseback on sight, and stated the result with that admirable clearness which endeared him to Drumtochty.

"Confoond ye, Hillocks, what are ye ploiterin' aboot here for in the weet wi' a face like a boiled beet? Div ye no ken that ye've a titch o' the rose (erysipelas), and ocht tae be in the hoose? Gae hame wi' ye afore a' leave the bit, and send a haflin (half-grown; a child) for some medicine. Ye donnerd idiot, are ye ettin (intending) tae follow Drums afore yir time?" And the medical attendant of Drumtochty continued his invective till Hillocks started, and still pursued his retreating figure with medical directions of a simple and practical character.

"A'm watchin', an' peety ye if ye pit aff time. Keep yir bed the mornin', and dinna show yir face in the fields till a' see ye. A'll gie ye a cry on Monday—sic an auld fule—but there's no ane o' them tae mind anither in the hale pairish."

Hillocks' wife informed the kirkyaird that the doctor "gied the gudeman an awfu' clearin'," and that Hillocks "wes keepin' the hoose," which meant that the patient had tea breakfast, and at that time was wandering about the farm buildings in an easy undress with his head in a plaid.

It was impossible for a doctor to earn even the most modest competence from a people of such scandalous health, and so MacLure had annexed neighbouring parishes. His house—little more than a cottage—stood on the roadside among the pines towards the head of our Glen, and from this base of operations he dominated the wild glen that broke the wall of the Grampians above Drumtochty—where the snowdrifts were twelve feet deep in winter, and the only way of passage at times was the channel of the river—and the moorland district westwards till he came to the Dunleith sphere of influence, where there were four doctors and a hydropathic. Drumtochty in its length, which was eight miles, and its breadth, which was four, lay in his hand; besides a glen behind, unknown to the world, which in the night time he visited at the risk of life, for the way thereto was across the big moor with its peat holes and treacherous bogs. And he held the land eastwards towards Muirtown so far as Geordie. The Drumtochty post travelled every day, and could carry word that the doctor was wanted. He did his best for the need of every man, woman, and child in this wild, stragglin district, year in, year out, in the snow and in the heat, in the dark and in the light, without rest, and without holiday for forty years.

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One horse could not do the work of this man, but we liked best to see him on his old white mare, who died the week after her master, and the passing of the two did our hearts good. It was not that he rode beautifully, for he broke every canon of art, flying with his arms, stooping till he seemed to be speaking into Jess's ears, and rising in the saddle beyond all necessity. But he could ride faster, stay longer in the saddle, and had a firmer grip with his knees, than any one I ever met, and it was all for mercy's sake. When the reapers in harvest time saw a figure whirling past in a cloud of dust, or the family at the foot of Glen Urtach, gathered round the fire on a winter's night, heard the rattle of a horse's hoofs on the road, or the shepherds, out after the sheep, traced a black speck moving across the snow to the upper glen, they knew it was the doctor, and, without being conscious of it, wished him God speed.

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Before and behind his saddle were strapped the instruments and medicines the doctor might want, for he never knew what was before him. There were no specialists in Drumtochty, so this man had to do everything as best he could, and as quickly. He was chest doctor and doctor for every other organ as well; he was accoucheur and surgeon; he was oculist and aurist; he was dentist and chloroformist, besides being chemist and druggist. It was often told how he was far up Glen Urtach when the feeders of the threshing mill caught young Burnbrae, and how he only stopped to change horses at his house, and galloped all the way to Burnbrae, and flung himself off his horse and amputated the arm, and saved the lad's life.

"You wud hae thocht that every meenut was an hour," said Jamie Soutar, who had been at the threshing, "an' a'll never forget the puir lad lying as white as deith on the floor o' the loft, wi' his head on a sheaf, an' Burnbrae haudin' the bandage ticht an' prayin' a' the while, and the wither greetin' in the corner.

"Will he never come?" she cries, 'an' a' heard the soond o' the horse's feet on the road a mile awa in the frosty air.

"The Lord be praised!" said Burnbrae, and a' slippit doon the ladder as the doctor came skelpin' intae the close, the foam fleein' frae his horse's mooth.

"Whar is he?" wes a' that passed his lips, an' in five meenuts he hed him on the feedin' board, and wes at his wark—sic wark, neeburs—but he did it weel. An' ae thing a' thocht rael thoctfu' o' him: he first sent aff the laddie's mither tae get a bed ready.

"Noo that's feenished, and his constitution 'll dae the rest,' and he carried the lad doon the ladder in his airms like a bairn, and laid him in his bed, and waits aside him till he wes sleepin', and then says he: Burnbrae, yir a gey lad never tae say 'Collie, will ye lick?' for a' hevna tasted meat for saxteen hoors."

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"It was michty tae see him come intae the yaird that day, neeburs; the verra look o' him wes victory."

Jamie's cynicism slipped off in the enthusiasm of this reminiscence, and he expressed the feeling of Drumtochty. No one sent for MacLure save in great straits, and the sight of him put courage in sinking hearts. But this was not by the grace of his appearance, or the advantage of a good bedside manner. A tall, gaunt, loosely made man, without an ounce of superfluous flesh on his body, his face burned a dark brick colour by constant exposure to the weather, red hair and beard turning grey, honest blue eyes that looked you ever in the face, huge hands with wrist bones like the shank of a ham, and a voice that hurled his salutations across two fields, he suggested the moor rather than the drawing-room. But what a clever hand it was in an operation, as delicate as a woman's; and what a kindly voice it was in the humble room where the shepherd's wife was weeping by her man's bedside. He was "ill pitten thegither" to begin with, but many of his physical defects were the penalties of his work, and endeared him to the Glen. That ugly scar that cut into his right eyebrow and gave him such a sinister expression, was got one night Jess slipped on the ice and laid him insensible eight miles from home. His limp marked the big snowstorm in the fifties, when his horse missed the road in Glen Urtach, and they rolled together in a drift. MacLure escaped with a broken leg and the fracture of three ribs, but he never walked like other men again. He could not swing himself into the saddle without making two attempts and holding Jess's mane. Neither can you "warstle" through the peat bogs and snow drifts for forty winters without a touch of rheumatism. But they were honorable scars, and

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for such risks of life men get the Victoria Cross in other fields. MacLure got nothing but the secret affection of the Glen, which knew that none had ever done one-tenth as much for it as this ungainly, twisted, battered figure, and I have seen a Drumtochty face soften at the sight of MacLure limping to his horse.

Mr. Hopps earned the ill-will of the Glen forever by criticising the doctor's dress, but indeed it would have filled any townsman with amazement. Black he wore once a year, on Sacrament Sunday, and, if possible, at a funeral; topcoat or waterproof never. His jacket and waistcoat were rough homespun of Glen Urtach wool, which threw off the wet like a duck's back, and below he was clad in shepherd's tartan trousers, which disappeared into unpolished riding boots. His shirt was grey flannel, and he was uncertain about a collar, but certain as to a tie, which he never had, his beard doing instead, and his hat was soft felt of four colors and seven different shapes. His point of distinction in dress was the trousers, and they were the subject of unending speculation.

"Some threep (declare) that he's worn thae eedential pair the last twenty year, an' a' mind masel (myself) his gettin' a tear ahint, when he was crossin' oor palin', and the mend's still veesible.

"Ithers declare 'at he's got a wab o'clath, and hes a new pair made in Muirtown aince in the twa year maybe, and keeps them in the garden till the new look wears aff.

"For ma ain pairt," Soutar used to declare, "a' canna mak up my mind, but there's ae thing sure, the Glen wud not like tae see him withoot them: it wud be a shock tae confidence. There's no muckle o' the check left, but ye can aye tell it, and when ye see thae breeks comin' in ye ken that if human pooer can save yir bairn's life it 'ill be dune."

The confidence of the Glen—and tributary states—was unbounded, and rested partly on long experience of the doctor's resources, and partly on his hereditary connection.

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"His father was here afore him," Mrs. Macfadyen used to explain; "atween them they've hed the countyside for weel on tae a century; if MacLure disna understand oor constitution, wha dis, a' wud like tae ask?"

For Drumtochty had its own constitution and a special throat disease, as became a parish which was quite self-contained between the woods and the hills, and not dependent on the lowlands either for its diseases or its doctors.

"He's a skilly man, Doctor MacLure," continued my friend Mrs. Macfadyen, whose judgment on sermons or anything else was seldom at fault; "an' a kindhearted, though o' coorse he hes his faults like us a', an' he disna tribble the Kirk often.

"He aye can tell what's wrang wi' a body, an' maistly he can put ye richt, an' there's nae new-fangled wys wi' him: a blister for the outside an' Epsom salts for the inside dis his wark, an' they say there's no an herb on the hills he disna ken.

"If we're tae dee, we're tae dee; an' if we're tae live, we're tae live," concluded Elspeth, with sound Calvinistic logic; "but a'll say this for the doctor, that whether yir tae live or dee, he can aye keep up a shairp moisture on the skin.

"But he's no verra ceevil gin ye bring him when there's naethin' wrang," and Mrs. Macfadyen's face reflected another of Mr. Hopps' misadventures of which Hillocks held the copyright.

"Hopps' laddie ate grosarts (gooseberries) till they hed to sit up a' nicht wi' him, and naethin' wud do but they maun hae the doctor, an' he writes 'immediately' on a slip o' paper.

"Weel, MacLure had been awa a' nicht wi' a shepherd's wife Dunleith wy, and he comes here withoot drawin' bridle, mud up tae the een.

"'What's a dae here, Hillocks?' he cries; 'it's no an accident, is't?' and when he got aff his horse he cud hardly stand wi' stiffness and tire.

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"'It's nane o' us, doctor; it's Hopps' laddie; he's been eatin' ower mony berries.'

"'If he didna turn on me like a tiger.

"'Div ye mean tae say—'

"'Weesht, weesht,' an' I tried tae quiet him, for Hopps wes comin' oot.

"'Well, doctor,' begins he, as brisk as a magpie, 'you're here at

last; there's no hurry with you Scotch-men. My boy has been sick all night, and I've never had one wink of sleep. You might have come a little quicker, that's all I've got to say.'

"We've mair tae dae in Drumtochty than attend tae every bairn that hes a sair stomach,' and a' saw MacLure was roosed.

"I'm astonished to hear you speak. Our doctor at home always says to Mrs. 'Opps, 'Look on me as a family friend, Mrs. 'Opps, and send for me though it be only a headache.'"

"He'd be mair sparin' o' his offers if he hed four an' twenty mile tae look aifter. There's naething wrang wi' yir laddie but greed. Gie him a gude dose o' castor oil and stop his meat for a day, an' he 'ill be a' richt the morn.'

"He'll not take castor oil, doctor. We have given up those barbarous medicines.'

"Whatna kind o' medicines hae ye noo in the Sooth?'

"Well, you see, Dr. MacLure, we're homœopathists, and I've my little chest here,' and oot Hopps comes wi' his boxy.

"Let's see 't,' an' MacLure sits doon and taks oot the bit bottles, and he reads the names wi' a lauch every time.

"Belladonna; did ye ever hear the like? Aconite; it coves a'. Nux Vomica. What next? Weel, ma mannie,' he says tae Hopps, 'it's a fine ploy, and ye 'ill better gang on wi' the Nux till it's dune, and gie him ony ither o' the sweeties he fancies.

"Noo, Hillocks, a' maun be aff tae see Drumsheugh's grieve (steward), for he's doon wi' the fever, an' it's tae be a teuch fecht (hard fight). A' hinna time tae wait for dinner; gie me some cheese an' cake in ma haund, and Jess 'ill tak a pail o' meal an' water.

"Fee; a'm no wantin' yir fees, man; wi' a' that boxy ye dinna need a doctor; na, na, gie yir siller tae some puir body, Maister Hopps,' an' he was doon the road as hard as he cud lick."

His fees were pretty much what the folk chose to give him, and he collected them once a year at Kildrummie fair.

"Weel, doctor, what am a' awin' ye for the wife and bairn? Ye 'ill need three notes for that nicht ye stayed in the hoose an' a' the veesits."

"Havers," MacLure would answer, "prices are low, a'm hearing; gie's thirty shillings."

"No, a'll no, or the wife 'ill tak ma ears off," and it was settled for two pounds.

Lord Kilspindie gave him a free house and fields, and one way or other, Drumsheugh told me, the doctor might get in about one hundred and fifty pounds a year, out of which he had to pay his old housekeeper's wages and a boy's, and keep two horses, besides the cost of instruments and books, which he bought through a friend in Edinburgh with much judgment.

There was only one man who ever complained of the doctor's charges, and that was the new farmer of Milton, who was so good that he was above both churches, and held a meeting in his barn. (It was Milton the Glen supposed at first to be a Mormon, but I can't go into that now.) He offered MacLure a pound less than he asked, and two tracts, whereupon MacLure expressed his opinion of Milton, both from a theological and social standpoint, with such vigour and frankness that an attentive audience of Drumtochty men could hardly contain themselves.

Jamie Soutar was selling his pig at the time, and missed the meeting, but he hastened to condole with Milton, who was complaining everywhere of the doctor's language.

"Ye did richt tae resist him; it 'ill maybe roose the Glen tae mak a stand; he fair hauds them in bondage.

"Thirty shillings for twal veesits, and him no mair then seven mile awa, an' a'm telt there werena mair than four at nicht.

"Ye 'ill hae the sympathy o' the Glen, for a' body kens yir as free wi' yir siller as yir tracts.

"Wes't 'Beware o' gude warks' ye offered him? Man, ye chose it weel, for he's been colleckin' sae mony thae forty years, a'm feared for him.

"A've often thocht oor doctor's little better than the Gude Samaritan, an' the Pharisees didna think muckle o' his chance aither in this warld or that which is tae come."

THE VARIOUS TEMPER OF GRANDMOTHER GREGG.



WHEN the doctor drove by the Gregg farm about dusk, and saw old Deacon Gregg perched cross-legged upon his own gate-post, he knew that something was wrong within, and he could not resist the temptation to drive up and speak to the old man.

It was common talk in the neighborhood that when Grandmother Gregg made things too warm for him indoors, the good man, her spouse, was wont to stroll out to the front gate and to take this exalted seat.

Indeed, it was said by a certain Mrs. Frequent, a neighbor of prying proclivities and ungentle speech, that the deacon's wife sent him there as a punishment for misdemeanors. Furthermore, this same Mrs. Frequent did even go so far as to watch for the deacon, and when she would see him laboriously rise and resignedly poise himself upon the narrow area, she would remark:

"Well, I see Grandma Gregg has got the old man punished again. Wonder what he's been up to now?"

Her constant repetition of the unkind charge finally gained for it such credence that the diminutive figure upon the gate-post became an object of mingled sympathy and mirth in the popular regard.

The old doctor was the friend of a lifetime, and he was sincerely attached to the deacon, and when he turned his horse's head toward the gate this evening, he felt his heart go out in sympathy to the old man in durance vile upon his lonely perch.

But he had barely started to the gate when he heard a voice which he recognized as the deacon's, whereupon he would have hurried away had not his horse committed him to his first impulse by unequivocally facing the gate.

"I know three's a crowd," he called out cheerily as he presently drew rein, "but I ain't a-goin' to stay; I jest—Why, where's grandma?" he added abruptly, seeing the old man alone. "I'm shore I heard—"

"You jest heerd me a-talkin' to myself, doctor—or not to myself, exactly, neither—that is to say, when you come up I was addressin' my remarks to this here pill."

"Bill? I don't see no bill." The doctor drew his buggy nearer. He was a little deaf.

"No, I said this pill, doctor. I'm a-holdin' of it here in the pa'm o' my hand, a-studyin' over it."

"What's she a-dosin' you for now, Enoch?"

The doctor always called the deacon by his first name when he approached him in sympathy. He did not know it. Neither did the deacon, but he felt the sympathy, and it unlocked the portals of his heart.

"Well"—the old man's voice softened—"she thinks I stand in need of 'em, of co'se. The fact is, that yaller-spotted steer run agin her clo'es-line twice-t to-day, drug the whole week's washin' onto the ground, an' then tromped on it. She's inside a-renchin' an' a-starchin' of 'em over now. An' right on top o' that, I come in lookin' sort o' puny an' peaked, an' I happened to choke on a muskitty jest ez I come in, an' she declared she wasn't a-goin' to have a consumed man sick on her hands an' a clo'es-destroyin' steer at the same time. An' with that she up an' wiped her hands on her apron, an' went an' selected this here pill out of a bottle of assorted sizes, an' instructed me to take it. They never was a thing done mo' delib'rate an' kind—never on earth. But of co'se you an' she know how it plegs me to take physic. You could mould out ice-cream in little pill shapes an' it would gag me, even ef 'twas vanilly-flavored. An' so, when I received it, why, I jest come out here to meditate. You can see it from where you set, doctor. It's a purty sizeable one, and I'm mighty suspicious of it."

The doctor cleared his throat. "Yas, I can see it, Enoch—of co'se."

"Could you jedge of it, doctor? That is, of its capabilities, I

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mean?"

"Why, no, of co'se not—not less'n I'd taste it, an' you can do that ez well ez I can. If it's quinine, it'll be bitter; an' ef it's soggy an'—"

"Don't explain no mo', doctor. I can't stand it. I s'pose it's jest ez foolish to investigate the inwardness of a pill a person is bound to take ez it would be to try to lif' the veil of the future in any other way. When I'm obligated to swaller one of 'em, I jest take a swig o' good spring water and repeat a po'tion of Scripture and commit myself unto the Lord. I always seem foreordained to choke to death, but I notice thet ef I recover from the first spell o' suffocation, I always come through. But I ain't never took one yet thet I didn't in a manner prepare to die."

"Then I wouldn't take it, Enoch. Don't do it." The doctor cleared his throat again, but this time he had no trouble to keep the corners of his mouth down. His sympathy robbed him for the time of the humor in the situation. "No, I wouldn't do it; d—doggone ef I would."

The deacon looked into the palm of his hand and sighed. "Oh, yas, I reckon I better take it," he said, mildly. "Ef I don't stand in need of it now, maybe the good Lord 'll sto'e it up in my system, some way, 'g'inst a future attackt."

"Well"—the doctor reached for his whip—"well, I wouldn't do it—*steer or no steer!*"

"Oh, yas, I reckon you would, doctor, ef you had a wife ez worried over a wash-tub ez what mine is. An' I had a extry shirt in wash this week too. One little pill ain't much when you take in how she's been tantalized."

The doctor laughed outright.

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"Tell you what to do, Enoch. Fling it away and don't let on. She don't question you, does she?"

"No, she ain't never to say questioned me, but—Well, I tried that once-t. Sampled a bitter white capsule she give me, put it down for quinine, an' flung it away. Then I chirped up an' said I felt a heap better—and that wasn't no lie—which I suppose was on account o' the relief to my mind, which it always did seem to me capsules was jest constructed to lodge in a person's air-passages. Well, I taken notice that she'd look at me keen now an' agin, an' then glance at the clock, an' treckly I see her fill the gou'd dipper an' go to her medicine-cabinet, an' then she come to me an' she says, says she, 'Open yore mouth!' An' of co'se I opened it. You see that first capsule, ez well ez the one she had jest adminstered, was mostly morphine, which she had give me to ward off a 'tackt o' the neuraligy she see approachin', and here I had been tryin' to live up to the requi'ements of quinine, an' wrastlin' severe with a sleepy spell, which, ef I'd only knew it, would o' saved me. Of co'se, after the second dose-t, I jest let nature take its co'se, an' treckly I commenced to doze off, an' seemed like I was a feather bed an' wife had hung me on the fence to sun, an' I remember how she seemed to be a-whuppin' of me, but it didn't hurt. That was on account of it bein' goose-pickin' time, an' she was werrited with windy weather, an' she tryin' to fill the feather beds. No, I won't never try to deceive her again. It never has seemed to me that she could have the same respect for me after ketchin' me at it, though she 'ain't never referred to it but once-t, an' that was the time I was elected deacon, an' even then she didn't do it outspoke. She seemed mighty tender over it, an' didn't no mo'n remind me thet a officer in a Christian church ought to examine hissself mighty conscientious an' be sure he was free of deceit, which, seemed to me, showed a heap o' consideration. She 'ain't got a deceitful bone in her body, doctor."

"Why, bless her old soul, Enoch, you know thet I think the world an' all o' Grandma Gregg! She's the salt o' the earth—an' rock salt at that. She's saved too many o' my patients by her good nursin', in spite o' my poor doctorin', for me not to appreciate her. But that don't reconcile me to the way she doses you for her worries."

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"It took me a long time to see that myself, doctor. But I've reasoned it out this a-way: I s'pose when she feels her temper arisin' she's 'feered thet she might be so took with her troubles thet she'd neglect my health, an' so she wards off any attackt thet might be comin' on. I taken notice that time her strawberry preserves all soured on her hands, an' she painted my face with iodine, a man did die o' the erysipelas down here at Battle Creek, an' likely as not she'd heerd of it. Sir? No, I didn't mention it at the time for fear she'd think best to lay on another coat, an' I felt sort o' disfigured

with it. Wife ain't a scoldin' woman, I'm thankful for that. An' some o' the peppermints an' things she keeps to dole out to me when she's fretted with little things—maybe her yeast'll refuse to rise, or a thunder-storm'll kill a settin' of eggs—why, they're so disguised thet *'cep'n thet I know they're medicine—'*

"Well, Kitty, I reckon we better be a-goin'." The doctor tapped his horse. "Be shore to give my love to Grandma, Enoch. An' ef you're bound to take that pill—of co'se I can't no mo'n speculate about it at this distance, but I'd advise you to keep clear o' sours an' acids for a day or so. Don't think, because your teeth are all adjustable, thet none o' yore other functions ain't open to salvation. *Good-night, Enoch.*"

"Oh, she always looks after that, doctor. She's mighty attentive, come to withholdin' harmful temptations. Good-by, doctor. It's did me good to open my mind to you a little.

"Yas," he added, looking steadily into his palm as the buggy rolled away—"yas, it's did me good to talk to him; but I ain't no more reconciled to you, you barefaced, high-foreheaded, little roly-poly, you. Funny how a pill thet ain't got a feature on earth can look me out o' countenance the way it can, and frustrate my speech. Talk about whited sepulchures, an' ravenin' wolves! I don't know how come I to let on thet I was feeling' puny to-night, nohow. I might've knew—with all them clo'es cedaubled over; though I can't, ez the doctor says, see how me a-takin' a pill is goin' to help matters; but of co'se I wouldn't let on to him, an' he a bachelor."

He stopped talking and felt his wrist.

"Maybe my pulse is obstropulous, an' ought to be sedated down. Reckon I'll haf to kill that steer—or sell him—one, though I swo'e I wouldn't. But of co'se I swo'e that in a temper, an' temp'rate vows ain't never made 'cep'in' to be repented of."

Several times during the last few minutes, while the deacon spoke, there had come to him across the garden from the kitchen the unmistakable odor of fried chicken.

He had foreseen that there would be a good supper to-night, and that the tiny globule within his palm would constitute for him a prohibition concerning it.

Grandmother Gregg was one of those worthy if difficult women who never let anything interfere with her duty as she saw it magnified by the lenses of pain or temper. It usually pleased her injured mood to make waffles on wash-day, and the hen-house owed many renovations, with a reckless upsetting of nests and roosts, to one of her "splittin' headaches." She would always wash her hair in view of impending company, although she averred that to wet her scalp never failed to bring on the "neuraligy." And her "neuraligy" in turn meant medicine for the deacon.

It was probably the doctor's timely advice, augmented, possibly, by the potencies of the frying-pan, with a strong underlying sympathy with the worrying woman within—it was, no doubt, all these powers combined that suddenly surprised the hitherto complying husband into such unprecedented conduct that any one knowing him in his old character, and seeing him now, would have thought that he had lost his mind.

With a swift and brave fling he threw the pill far into the night. Then, in an access of energy born of internal panic, he slid nimbly from his perch and started in a steady jog-trot into the road, wiping away the tears as he went, and stammering between sobs as he stumbled over the ruts:

"No, I won't—yas, I will, too—doggone shame, and she frettin' her life out—of co'se I sell 'im for anything he'll fetch—an' I'll be a better man, yas, yas I will—but I won't swaller another one o' them blame—not ef I die for it."

This report, taken in long-hand by an amused listener by the roadside, is no doubt incomplete in its ejaculatory form, but it has at least the value of accuracy, so far as it goes, which may be had only from a verbatim transcript.

It was perhaps three-quarters of an hour later when Enoch entered the kitchen, wiping his face, nervous, weary, embarrassed. Supper was on the table. The blue-bordered dish, heaped with side-bones and second joints done to a turn, was moved to a side station, while in its accustomed place before Enoch's plate there sat an ominous bowl of gruel. The old man did not look at the table, but he saw it all. He would have realized it with his eyes shut. Domestic

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history, as well as that of greater principalities and powers, often repeats itself.

Enoch's fingers trembled as he came near his wife, and standing with his back to the table, he began to untie a broad flat parcel that he had brought in under his arm. She paused in one of her trips between the table and stove, and regarded him askance.

"Reckon I'll haf to light the lantern befo' I set down to eat, wife," he said, by way of introduction. "Isrul 'll be along d'rec'ly to rope that steer. I've done sold him." The good woman laid her dish upon the table and returned to the stove.

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"Wish you'd 'a' sold 'im day befo' yesterday. I'd 'a' had a heap less pain in my shoulder-blade." She sniffed as she said it; and then she added, "That gruel ought to be e't warm."

By this time the parcel was open. There was a brief display of colored zephyrs and gleaming cardboard. Then Enoch began rewrapping them.

"Reckon you can look these over in the mornin', wife. They're jest a few new cross-stitch Bible texts, an' I knowed you liked Scripture motters. Where'll I lay 'em, wife, while I go out an' tend to lightin' that lantern? I told Isrul I'd set it in the stable door so's as he could git that steer out o' the way immejate."

The proposal to lay the mottoes aside was a master-stroke.

The aggrieved wife had already begun to wipe her hands on her apron. Still, she would not seem too easily appeased.

"I do hope you ain't gone an' turned that whole steer into perforated paper, Enoch, even ef 'tis Bible-texted over."

Thus she guarded her dignity. But even as she spoke she took the parcel from his hands. This was encouragement enough. It presaged a thawing out. And after Enoch had gone out to light the lantern, it would have amused a sympathetic observer to watch her gradual melting as she looked over the mottoes:

"A VIRTUOUS WIFE IS FAR ABOVE RUBIES."

"A PRUDENT WIFE IS FROM THE LORD."

"BETTER A DINNER OF HERBS WHERE LOVE IS—"

She read them over and over. Then she laid them aside and looked at Enoch's plate. Then she looked at the chicken-dish, and then at the bowl of gruel which she had carefully set on the back of the stove to keep warm.

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"Don't know ez it would hurt 'im any ef I'd thicken that gruel up into mush. He's took sech a distaste to soft foods sense he's got that new set."

She rose as she spoke, poured the gruel back into the pot, sifted and mixed a spoonful of meal and stirred it in. This done, she hesitated, glanced at the pile of mottoes, and reflected. Then with a sudden resolve she seized the milk-pitcher, filled a cup from it, poured the milk into the little pot of mush, hastily whipped up two eggs with some sugar, added the mixture to the pot, returned the whole to the yellow bowl, and set it in the oven to brown.

And just then Enoch came in, and approached the water-shelf.

"Don't keer how you polish it, a brass lantern an' coal ile is like murder on a man's hands. It will out."

He was thinking of the gruel, and putting off the evil hour. It had been his intention to boldly announce that he hadn't taken his medicine, that he never would again unless he needed it, and, moreover, that he was going to eat his supper to-night, and always, as long as God should spare him, etc., etc., etc.

But he had no sooner found himself in the presence of long-confessed superior powers than he knew he would never do any of these things.

His wife was thinking of the gruel too when she encouraged delay by remarking that he would better rest up a bit before eating.

"And I reckon you better soak yo' hands good. Take a pinch o' that bran out o' the safe to 'em," she said, "and ef that don't do, the Floridy water is in on my bureau."

When finally Enoch presented himself, ready for his fate, she was able to set the mush pudding, done to a fine brown, before him, and her tone was really tender as she said:

"This ain't very hearty ef you're hungry; but you can eat it all. There ain't no interference in it with anything you've took."

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The pudding was one of Enoch's favorite dishes, but as he broke its brown surface with his spoon he felt like a hypocrite. He took one

long breath, and then he said:

"By-the-way, wife, this reminds me, I reckon you'll haf to fetch me another o' them pills. I dropped that one out in the grass—that is, ef you think I still stand in need of it. I feel consider'ble better'n I did when I come in this evenin'."

The good woman eyed him suspiciously a minute. Then her eyes fell upon the words "ABOVE RUBIES" lying upon the table. Reaching over, she lifted the pudding-bowl aside, took the dish of fried chicken from its sub-station, and set it before her lord.

"Better save that pudd'n' for dessert, honey, an' help yo'self to some o' that chicken, an' take a potater an' a roll, and eat a couple o' them spring onions—they're the first we've had. Sense you're a-feelin' better, maybe it's jest ez well thet you mislaid that pill."

The wind blows sometimes from the east in Simkinsville, as elsewhere, and there are still occasional days when the deacon betakes himself to the front gate and sits like a nineteenth-century Simon Stilites on his pillar, contemplating the open palm of his own hand, while he enriches Mrs. Frequent's *répertoire* of gossip by a picturesque item.

But the reverse of the picture has much of joy in it; for, in spite of her various tempers, Grandmother Gregg is a warm-hearted soul—and she loves her man. And he loves her.

Listen to him to-night, for instance, as, having finished his supper, he remarks:

"An' I'm a-goin' to see to it, from this on, thet you ain't fretted with things ez you've been, ef I can help it, wife. Sometimes, the way I act, I seem like ez ef I forgit you're all I've got—on earth."

"Of co'se I realize that, Enoch," she replies. "We're each one all the other's got—an' that's why I don't spare no pains to keep you in health."

—RUTH MCENERY STUART.

DR. BARRÈRE.

CHAPTER I.



R. BARRÈRE was a young man who was beginning to make his way. In the medical profession, as in most others, this is not a very easy thing to do, and no doubt he had made some mistakes. He had given offence in his first practice to the principal person in the little town where he had set up his surgery by explaining that certain symptoms which his patient believed to mean heart disease were due solely to indigestion; and he still more deeply offended that gentleman's wife by telling her that her children were over-fed. These are follies which a more experienced medical man would never commit; but this one was young and fresh from those studies in which, more than in any other profession, things have to be called by their right names. In his next attempt he had nearly got into more serious trouble still, by his devotion to an interesting and difficult case, in which, unfortunately, the patient was a woman. From this he came out clear, with no stain on his character, as magistrates say. But for a doctor, as often for a woman, it is enough that evil has been said. The slander, though without proof, has more or less a sting, and is recollected when all the circumstances—the disapproval, the clearing-up, even the facts of the case have been forgotten. He was, therefore, not without experience when he came to settle in the great town of Poolborough, which might be supposed large enough and busy enough to take no note of those village lies and tempests in a teapot. And this proved to be the case. He was young, he was clever, he was *au courant* of all the medical discoveries, knew everything that had been discovered by other men, and was not without little discoveries and inventions of his own. He was still young, a few years over thirty, at the age which combines the advantages of youth and of maturity, strong in mind and in body, loving work, and fearing nothing. If his previous encounters with the foolish side of humanity had diminished in some degree his faith in it, and opened his eyes to the risks which those who think no evil are apt to run in their first conflict with the stupidities and base ideas of men, he had yet not suffered enough to make him bitter, or more than wary in his dealings with the narrow and uncomprehending. He no longer felt sure of being understood, or that a true estimate of his intentions and motives was certain; but he did not go to the opposite extreme as some do, and take it for granted that his patients and their surroundings were incapable of doing him justice. He was sobered, but not embittered. He was wise enough neither to show too much interest, nor to betray too great an indifference. He listened seriously to the tale of symptoms which were nothing to anybody but their narrator, and he restrained his excitement when a matter of real importance, something delicate and critical, came under his view. Thus it was proved that he had learned his lesson. But he did not despise his fellow creatures in general, or think all alike guilty of affectation and self-regard, which showed that he had not learned that lesson with extravagance. He was kind, but not too kind. He was clever, but not so clever as to get the alarming character of an experimentalist—in short, he was in every way doing well and promising well. When the untoward accident occurred which cut short his career in Poolborough where he was universally well thought of and looked upon as a rising man.

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It may be well before going further to indicate certain particulars in his antecedents which throw light upon Dr. Barrère's character and idiosyncrasies. He was of French origin, as may be perceived by his name. The name was not so distinctly French as held by his father and grandfather, who ignored the nationality, and wrote it phonetically Barraire. In their days, perhaps, a French origin was not an advantage. But in the days when Arnold Barrère was at college this prejudice had disappeared, and he was himself delighted to resort to the old orthography, and liked his friends to remember the accent which it pleased him to employ. Perhaps the

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keen logical tendency of his mind and disposition to carry everything out to its legitimate conclusion with a severity which the English love of compromise and accident prevents, were more important signs of his origin than even the accent over the e. Dr. Barrère for his part did not like to elude the right and logical ending either of an accent or a disease. It annoyed him even that his patient should recover in an irregular way. He liked the symptoms to follow each other in proper sequence; and the end which was foreseen and evident was that which he preferred to have occur, even when the avoidance of it, and deliverance of the sufferer were due to his own powers. Like his nation, or rather like the nation of his forefathers, he was disposed to carry out everything to its logical end. His outward man, like his mind, bore evidence of his parentage. He was about the middle height, of a light and spare figure, with a thickly-growing but short and carefully cropped black beard, his complexion rather dark but very clear, his voice somewhat high-pitched for an Englishman, with an animated manner, and a certain sympathetic action of head and hand when he talked, scarcely enough to be called gesticulation, yet more than usually accompanies English speech. He seemed, in short, to have missed the influence of the two generations of English mothers and manners which might have been supposed to subdue all peculiarities of race, and to have stepped back to the immediate succession of that Arnold Barrère who was the first to bring the name to this island. These individual features gave a certain piquancy, many people thought, to the really quite English breeding of the doctor, who had never so much as crossed the Channel, and knew little more French than was consistent with a just placing of the accents, especially upon the letter e.

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It would be unnecessary to enter into full detail of how he formed acquaintance with the Surtees, and came to the degree of intimacy which soon developed into other thoughts. It is a proper thing enough in a story, though not very true to real life, to describe a young doctor as falling in love, by a sick bed, with the angel-daughter who is the best nurse and ministrant that a sick parent can have. Members of the medical profession are not more prone than other men to mingle their affections with the requirements of their profession, and probably a devoted nurse is no more the ideal of a young doctor than a good model is that of a painter. As a matter of fact, however, it was while attending Mrs. Surtees through a not very dangerous or interesting illness that Dr. Barrère made the acquaintance of Agnes. He might just as well have met her in the society which he frequented sparingly, for there was no particular difference in her sphere and his, but there were reasons why Miss Surtees went out little, less than most young women of her age. Her family was one of those which had ranked amongst the best in Poolborough in the time of their wealth, and no one could say still that their place was not with "the best people" of the town. But with a mercantile community more than any other (though also more or less in every other) wealth is necessary for the retaining of that position. Women who go afoot cannot keep up with those who have carriages and horses at their command, neither can a girl in whose house no dances, no dinners, no entertainments, are ever given, associate long on easy terms with those who are in the full tide of everything, going everywhere, and exchanging hospitalities after the lavish fashion of wealthy commercial society. And this was not the only reason that kept Agnes Surtees out of the world. There was one more urgent which was told, and one which no one named but every one understood. The first was the delicate health of her mother. Dr. Barrère was aware that there was not very much in this. He knew that had she been able to drive about as did the ladies who were so sorry for her, and clothe herself in furs and velvet, and take change of air whenever she felt disposed, there would have been little the matter with Mrs. Surtees. But he was too sensible to breathe a word on this subject. He held his tongue at first from discretion, and afterwards because he had found out for himself why it was that Mrs. Surtees' delicate health was kept before the public of Poolborough. It took him some time to make this discovery; but partly from hints of others, and partly from his own perceptions, he found it out at last.

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It was that these two ladies were involved in the life of a third member of their household—a son and brother whom the "best people" in Poolborough had ceased to invite, and whose name when it was mentioned was accompanied with shakings of the head and

looks of disapproval. Dr. Barrère did not ever see Jim Surtees until he had been acquainted with his mother and sister for nearly a year—not that he was absent, but only that his haunts and associates were not theirs. He was a young man who had never done well. He had been far more highly educated than was usual with the young men of Poolborough; instead of being sent into the counting-house in his youth he had been sent to Cambridge, which was all his father's pride and folly, the critics said, exempting Mrs. Surtees from blame in a manner most unusual. It was supposed that she had disapproved. She had come of a Poolborough family, in business from father to son, and knew what was necessary; but Surtees was from the country, from a poor race of county people, and was disposed to think business beneath him, or at least consider it as a mere stepping-stone to wealth. When he died so much less well off than was expected, leaving his family but poorly provided for, then was the moment when Jim Surtees might have proved what was in him, and stepped into the breach, replaced his mother and sister in their position, and restored the credit of his father's name. In that case all the old friends would have rallied around him; they would have backed him up with their credit, and given him every advantage. At such moments and in such emergencies mercantile men are at their best. No one would have refused the young man a helping hand—they would have hoisted him upon their shoulders into his father's place; they would have helped him largely, generously, manfully. Alas! Jim Surtees did then and there show what was in him. He had neither energy nor spirit nor ambition, nor any care for his father's name or his mother's comfort. He said at once that he knew nothing about business. What could he do? It was entirely out of his way. He scarcely knew what it was his father dealt in. Cotton? Yes—but what did he know about cotton, or bookkeeping, or anything? The young man was interviewed by all who knew him; he was sent for by the greatest merchants in Poolborough. What he ought to do was set before him by everybody who had any right to speak, and by a great many who had none. But nothing moved him. He knew nothing about business—he would do nothing in it. Why should he try what he could not do? And with these replies he baffled all the anxious counsellors who were so eager to convince him to the contrary. Then there were situations suggested, even provided, for him; but these were all subject to the same objections. Finally it came about that Jim Surtees did nothing. He had not been long enough at Cambridge to take his degree. He was modest about his own capacities even when pupils were suggested to him. He did not know enough to teach, he declared, till his modesty drove the anxious advisers distracted. What was to be done? Jim Surtees eluded every expedient to make him do anything. At last he dropped altogether, and the best people in Poolborough were conscious of his existence no more.

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These were the circumstances of the Surtees family when Dr. Barrère made their acquaintance. He thought for some time that the two ladies lived alone, and that their withdrawal from society was somewhat absurd, based as it was on that delusion about Mrs. Surtees' health; but a little further information made him change his mind. He changed his mind about several things, modifying his first impressions as time went on. He had thought the mother one of those imaginary invalids who enjoy that gentle level of ill-health which does not involve much suffering, and which furnishes a pretty and interesting *rôle* for many unoccupied women; and he had thought her daughter an angelic creature, whose faith in her mother's migraines was such that she cheerfully and sweetly gave up the pleasures of her youth in order to minister to them. But as Dr. Barrère changed from a doctor into a friend; as he began to ask admittance at times when he was not called for, and when, last seal of a growing intimacy, he began to venture to knock at the door in the evening after dinner—a privilege which he pleaded for as belonging to the habits of his French ancestry (of which he knew so little)—his eyes were speedily opened to many things which a morning visitor would never have divined. The first time he did so, he perceived to his astonishment Agnes on the landing, half concealed by the turn of the staircase, eagerly looking down to see who it was; and her mother, though so little able to move about, was at the door of the little drawing-room, looking flushed and wretched, far more ill than when he had been called in to prescribe for her. For whom was it that they were looking? It could not be for himself, whom nobody had expected, whom they received with a tremulous

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kindness, half relieved, half reluctant. After a few such visits he began to see that the minds of these poor ladies were divided between pleasure in his society and fear to have him there. If he stayed a little longer than usual he saw that they became anxious, the mother breathless, with a desire to have him go away; and that even Agnes would accompany him down stairs with an eager alacrity as if she could not be comfortable till she had seen him out of the house. And yet they were always kind, liked him to come, looked for him, even would say a word which showed that they had noted his absence if for a week or so he did not appear; although while he was there they were ever watchful, starting at every sound, hurrying him away if he stayed beyond his time. The sight of a tall figure lurching along the street, of some one fumbling with a latch-key, of which he was sometimes conscious as he went away, was scarcely necessary at last to make him aware what it was that occasioned this anxiety. Mrs. Surtees saw love dawning in the Doctor's eyes. She would not shut out from her patient girl the chances of a happier lot; but what if the doctor should meet Jim! See him coming home sodden and stupid, or noisy and gay. As Dr. Barrère became intimate they had spoken to him of Jim. He was studying hard, he was writing, he was always busy, he was not fond of society. There were so many reasons why he should never appear. And by and by the doctor, with a great ache of pity, had learned all these excuses by heart, and penetrated their secret, and misconstrued their actions and habits no more.

Finally the doctor made the acquaintance of Jim, and to his great surprise not only liked him, but understood why the mother and sister were not always miserable, how life varied with them from day to day, and how even Mrs. Surtees was often cheerful, though never unwatchful, never at ease. Dr. Barrère thought with justice that nothing could be more miserable, more inexcusable, than the life the young man was leading. In theory fate should have put into every honest hand a whip to scourge such a good-for-nothing. And sometimes the doctor felt a righteous wrath, a desire to scourge till the blood came: but it was not so much out of moral indignation as out of an exasperated liking, an intolerable pity. What might happen in the house in those awful moments when all was silent, and everybody at rest save the mother and sister watching for Jim's return at night, neither the doctor nor any one knew. But at other moments Dr. Barrère found it impossible to resist, any more than the women did, the charm of a nature which had not lost its distinction even in the haunts where he had lost everything else. He even tried to attract and draw to himself the prodigal, entertaining visions on the subject and fancying how, if there were a man closely connected with the family, himself to wit, Arnold Barrère, and not merely women who wept and reproached and condoned and wept again, but never made a determined stand, nor struck a decisive blow, there might still be hope for Jim. It could not be said that this told as a motive in the fervour with which he offered himself to Agnes Surtees. The doctor was in love warmly and honestly, and as he made his declaration thought, as a lover ought, of nothing but Agnes. Yet when she hesitated and faltered, and after a moment broke the long silence and spoke to him openly of her brother, there was the warmth of a personal desire in the eagerness with which he met her confessions half way. "Jim is no drawback," he said eagerly—"to me none. I can help you with Jim. If you will have me there shall be no question of depriving him of any love or care. He shall have me in addition to help him to better things." "Oh," Agnes had cried, giving him both her hands in the fervour of love and trust, "God bless you, Arnold, for speaking of better things for Jim." And it was on this holy ground that their contract was made. Henceforward there were no concealments from him.

Dr. Barrère was not a man to let the grass grow under his feet. There was no reason why his marriage should be delayed. He wanted to have his wife—a possession almost indispensable, he assured Mrs. Surtees, with a smile, to a medical man; and the mother, anxious to see one child's fate assured, and still more anxious, catching with feverish hope at the help so hopefully offered for the other, had no inclination to put obstacles in the way. The marriage day was settled, and all the preparations thereto begun, when the sudden horror which still envelopes the name of Surtees in Poolborough arose in a moment, and the following incidents occurred to Dr. Barrère.

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HE WAS going to visit a patient in a suburb one dark October night. But it could scarcely be called dark. There was a pallid moon somewhere among the clouds whitening the heavy mist that lay over the half-built environs of the town—dismal blank spaces—fields which were no longer fields, streets which were not yet streets. The atmosphere was charged with vapour, which in its turn was made into a dim, confusing whiteness by the hidden moon. Everybody knows how dismal are these outskirts of a great city. A house built here and there stood out with a sinister solidity against the blank around. New roads and streets laid out with indications of pavement, cut across the ravaged fields. Here and there was a mass of bricks, and there a pool of water. A piece of ragged hedgerow, a remnant of its earlier state, still bordered the highway here and there; a forlorn tree shedding its leaves at every breath of air stood at the corner where two ways met. Dr. Barrère was no ways timid, but he felt a chill of isolation and something like danger as he pushed his way towards one of the furthest points of the uncompleted road, where one house stood shivering in the vague damp and whiteness. He had to cross the other branching road, at the corner of which stood the shivering poplar, which shed its leaves as if with a perpetual shrinking of fear. There he was vaguely aware of something standing in the shade of the ragged hedgerow—a figure which moved as he passed, and seemed to make a step forward as if awaiting some one. To say that it was a figure he saw would be too distinct—he saw a movement, a something more solid than the mist, which detached itself as if with a suggestion of watchfulness, and immediately subsided again back into the shadows. Dr. Barrère, though he was not timid, felt the thrill as of a possible danger, the suggestion having something in it more moving than a distincter peril. But if there was a man lurking there waiting for some passer-by, it was not at least for him, and he walked quickly on, and presently in the interest of his patient, and in the many thoughts that hurry through every active brain, forgot the curious hint of mystery and danger which had for a moment excited his imagination.

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When he approached the spot again on his return, even the suggestion had died out of his mind. His eyesight and all his faculties were keen, as befits his profession, and he saw, without being aware that he was seeing, everything that came within his range of vision. Accordingly he perceived without paying any attention, the vague figure of a man crossing the opening of the road where the poplar marked the corner, coming towards him. He saw the solid speck in the white mist approaching—then in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, this vague silhouette in the night became a sudden swift scene of pantomimic tragedy, all done and over in a moment. A sudden movement took place in the scene; another something, almost less than a shadow, suddenly came into it from behind the poplar. No, these words are too strong. What came into the night was the sound of a crashing blow and a fall, and another figure, in a different position, standing over something prostrate, raining down, as in a fit of frantic passion, blow on blow. Passion, murder, horror, came in a second into the still confusion of the misty air. Then, swift as the sudden commotion, came a pause—a wild cry of consternation, as if for the first time the actor in this terrible momentary tragedy had become aware of what he was doing. The spectator's senses were so absorbed in the suddenness of the catastrophe that there was time enough for the whole drama to enact itself before he found voice. He had broken mechanically into a run, and thought that he called out. But it was not (it seemed to him in the hurried progression of ideas) his cry or the sound of his approach, but a sudden horror which had seized the man (was he a murderer?), who had in a moment come to himself. When the doctor at full speed, and calling out mechanically, automatically, for Help! help! reached the spot where the prostrate figure was lying, the other had taken flight down the cross road and was already invisible in the distance. The doctor's first care was for the victim. He was not an avenger of blood, but a healer of men.

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Presently there appeared around him two or three startled people—one from the nearest house carrying a small lamp, which

made the strangest, weird appearance in the misty night; a passer-by on his way home; a vagrant from the deserted fields. They helped the doctor to turn over the murdered man, who was still living, but no more, and who, it was evident to Dr. Barrère's experienced eyes, was on the point of death and beyond all human help. The lamp had been placed on the ground close by, and sent up an odour of paraffin along with the yellow rays that proceeded from its globe of light, and the figures kneeling and bending over the inanimate thing in the midst looked more like a group of murderers than people bringing help and succour. Some time had elapsed before the means of transporting him even to the nearest house had been procured, and by that time there was no longer any question of what could be done on his behalf, and all that was possible was to carry away the body. Dr. Barrère walked beside the melancholy convoy to the nearest police station, where he made his deposition; and then he went home in all the tremor of excitement and mental commotion. He had fortunately no visits to pay that evening of any importance; but he was too much stirred and troubled to remain quietly at home, and after a while hurried out to Agnes, his natural confidant, to tell her all about the shock he had received. It struck him with surprise to see, when he entered the little drawing-room, that Jim was with his mother and sister. It was a thing that had very seldom happened before. He sat apart from them at the writing-table, where he was writing, or making believe to write, letters. The sight of him struck Dr. Barrère with a certain surprise, but he could not have told why. There was no reason why he should not be found in his mother's drawing-room. It was true that he was rarely to be seen there, but yet sometimes he would make his appearance. This evening he had dressed for dinner, which was still more unusual: perhaps he was going out to some late evening party; perhaps some one had been expected to dinner. These thoughts flew vaguely through Dr. Barrère's mind, he could not have told why. There was no particular reason why he should thus desire to penetrate the motives of Jim Surtees' behaviour, or to explain to himself why the young man was there. The speculation passed through his head without thought, if such an expression may be used, without any volition of his, as half our thoughts do, like the chance flight of birds or butterflies across the air. They did not detain him a moment as he came forward with his greetings, and met the pleased surprise of the reception which the ladies gave him, "I thought it was too late to look for you," his Agnes said, with a brightening of all the soft lines of her face, as if the sun had risen upon a landscape. And then, as it was cold, a chair was drawn for him near the fire. "You have been kept late on your round to-night," said Mrs. Surtees. "Have you any very anxious case?"

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"It is no case that has kept me," said the doctor. "I have had a dreadful encounter in the road. You know that district up beyond St. George's-in-the-fields—those half-built, desolate villas and cottages. The roads are as lonely as if they were in the middle of a wood. A new quarter by night is as bad as a bare moor."

Agnes stood listening with her hand on the back of his chair, but still a smile upon her face—the smile of pleasure at his coming. Mrs. Surtees had let her knitting fall upon her lap, and was looking at him, listening with pleased interest. They had not perceived the agitation which, indeed, until he began to speak, he had managed to suppress. "And what happened?" Mrs. Surtees said.

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"I have been," he answered, his voice breaking in spite of himself, "the witness of a murder."

"Good heavens!" The ladies were too much startled to put another question except with their eager eyes. They drew closer to him; the hand of Agnes glided to his shoulder from the back of his chair. What she thought first was that his emotion did honour to him.

Then he described to them briefly what he had seen—the lurking figure in the shadow which had alarmed himself as he passed first, but which he soon perceived had no hostile intentions towards him; the appearance of the man approaching from the opposite direction as he returned; the sudden assault; the rapid, breathless, horrible suddenness of the tragedy. The ladies hung upon his lips, making exclamations of horror. It was not till afterwards that Dr. Barrère became aware that the young man at the table behind made no sign, said not a word. He had told everything, and answered half a dozen hurried, faltering questions before Jim made any remark. Then he suddenly stirred behind backs (the group at the fireside having

forgotten his presence) and asked, "What are you talking about? What's happened?" in a deep, half growling voice, as of a man disturbed in his occupation by some fuss of which he did not grasp the meaning.

"Oh," said Mrs. Surtees wiping her moist eyes, "did you not hear, Jim? The doctor has seen a murder committed. God preserve us! I feel as if I had seen it myself. A dreadful thing like that coming so near us! It is as if we were mixed up in it," she said.

"A murder? Are you sure it was a murder? It might be nothing more than a quarrel—how could you tell in the dark?" said Jim, always in the same gruff, almost indignant voice.

"If you had seen it as I did you would have been in no doubt," said Dr. Barrère, turning half round, and catching a side view of the tall figure slouching with hands in his pockets, his face clouded with a scowl of displeasure, his shoulders up to his ears. This silhouette against the light gave him a thrill, he scarcely knew why. He paused for a moment, and then added, "After all you may be right; it was murder to all intents and purpose—but whether it was intended to be so there may be a doubt."

"You are always so ready to come to tragical conclusions," said Jim in easier tones. "I dare say it will turn out to have been a quarrel, and no more."

"A quarrel in which one is killed is apt to look like murder."

These words gave them all a shivering sensation. Even Jim's shoulders went up to his ears as if he shared the involuntary shudder—and Mrs. Surtees said again, drying her eyes, "It is as if we were mixed up in it. Poor man, poor man, cut off in a moment, without a thought!"

"It appears that he is a well known and very bad character," said Dr. Barrère. "I feel almost more sorry for the poor wretch that did it. The cry he gave when he saw what he had done still rings in my ears."

"Then you think he did not mean it, Arnold?"

"God knows! You would have said he meant everything that passion and rage could mean to see the blows; but that cry—"

"He repented, perhaps—when it was too late."

"It was horror—it was consternation. It was the cry of a man who suddenly saw what he had done."

There was a pause of sympathetic horror and pity. Then Jim Surtees went back to the writing-table, and Dr. Barrère continued his conversation with the ladies, which, however they tried to break into other and happier subjects, returned again and again to the terrible scene from which he had just come. They spoke in low tones together over the fire—the doctor recounting over and over again the feelings with which he had contemplated the extraordinary, sudden tragedy, the rapidity with which all its incidents followed each other, leaving him scarcely time to cry out before all was over. He was naturally full of it, and could speak of nothing else, and his betrothed and her mother, always sympathetic, threw themselves entirely into the excitement which still possessed him. It was late when he rose to go away, soothed and calmed, and with a sense of having at last exhausted the incident. It startled him as he turned round, after taking leave of Mrs. Surtees, to see that Jim was still there. And the aspect of the young man was sufficiently remarkable. The candles on the writing-table behind which he sat had burned low. They had escaped from the little red shades which had been placed over them, and were flaring low, like a level sun in the evening, upon the figure behind, which, with his head bowed in his hands and shoulders up to his ears, seemed unconscious of all that was passing. Jim neither saw nor heard the doctor move. He was absorbed in some all-important matter of his own.

Next day Dr. Barrère was still deeply occupied by the scene he had seen. He was summoned for the coroner's inquest, and he was, as was natural, questioned by everybody he met upon a subject which was in all men's mouths. It was equally natural that he should return next evening to bring the account of all the encounters he had gone through and all that was news on the subject to Agnes and her mother. Once more he noted with surprise that Jim was in the drawing-room. Was he turning over a new leaf? Had he seen the folly of his ways at last?

They were sitting as before over the fire, Dr. Barrère telling his story, the ladies listening with absorbed attention. The interest of

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this terrible tragedy which had taken place almost within their kin, which they were seeing through his eyes, was absorbing to them. They wanted to know everything, the most minute details, what questions had been asked him, and what he had replied. Jim was still behind backs at the writing-table with the two candles in their red shades, which did not betray his face, but threw a strange light upon his hands and the occupation in which he seemed to be absorbed. He was playing an old-fashioned game with small colored glass balls on a round board, called solitaire in the days when it was in fashion. The little tinkle of the balls as he placed them in the necessary order came in during the pauses in the talk like a faint accompaniment. But no one looked at him: they were too much absorbed in Dr. Barrère's report.

"And are you the only witness, Arnold?" Agnes asked.

"The only one who saw the deed done," he said. "It is very rarely that there is even one witness to the actual fact of a murder. But there is other evidence than mine; the man is supposed to have been seen by various people, and there is a dumb witness of the first importance, the stick which he must have thrown away, or which dropped from his hand in the horror, as I shall always believe of his discovery of what he had done."

At this point there was a ring as of the glass balls all tinkling together on the board. The doctor turned round, slightly startled in the high tension of his nerves, and saw that Jim had upset his plaything, and that the balls were rolling about the table. But this was far from being an unusual accident in the game, and neither Mrs. Surtees nor Agnes took any notice, their nerves were not strained as Dr. Barrère's had been. The mother spoke low with a natural thrill of horror and pity. "And is it known," she said, "is it known to whom the stick belongs?"

Before Dr. Barrère could reply there came a knock to the door—a knock not at the door of the room in which they sat, but below at the street door, a thing unusual indeed at that hour, but not so startling in general as to excite or alarm them.

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But perhaps all their nerves were affected more or less. It was very sudden and sharp, and came into the calm domestic atmosphere with a scarcely comprehensible shock. They all turned round, and Jim, the doctor saw, had suddenly risen up, and stood with his face turned towards the door. The summons rang through the silence with an effect altogether out of keeping with its simplicity.

"Who can that be so late," said Mrs. Surtees. "Jim, will you go and see?"

"It must be some one for me," the doctor said.

"Poor Arnold! I hope it is someone near," said Agnes faltering—for neither of them believed what they said. It was something terrible, something novel, some startling new event whatever it was. Jim, instead of doing as his mother wished, sat down again behind the writing-table, within the shelter of the red shades on the candles, and they all waited, scarcely venturing to draw breath. Presently the neat parlor-maid, pale, too, and with a visible tremor, opened the door. She said, with a troubled look at her mistress, that, "Please, there was some one down stairs who wanted to speak to Mr. Jim." Mrs. Surtees was the last to be moved by the general agitation. She said, "For Mr. Jim? But let him come up, Ellen. Jim, you had better ask your friend to come upstairs."

Once more there was a terrible, incomprehensible pause. Jim, who had fallen rather than re-seated himself on the sofa which stood behind the writing-table, said not a word; his face was not visible behind the shaded lights. Mrs. Surtees threw a glance round her—a troubled appeal for she knew not what enlightenment. Then she said breathlessly, "What has happened? What is the matter? Who is it? Ellen, you will show the gentleman up stairs."

Heavens! How they stood listening, panic stricken, not knowing what they were afraid of, nor what there was to fear. Mrs. Surtees still kept her seat tremulously, and Jim, lost in the corner of the sofa, suddenly extinguished the candles—an act which they all seemed to approve and understand without knowing why. And then there came a heavy foot ascending the stairs. Mrs. Surtees did not know the man who came in—a tall soldierly man with a clear and healthful countenance. It even gave her a momentary sensation of comfort to see that Jim's "friend" was no blear-eyed young rake, but a person so respectable. She rose to meet him with her old-

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fashioned courtesy. "Though I have not the pleasure of knowing you," she said with a smile, which was tremulous by reason of that causeless agitation, "my son's friends are always welcome." Oh heaven above! her son's friend! Dr. Barrère was the only one among them who knew the man. The sight of him cleared the whole matter in a moment, and shed a horrible light over everything to the doctor's eyes. He made a sudden sign to the newcomer imploring silence.

"I know this gentleman, too, Mrs. Surtees," he said, "he is one of my—friends, also. Would it be taking a great liberty if I were to ask you to leave us for a few minutes the use of this room? Agnes, it is a great intrusion—but—for God's sake take her away!" he said in his betrothed's ear.

Mrs. Surtees looked at him with some surprise and an air of gentle dignity not entirely without offence. "My dear," she said to Agnes, "Dr. Barrère would not ask such a thing without good reasons for it, so let us go." She was not a woman who had been accustomed to take the lead even in her own family, and she was glad, glad beyond description, to believe that the business, whatever it was, was Dr. Barrère's business, and not—anything else. She accepted it with a trembling sense of relief, yet a feeling that the doctor was perhaps taking a little too much upon him, turning her out of her own room.

The two men stood looking at each other as the ladies went away, with Jim still huddled in the corner of the sofa, in the shade, making no sign. Dr. Barrère saw, however, that the stranger, with a glance round of keen, much-practised eyes, had at once seen him, and placed himself between Jim and the door. When the ladies had disappeared the doctor spoke quickly. "Well," he said, "what is it, Morton? Some new information?"

"Something I regret as much as any one can, Dr. Barrère. I have to ask Mr. Surtees to come with me. There need be no exposure for the moment: but I must take him without delay."

"Take him!" The doctor made a last effort to appear not to perceive. He said, "Have you too seen something, then? Have you further evidence to give, Jim?"

There was no reply. Neither did the superintendent say a word. They stood all three silent. Jim had risen up; his limbs seemed unable to support him. He stood leaning on the table, looking out blankly over the two extinguished candles and their red shades. The officer went up and laid his hand lightly upon the young man's shoulder. "Come," he said, "you know what I'm here for: and I'm sorry, very sorry for you, Mr. Jim: but no doubt you'll be able to make it all clear."

"Barrère," said Jim, struggling against the dryness in his throat, "you can prove that I have not been out of the house—that I was at home all last night. I couldn't—I couldn't, you know, be in two places at one time—could I, Barrère?"

"Mr. Jim, you must remember that whatever you say now will tell against you at the trial. I take you to witness, doctor, that I haven't even told him what it was for."

Jim ground out an oath from between his clenched teeth. "Do I need to ask?" he said. "Doesn't everybody know I hated him—and good reason too—hated him and threatened him—but, God help me, not to kill him!" cried the young man with a voice of despair.

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CHAPTER III.

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DR. BARRÈRE was left to break the news to the mother and daughter. He never knew how he accomplished this dreadful office. They came back when they heard the door shut, evidently not expecting to find him, believing that he had withdrawn with his "friend"—and the anxious, searching eyes with which his Agnes looked around the room, the mingled terror and pleasure of her look on discovering him, never faded from his mind. Mrs. Surtees was more disappointed than pleased. She said, with an evident sudden awakening of anxiety, "Where is Jim?" And then he had to tell them. How did he find words to do it? But the wonderful thing, the dreadful thing, was that after the shock of the first

intimation there seemed little surprise in the looks of these poor ladies. The mother sank down in her chair and hid her face in her hands, and Agnes stood behind her mother, throwing her arms round her, pressing that bowed head against her breast. They did not cry out indignantly that it was not—could not be true. They were silent, like those upon whom something long looked for had come at last. The doctor left them after a while with a chill in his very soul. He could say nothing; he could not attempt to console them in the awful silence which seemed to have fallen upon them. Agnes tried to smile as he went away—tried with her trembling lips to say something. But she could not conceal from him that she wished him to go, that he could give no comfort, that the best thing he could do for them in their misery was to leave them alone. He went home very miserable in that consciousness of being put aside, and allowed no share in the anguish of the woman whom he loved. It was intolerable to him; it was unjust. He said to himself as he walked along that the tacit abandonment of Jim, the absence of all protest on their part that his guilt was impossible—a protest which surely a mother and sister in any circumstances ought to have made—was hard, was unjust. If all the world condemned him, yet they should not have condemned him. He took Jim's part hotly, feeling that he was a fellow sufferer. Even were he dissipated and reckless, poor fellow, there was a long, long way between that and murder. Murder! There was nothing in Jim which could make it possible that he could have to do with a murder. If he was hasty in temper, poor fellow, his nature was sweet, notwithstanding all his errors. Even he, Arnold Barrère, a man contemptuous of the manner of folly which had ruined Jim, a man with whom wrath and revenge might have awakened more sympathy—even he had come to have a tenderness for the erring young man. And to think that Jim could have lain in wait for any one, could have taken a man at a disadvantage, was, he declared to himself with indignation, impossible. It was impossible! though the two women who were nearest to him—his mother and his sister—did not say so, did not stand up in vindication of the unhappy youth.

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When he had exhausted this natural indignation Dr. Barrère began to contemplate the situation more calmly, and to arrange its incidents in his mind. The horror of the thought that he was himself the chief witness affected him little at first, for it was to the fact only that he could speak, and the culprit, so far as he was concerned, was without identity, a shadow in the night, and no more. But a chill came over that flush of indignant partisanship with which he had made a mental stand for Jim when the other circumstances flashed upon him. He remembered his own surprise to find Jim in the drawing-room when he arrived at Mrs. Surtees' house; to see his dress so unusual, though scarcely more unusual than the fact of his being there. He remembered how the young man held aloof, how the candles had flared upon him neglected. The little scene came before Dr. Barrère like a picture—the candle shades standing up in a ludicrous neglect, the light flaring under them upon Jim's face. And then again, to-night: the senseless game with which he seemed to amuse himself; the tremble of his hands over the plaything; his absence of interest in the matter which was so exciting to the others. Why was Jim there at all? Why did he ask no question? Why keep behind unexcited, unsurprised, while the doctor told his story? And then the reason thrust itself upon him in Jim's own words—"I couldn't be in two places at once, could I? You can prove that I was here last night." Good God, what did it mean? Jim—Jim!—and his mother and sister, who had sunk into despair without a word, who had never said as women ought, "We know him better; it is not true—it is not true."

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Dr. Barrère went home more wretched than words can say. Hard and terrible is an unjust accusation; but oh, how easy, how sweet, how possible, is even the shame which is undeserved! A century of that is as nothing in comparison with a day or hour of that which is merited—of the horror which is true. He tried to hope still that it was not true; but he felt coming over him like a pall, the terror which he could now perceive had quenched the very hearts in the bosoms of the two women who were Jim's natural defenders. They had not been able to say a word—and neither could he. Dr. Barrère stood still in the middle of the dark street with the damp wind blowing in his face as all this came before him. A solitary passer-by looked round surprised, and looked again, thinking the man was mad. He saw in a moment as by a revelation, all that was before

them—and himself. The horrible notoriety, the disgrace, the endless stigma. It would crush *them* and tear their lives asunder: but for him also, would not that be ruin too?

CHAPTER IV.

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THE trial took place after a considerable interval, for the assizes were just over when the man was killed. In that dreadful time of suspense and misery proof after proof accumulated slowly with a gradual drawing together as of the very web of fate. The stick which was found by the body of the murdered man was Jim's stick, with his initials upon it, in a silver band—alas, his mother's gift. He was proved to have had a desperate quarrel with the man, who was one of those who had corrupted and misled him. Then the *alibi* which had seemed at first so strong disappeared into worse than nothing when examined: for Jim had been seen on his flight home; he had been seen to enter furtively and noiselessly into his mother's house, though the servants were ready to swear that he had not gone out that night; and all the precautions he had taken, instead of bringing him safety, only made his position worse, being shown to be precautions consciously taken against a danger foreseen. All these things grew into certainty before the trial; so that it was all a foregone conclusion in the minds of the townspeople, some of whom yielded to the conviction with heartfelt pity, and some with an eager improving of the situation, pointing out to what horrible conclusions vice was sure to come.

Meanwhile this strange and horrible event, which had held the town for more than nine days in wonder and perturbation, and which had given a moral to many a tale, and point to many a sermon, held one little circle of unhappy creatures as in a ring of iron—unable to get away from it, unable to forget it, their hearts, their hopes, their life itself, marked forever with its trace of blood. The two ladies had roused themselves from their first stupor into a half fictitious adoption of their natural *rôle* as defenders of Jim. God knows through how many shocks and horrors of discovery Jim had led them, making something new, something worse, always the thing to be expected, before they had come to that pitch that their hearts had no power to make any protest at all. But when the morning rose upon their troubled souls they began to say to each other that it could not be true. It could not be true! Jim had now and then an *accès* of sudden rage, but he was the kind of man of whom it is said that he would not hurt a fly. How could it be possible that he would do a murder? It was not possible; any other kind of evil thing—but not that, oh, not that! They said this to each other when they rose up from the uneasy bed in which mother and daughter had lain down together, not able to separate from each other—though those rules of use and wont which are so strong on women made them lie down as if to sleep, where no sleep was. But when the light came—that awful light which brings back common life to us on the morning after a great calamity—they looked into each other's pale faces, and with one voice said, "Oh no, no, it cannot be!" "Mother," cried Agnes, "he would not hurt a fly. Oh, how kind he was when I was ill, when you had your accident—do you remember?" Who does not know what these words are—Do you remember? All that he was who is dead; all that he might have been who is lost; all the hopes, the happy prospects, the cheerful days before trouble came. No words more poignant can be said. They did not need to ask each other what they remembered—that was enough. They clasped each other, and kissed with trembling lips, and then Agnes rose, bidding her mother rest, and went to fetch her the woman's cordial, the cup of tea—which is so often all one poor female creature can offer to another by way of help.

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No, no, he could not have done it! They took a little comfort for the moment. And another strange comfort they took in a thing which was one of the most damning pieces of evidence against Jim: which was that he had quarreled violently with the murdered man and denounced him, and declared hatred and everlasting enmity against him. The story of the quarrel as it was told to them brought tears, which were almost tears of joy, to Mrs. Surtees' eyes. The man who had been killed was one of those adventurers who haunt the outskirts of society wherever there are victims to be found. He

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had preyed upon the lives and souls of young men in Poolborough since the days when Jim Surtees was an innocent and credulous boy. It was not this man's fault that Jim had gone astray, for Jim, alas, was all ready for his fall, and eager after everything that was forbidden; but in the fits of remorse and misery which sometimes came upon him it was perhaps no wonder if he laid it at Langton's door; and that the mother should have held Langton responsible, who could wonder? The facts of the quarrel were as so many nails in Jim's coffin: but God help the poor woman, they gave consolation to his mother's heart. They meant repentance, she thought, they meant generosity and a pathetic indignation, and more, they meant succour; for the quarrel had arisen over an unfortunate youth whom the blackleg was throwing his toils around as he had thrown them around Jim, and whom Mrs. Surtees believed Jim had saved by exposing the villain. The story was told reluctantly, delicately, to the poor ladies, as almost sealing Jim's fate: and to the consternation of the narrator, who was struck dumb, and could only stare at them in a kind of stupor of astonishment, they looked at each other and broke forth into cries at first inarticulate which were almost cries of joy. "You do not see the bearing of it, I fear," said the solicitor who had the management of the case, as soon as out of his astonishment he had recovered his voice. "Oh sir," cried Mrs. Surtees, "what I see is this, that my boy has saved another poor woman's son, God bless him! and that will not be forgotten, that will not be forgotten!" This gentleman withdrew in a state of speechless consternation. "No, it will not be forgotten," he said to Dr. Barrère. "I think the poor lady has gone out of her senses, and little wonder. It is a piece of evidence which we can never get over." Dr. Barrère shook his head, not understanding the women much better than the lawyer did. This gave them consolation, and yet it was the seal of Jim's fate.

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Dr. Barrère himself in the long period of waiting was a most unhappy man. He stood by the Surtees nobly, everybody said. No son could have been more attentive than he was to the poor mother who was entirely broken by this blow, and had suddenly become an old woman. And he never wavered in his faith and loyalty to Agnes, who but for that noble fidelity would, everybody said, have been the most of all to be pitied. For Agnes was young, and had all her life before her, with the stain of this crime upon her name; and if her lover had not stood by her what would have become of her? The people who had been doubtful of Dr. Barrère, as half a Frenchman, as too great a theorist, as a man who had not been quite successful in his outset, began now to look upon him with increased respect, and his firmness, his high honour, his disinterestedness were commented upon on all sides. But in his heart the doctor was far from happy. His life, too, seemed in question as well as Jim's. If the worst came to the worst, he asked himself, would society, however sympathetic for the moment, receive the family of a man who had been hanged—horrible words!—without prejudice? Would there not be a stigma upon the name of Surtees, and even upon the name of him who had given his own as a shield to the family of the murderer? He did his duty—no man more truly. He loved his Agnes with all the warmth of an honest heart, taking his share of all her trouble, supporting her through everything, making himself for her sake the brother of a criminal, and one of the objects of popular curiosity and pity. All this he did from day to day, and went on doing it: but still there were struggles and dreadful misgivings in Dr. Barrère's heart. He was a proud man, and except for what he made by his profession a poor one. If that failed him he had nothing else to fall back upon, and he already knew the misery of unsuccess. He knew what it was to see his practice wasting away, to see his former patients pass by shamefacedly, conscious of having transferred their ailments and themselves to other hands, to be put aside for no expressed reason out of the tide of life. At Poolborough he had begun to forget the experiences of his beginning, and to feel that at last he had got hold of the thread which would lead him if not to fortune, at least to comfort and the certainties of an established course of living. Would this last? he asked himself. Would it make no difference to him if he identified himself with ruin—ruin so hideous and complete? The question was a terrible one, and brought the sweat to his brow when in chance moments, between his visits and his cases, between the occupations and thoughts which absorbed him, now and then, suddenly, in spite of all the pains he took, it would start up and look him in the face. "He had a brother who was hanged," that was what people would say; they would not even after

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a little lapse of time pause to recollect that it was his wife's brother. The brand would go with them wherever he went. "You remember the great murder case in Poolborough? Well, these were the people, and the brother was hanged." These words seemed to detach themselves and float in the air. He said them to himself sometimes, or rather they were said in his ear, without anything else to connect them. The phrase seemed already a common phrase which any one might use—"The brother was hanged." And then cold drops of moisture would come out upon his forehead. And all the possibilities of life, the success which is dear to a man, the advancement of which he knew himself capable—was it all to go? Was he to be driven back once more to that everlasting re-commencement which makes the heart of a man sick?

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These thoughts accompanied Dr. Barrère as he went and came, a son, and more than a son, to Mrs. Surtees, and to Agnes the most faithful, the most sympathetic of lovers. At such a moment, and in face of the awful catastrophe which had come upon them, any talk of marriage would have been out of place. He had, indeed, suggested it at first in mingled alarm and desperation, and true desire to do his best, in the first impulse of overwhelming sympathy, and at the same time in the first glimpse of all that might follow, and sickening horror of self-distrust lest his resolution might give way. He would have fled from himself, from all risks of this nature into the safety of a bond which he could not break. But Agnes had silently negatived the proposal with a shake of her head and a smile of pathetic tenderness. She, too, had thoughts of the future, of which she breathed no word to any one, not even to her mother. All that was in his mind as subject of alarm and misgiving was reflected, with that double clearness and vivification which is given to everything reflected in the clear flowing of a river, in the mind of Agnes. She saw all with the distinctness of one to whom the sacrifice of herself was nothing when compared with the welfare of those she loved. He was afraid lest these alarms might bring him into temptation, and the temptation be above his strength; and his soul was disturbed and made miserable. But to Agnes the matter took another aspect. All that he foresaw she foresaw, but the thought brought neither disturbance nor fear. It brought the exaltation of a great purpose—the solemn joy of approaching martyrdom. Arnold should never suffer for her. It was she who would have the better part and suffer for him.

The dreadful fact that it was Dr. Barrère only who had witnessed the murder, and that he would have to speak and prove what he had seen, became more and more apparent to them all as the time drew on. His description of the blows that had been rained down wildly on the victim, and of the lurking figure in the shadow whom he had noted, as he passed the first time, took away all hope that it might be supposed the act of a momentary madness without premeditation. The doctor had told his story with all the precision that was natural to him before he knew who it was that would be convicted by it; and now it was no longer possible for him, even had his conscience permitted it, to soften the details which he had at first given so clearly, or to throw any mist upon his clear narrative. He had to repeat it all, knowing the fatal effect it must have, standing up with Jim's pale face before him, with a knowledge that somewhere in a dim corner Agnes sat with bowed head listening—to what she already knew so well. The doctor's countenance was as pale as Jim's. His mouth grew dry as he bore his testimony; but not all the terrible consequences could make him alter a word. He could scarcely refrain a groan, a sob, when he had done; and this involuntary evidence of what it cost him to tell the truth increased the effect in the highest degree, as the evidence of an unwilling witness always does. There was but one point in which he could help the prisoner; and fortunately that too had been a special point in his previous evidence: but it was not until Dr. Barrère got into the hands of Jim's advocate that this was brought out. "I see," the counsel said, "that in your previous examination you speak of a cry uttered by the assailant after the blows which you have described. You describe it as a cry of horror. In what sense do you mean this to be understood?"

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"I mean," said Dr. Barrère very pointedly and clearly—and if there had been any divided attention in the crowded court where so many people had come to hear the fate of one whom they had known from his childhood, every mind was roused now, and every eye intent upon the speaker—"I mean—" He paused to give fuller

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force to what he said.

"I mean that the man who struck those blows for the first time realised what he was doing. The cry was one of consternation and dismay. It was the cry of a man horrified to see what he had done."

"The cry was so remarkable that it made a great impression on your mind?"

"A very great impression. I do not think I have ever heard an utterance which affected me so much."

"You were hurrying forward at the time to interpose in the scuffle. Did you distinguish any words? Did you recognise the voice?"

"It would give an erroneous impression to say that I meant to interpose in the scuffle. There was no scuffle. The man fell at once. He never had a chance of defending himself. I did not recognise the voice, nor can I say that any words were used. It was nothing but a cry."

"The cry, however, was of such a nature as to induce you to change your mind in respect to what had occurred?"

"I had no time to form any theory. The impression it produced on my mind was that an assault was intended, but not murder; and that all at once it had become apparent to the unfortunate—" Here the doctor paused, and there was a deep sobbing breath of intense attention drawn by the crowd. He stopped for a minute, and then resumed, "It had become apparent to the—assailant that he had—gone too far; that the consequences were more terrible than he had intended. He threw down what he had in his hand, and fled in horror."

"You were convinced, then, that there was no murderous intention in the act of the unfortunate—as you have well said—assailant?"

"That was my conviction," said Dr. Barrère.

The effect made upon the assembly was great. And though it was no doubt diminished more or less by the cross-examination of the counsel for the prosecution, who protested vehemently against the epithet of unfortunate applied to the man who had attacked in the dark another man who was proceeding quietly about his own business, who had lain in wait for him and assaulted him murderously with every evidence of premeditation, it still remained the strongest point in the defence. "You say that you had no time to form any theory?" said the prosecutor; "yet you have told us that you rushed forward calling out murder. Was this before or after you heard the cry, so full of meaning, which you have described?"

"It was probably almost at the same moment," said Dr. Barrère.

"Yet, even in the act of crying out murder, you were capable of noticing all the complicated sentiments which you now tell us were in the assailant's cry!"

"In great excitement one takes no notice of the passage of time—a minute contains as much as an hour."

"And you expect us to believe that in that minute, and without the help of words, you were enlightened as to the meaning of the act by a mere inarticulate cry?"

"I tell you the impression produced on my mind, as I told it at the coroner's inquest," said Dr. Barrère, steadily; "as I have told it to my friends from the first."

"Yet this did not prevent you from shouting murder?"

"No; it did not prevent me from calling for help in the usual way."

This was all that could be made of the doctor. It remained the strongest point in poor Jim's favour, who was, as everybody saw to be inevitable, condemned; yet recommended to mercy because of what Dr. Barrère had said. Otherwise there were many features in the case that roused the popular pity. The bad character of the man who had been killed, the evil influence he was known to have exercised, the injury he had done to Jim himself and to so many others, and the very cause of the quarrel in which Jim had threatened and announced his intention of punishing him—all these things, had Jim been tried in France, would have produced a verdict modified by extenuating circumstances. In England it did not touch the decision, but it produced that vague recommendation to mercy with which pity satisfies itself when it can do no more.

Dr. Barrère took the unfortunate mother and sister home. Mrs. Surtees, broken as she was, could not be absent from the court

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when her son's fate was to be determined. She was as one stricken dumb as they took her back. Now and then she would put her trembling hands to her eyes as if expecting tears which did not come. Her very heart and soul were crushed by the awful doom which had been spoken. And the others did not even dare to exchange a look. The horror which enveloped them was too terrible for speech. It was only after an interval had passed, and life, indomitable life which always rises again whatever may be the anguish that subdues it for a moment, had returned in pain and fear to its struggle with the intolerable, that words and the power of communication returned. Then Dr. Barrère told the broken-hearted women that both he himself and others in the town who knew Jim, with all the influence that could be brought to bear, would work for a revision of the sentence. It was upon his own evidence that the hopes which those who were not so deeply, tremendously interested, but who regarded the case with an impartial eye, began to entertain, were founded. "I hope that the Home Secretary may send for me," he said; "they think he will. God grant it!" He too had worked himself into a kind of hope.

"Oh," said Agnes, melting for the first time into tears at the touch of a possible deliverance, "if we could go, as they used to do, to the Queen, his mother and his sister, on our knees!"

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Mrs. Surtees sat and listened to them with her immovable face of misery. "Don't speak to me of hope, for I cannot bear it," she said. "Oh, don't speak of hope; there is none—none! Nothing but death and shame."

"Yes, mother," said Dr. Barrère, and he added under his breath, "whatever happens—whatever happens—there shall be no death of shame."

CHAPTER V.

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THE recommendation to mercy was very strong; almost all the principal people in the town interested themselves, and the judge himself had been persuaded to add a potent word; but as he did so he shook his head, and told the petitioners that their arguments were all sentimental. "What does your lordship say then to the doctor's testimony?" was asked him, upon which he shook his head more and more. "The doctor's testimony, above all," he said. "Mind you, I think that probably the doctor was right, but it is not a solid argument, it is all sentiment; and that is what the Home Office makes no account of." This was very discouraging. But still there was a certain enthusiasm in the town in Jim's favour, as well as a natural horror that one who really belonged (if he had kept his position) to the best class, should come to such an end; and the chief people who got up this recommendation to mercy were warm supporters of the Government. That, too, they felt convinced must tell for something. And there reigned in Poolborough a certain hope which Dr. Barrère sometimes shared.

Sometimes; for on many occasions he took the darker view—the view so universal and generally received, that the more important it is for you that a certain thing should come to pass, the more you desire it, the less likely it is to happen. And then he would ask himself was it so important that it should come to pass? At the best it was still true that Jim had killed this man. If he were not hanged for it he would be imprisoned for life; and whether it is worse to have a relative who has been hanged for a crime or one who is lingering out a long term of imprisonment for it, it is hard to tell. There did not seem much to choose between them. Perhaps even the hanging would be forgotten soonest—and it would be less of a burden. For to think of a brother in prison, who might emerge years hence with a ticket-of-leave, a disgraced and degraded man, was something terrible. Perhaps on the whole it would be best that he should die. And then Dr. Barrère shuddered. Die! Ah! if that might be, quietly, without demonstration. But as it was—And then he would begin again, against his will, that painful circle of thought—"the brother was hanged." That was what people would say. After the horror of it had died out fantastic patients would cry, "The brother of a man who was hanged! Oh, no! don't let us call in such a

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person." The ladies would say this: they would shudder yet perhaps even laugh, for the pity would be forgotten, even the horror would be forgotten, and there would remain only this suggestion of discomfort—just enough to make the women feel that they would not like to have him, the brother of a man who was hanged, for their doctor. Dr. Barrère tried all he could to escape from this circle of fatal thought; but however hard he worked, and however much he occupied himself, he could not do so always. And the thought went near sometimes to make him mad.

He had, however, much to occupy him, to keep thought away. He was the only element of comfort in the life of the two miserable women who lived under the shadow of death, their minds entirely absorbed in the approaching catastrophe, living through it a hundred times in anticipation, in despair which was made more ghastly and sickening by a flicker of terrible hope. Mrs. Surtees said that she had no hope; she would not allow the possibility to be named; but secretly dwelt upon it with an intensity of suspense which was more unendurable than any calamity. And when Agnes and her lover were alone this was the subject that occupied them to the exclusion of all others. Their own hopes and prospects were all blotted out as if they had never been. He brought her reports of what was said, and what was thought on the subject among the people who had influence, those who were straining every nerve to obtain a reprieve: and she hung upon his words breathless with an all-absorbing interest. He never got beyond the awful shadow, or could forget it, and went about all day with that cloud hanging over him, and frightened his patients with his stern and serious looks. "Dr. Barrère is not an encouraging doctor," they began to say, "he makes you think you are going to die;" for the sick people could not divest themselves of the idea that it was their complaints that were foremost in the doctor's mind and produced that severity in his looks.

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But all this was light and easy to the last of the many occupations which filled Dr. Barrère's time and thoughts, and that was Jim—Jim alone in his prison, he who never had been alone, who had been surrounded all day long with his companions—the companions who had led him astray. No, they had not led him astray. Langton, who was dead, whom he had killed, had not led him astray, though he now thought so, or said so, bemoaning himself. Such a thing would be too heavy a burden for any human spirit. A man cannot ruin any more than he can save his brother. His own inclinations, his own will, his love for the forbidden, his idle wishes and follies—these were what had led him astray. And now he was left alone to think of all that, with the shadow before him of a hideous death at a fixed moment—a moment drawing nearer and nearer, which he could no more escape than he could forget it. Jim had many good qualities amid his evil ones. He was not a bad man; his sins were rather those of a foolish, self-indulgent boy. His character was that of a boy. A certain innocency, if that word may be used, lay under the surface of his vices, and long confinement away from all temptation had wrought a change in him like that that came over the leper in the Scriptures, whose flesh came again as the flesh of a little child. This was what happened to Jim, both bodily and mentally. He languished in health from his confinement, but yet his eyes regained the clearness of his youth, and his mind, all its ingenuousness, its power of affection. Lying under sentence of death he became once more the lovable human creature, the winning and attractive youth he had been in the days before trouble came. All clouds save the one cloud rolled off his soul. In all likelihood he himself forgot the course of degradation through which he had gone; everything was obliterated to him by the impossibility of sinning more—everything except the one thing which no self-delusion could obliterate, the unchangeable doom to which he was approaching day by day. Jim had none of the tremors of a murderer. He concealed nothing; he admitted freely that the verdict was just, that it was he who had lurked in the dark and awaited the villain—but only he had never meant more than to punish him. "It is all quite true what the doctor says. I knocked him down. I meant to beat him within an inch of his life. God knows if he deserved it at my hands, or any honest man's hands. And then it came over me in a moment that he never moved, that he never made a struggle. It was not because there were people coming up that I ran away. It was horror, as the doctor says. Nothing can ever happen to me again so dreadful as that," said Jim, putting up his handkerchief to wipe his damp forehead. And yet he

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could tell even that story with tolerable calm. He was not conscious of guilt; he had meant to do what he felt quite justifiable—rather laudable than otherwise—to thrash a rascal “within an inch of his life.” He had expected the man to defend himself; he had been full of what he felt to be righteous rage, and he did not feel himself guilty now. He was haunted by no ghost; he had ceased even to shudder at the recollection of the horrible moment in which he became aware that instead of chastising he had killed. But when his momentary occupation with other thoughts died away and the recollection of what lay before him came back, the condition of poor Jim was a dreadful one. To die—for that!—to die on Thursday, the 3rd of September, at a horrible moment fixed and unchangeable. To feel the days running past remorselessly, swift, without an event to break their monotonous flying pace—those days which were so endlessly long from dawn to twilight, which seemed as if they would never be done, which had so little night, yet which flew noiselessly, silently, bringing him ever nearer and nearer to the end. Poor Jim broke down entirely under the pressure of this intolerable certainty. Had it been done at once, the moment the sentence had been pronounced; but to sit and wait for it, look for it, anticipate it, know that every hour was bringing it nearer, that through the dark and through the day, and through all the endless circles of thoughts that surmounted and surrounded it, it was coming, always coming, not to be escaped! Jim’s nerves broke down under this intolerable thing that had to be borne. He kept command of himself when he saw his mother and sister, but with Dr. Barrère he let himself go. It was a relief to him for the wretched moment. Save for the moment, nothing, alas, could be a relief—for whether he contrived to smile and subdue himself, or whether he dashed himself against the wall of impossibility that shut him in, whether he raved in anguish or madness, or slept, or tried to put a brave face upon it, it was coming all the time.

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“It is sitting and waiting that is the horrible thing,” he said; “to think there is nothing you can do. That’s true, you know, doctor, in *Don Juan*, about the people that plunged into the sea to get drowned a little sooner and be done with it—in the shipwreck, you know. It’s waiting and seeing it coming that is horrible. It is just thirteen days to-day. Death isn’t what I mind! it’s waiting for it. Will it be—will it be very—horrible, do you think—at the moment—when it comes?”

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“No,” said Dr. Barrère, “if it comes to that, not horrible at all—a moment, no more.”

“A moment—but you can’t tell till you try what may be in a moment. I don’t mind, doctor; something sharp and soon would be a sort of relief. It is the sitting and waiting, counting the days, seeing it coming—always coming. Nobody has a right to torture a fellow like that—let them take him and hang him as the lynchers do, straight off.” Then Jim was seized with a slight convulsive shudder. “And then the afterwards, doctor? for all your science you can’t tell anything about that. Perhaps you don’t believe in it at all. I do.”

Dr. Barrère made no reply. He was not quite clear about what he believed; and he had nothing to say on such a subject to this young man standing upon the verge, with all the uncertainties and possibilities of life still so warm in him, and yet so near the one unalterable certainty. After a minute Jim resumed.

“I do,” he said firmly. “I’ve never been what you call a skeptic. I don’t believe men are: they only pretend, or perhaps think so, till it comes upon them. I wonder what they’ll say to a poor fellow *up there*, doctor? I’ve always been told they understand up there—there can’t be injustice done like here. And I’ve always been a true believer. I’ve never been led away—like that.”

“It isn’t a subject on which I can talk,” said the doctor, unsteadily; “your mother and Agnes, they know. But, Jim, for the love of God don’t talk to them as you are doing now. Put on a good face for their sakes.”

“Poor mother!” said Jim. He turned all at once almost to crying—softened entirely out of his wild talk. “What has she done to have a thing like this happen to her? She is a real good woman—and to have a son hanged, good Lord!” Again he shivered convulsively. “She won’t live long, that’s one thing; and perhaps it’ll be explained to her satisfaction up there. But that’s what I call unjust, Barrère, to torture a poor soul like that, that has never done anything but good all her life. You’ll take care of Agnes. But mother will not live long, poor dear. Poor dear!” he repeated with a tremulous smile. “I

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suppose she had a happy life till I grew up—till I—I wonder what I could be born for, a fellow like me, to be hanged!" he cried with a sudden, sharp anguish in which there was the laughter of misery and the groan of despair.

Dr. Barrère left the prison with his heart bleeding; but he did not abandon Jim. On the contrary, there was a terrible attraction which drew him to the presence of the unfortunate young man. The doctor of Poolborough jail, though not so high in the profession as himself, was one of Dr. Barrère's acquaintances, and to him he went when he left the condemned cell. The doctor told his professional brother that Surtees was in a very bad state of health. "His nerves have broken down entirely. His heart—haven't you remarked?—his heart is in such a state that he might go at any moment."

"Dear me," said the other, "he has never complained that I know of. And a very good thing, too, Barrère; you don't mean to say that you would regret it if anything did happen, before—"

"No," said the doctor, "but the poor fellow may suffer. I wonder if you'd let me have the charge of him, Maxwell? I know you're a busy man. And it would please his mother to think that I was looking after him. What do you say?"

The one medical man looked at the other. Doctor Barrère was pale, but he did not shrink from the look turned upon him. "I'll tell you what I'll do, Barrère," said the prison doctor at last. "I'm getting all wrong for want of a little rest. Feel my hand—my nerves are as much shaken as Surtees'! If you'll take the whole for a fortnight, so that I may take my holiday—"

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Dr. Barrère thought for a moment. "A fortnight? That will be till after—I don't know how I'm to do it with my practice; but I will do it, for the sake of—your health, Maxwell: for I see you are in a bad way."

"Hurrah!" said the other, "a breath of air will set me all right, and I shall be forever obliged to you, Barrère." Then he stopped for a moment and looked keenly in his face. "You're a better man than I am, and know more: but for God's sake, Barrère, no tricks—no tricks. You know what I mean," he said.

"No, I don't know what you mean. I know you want a holiday, and I want to take care of a case in which I am interested. It suits us both. Let me have all the details you can," said Dr. Barrère.

CHAPTER VI.

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THE day had come, and almost the hour. The weary time had stolen, endless, yet flying on noiseless wings; an eternity of featureless lingering hours, yet speeding, speeding towards that one fixed end. And there was no reprieve. The important people of Poolborough had retired sullenly from their endeavours. To support a Government faithfully and yet not to have one poor favour granted—their recommendation to mercy turned back upon themselves; they were indignant, and in that grievance they forgot the original cause of it. Still there were one or two still toiling on. But the morning of the fatal day had dawned and nothing had come.

To tell how Mrs. Surtees and Agnes had lived through these days is beyond our power. They did not live; they dragged through a feverish dream from one time of seeing him to another, unconscious what passed in the meantime, except when some messenger would come to their door, and a wild blaze and frenzy of hope would light up in their miserable hearts: for it always seemed to them that it must be the reprieve which was coming, though each said to herself that it would not, could not, come. And when they saw Jim, that one actual recurring point in their lives was perhaps more miserable than the intervals. For to see him, and to know that the hour was coming ever nearer and nearer when he must die; to sit with him, never free from inspection, never out of hearing of some compulsory spectator; to see the tension of his nerves, the strain of intolerable expectation in him—was almost more than flesh and blood could bear. They had privileges which were not allowed in ordinary cases—for were not they still ranked among the best people of Poolborough, though beaten down by horrible calamity? What could they say to him? Not even the religious exhortations, the prayers which came from other lips less trembling. They were dumb. "Dear

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Jim," and "God bless you," was all they could say. Their misery was too great, there was no utterance in it; a word would have overthrown the enforced and awful calm. And neither could he speak. When he had said "Mother," and kissed her, and smiled, that was all. Then they sat silent holding each other's hands.

Through all this Dr. Barrère was the only human supporter of the miserable family. He had promised to stand by Jim, to the end, not to leave him till life had left him—till all was over. And now the supreme moment had nearly come. The doctor was as pale, almost paler than he who was about to die. There was an air about him of sternness, almost of desperation; yet to Jim he was tender as his mother. He had warned the authorities what he feared, that agitation and excitement might even yet rob the law of its victim. He had been allowed to be with the condemned man from earliest dawn of the fatal morning in consequence of the warning he had given, but it appeared to the attendants that Jim himself bore a less alarming air than the doctor, whose colourless face and haggard eyes looked as if he had not slept for a week. Jim, poor Jim, had summoned all his courage for this supreme moment. There was a sweetness in his look that added to its youthfulness. He looked like a boy: his long imprisonment and the enforced self-denial there was in it, had chased from his face all stains of evil. He was pale and worn with his confinement and with the interval of awful waiting, but his eyes were clear as a child's—pathetic, tender, with a wistful smile in them, as though the arrival of the fatal hour had brought relief. The old clergyman who had baptised him had come, too, to stand by him to the last, and he could scarcely speak for tears. But Jim was calm, and smiled; if any bit of blue sky was in that cell of the condemned, with all its grim and melancholy memories, it was in Jim's face.

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The doctor moved about him not able to keep still, with that look of desperation, listening for every sound. But all was still except the broken voice of the old clergyman, who had knelt down and was praying. One of the attendants too had gone down on his knees. The other stood watching, yet distracted by a pity which even his hardened faculties could not resist. Jim sat with his hands clasped, his eyes for a moment closed, the smile still quivering about his mouth. In this stillness of intense feeling all observation save that of the ever-watchful doctor was momentarily subdued. Suddenly Jim's head seemed to droop forward on his breast; the doctor came in front of him with one swift step, and through the sound of the praying called imperatively, sharply, for wine, wine! The warder who was standing rushed to fill it out, while Dr. Barrère bent over the fainting youth. It all passed in a moment, before the half-said sentence of the prayer was completed. The clergyman's voice wavered, stopped—and then resumed again, finishing the phrase, notwithstanding the stir and hurried movement, the momentary breathless scuffle, which a sudden attack of illness, a fit or faint, always occasions. Then a sharp sound broke the stillness—the crash of the wine glass which the doctor let fall from his hand after forcing the contents, as it seemed, down the patient's throat. The old clergyman on his knees still, paused and opening his eyes gazed at the strange scene, not awakening to the seriousness of it, or perceiving any new element introduced into the solemnity of the situation for some minutes, yet gazing with tragic eyes, since nothing in the first place could well be more tragic. The little stir, the scuffle of the moving feet, the two men in motion about the still figure in the chair, lasted for a little longer; then the warder uttered a stifled cry. The clergyman on his knees, his heart still in his prayer for the dying, felt it half profane to break off into words to men in the midst of those he was addressing to God—but forced by this strange break cried, "What is it?—what has happened?" in spite of himself.

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There was no immediate answer. The doctor gave some brief, quick directions, and with the help of the warder lifted the helpless figure, all fallen upon itself like a ruined house, with difficulty to the bed. The limp, long, helpless limbs, the entire immobility and deadness of the form struck with a strange chill to the heart of the man who had been interceding wrapt in another atmosphere than that of earth. The clergyman got up from his knees, coming back with a keen and awful sense of his humanity. "Has he—fainted?" he asked with a gasp.

Once more a dead pause, a stillness in which the four men heard their hearts beating; then the doctor said, with a strange brevity and solemnity, "Better than that—he is dead."

Dead! They gathered round and gazed in a consternation beyond words. The young face, scarcely paler than it had been a moment since, the eyes half shut, the lips fallen apart with that awful opening which is made by the exit of the last breath, lay back upon the wretched pillow in all that abstraction and incalculable distance which comes with the first touch of death. No one could look at that, and be in any doubt. The warders stood by dazed with horror and dismay, as if they had let their prisoner escape. Was it their fault? Would they be blamed for it? They had seen men go to the scaffold before with little feeling, but they had never seen one die of the horror of it, as Jim had died.

While they were thus standing a sound of measured steps was heard without. The door was opened with that harsh turning of the key which in other circumstances would have sounded like the trumpet of doom, but which now woke no tremor, scarcely any concern. It was the sheriff and his grim procession coming for the prisoner. They streamed in and gathered astonished about the bed. Dr. Barrère turned from where he stood at the head, with a face which was like ashes—pallid, stern, the nostrils dilating, the throat held high. He made a solemn gesture with his hand towards the bed. "You come too late," he said.

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The men had come in almost silently, in the excitement of the moment swelling the sombre circle to a little crowd. They thronged upon each other and looked at him, lying there on the miserable prison bed, in the light of the horrible grated windows, all awe-stricken in a kind of grey consternation not knowing how to believe it; for it was a thing unparalleled that one who was condemned should thus give his executioner the slip. The whisper of the sheriff's low voice inquiring into the catastrophe broke the impression a little. "How did it happen—how was it? Dead! But it seems impossible. Are you sure, doctor, it is not a faint?"

The doctor waved his hand almost scornfully towards the still and rigid form. "I foresaw it always; it is—as I thought it would be," he said.

"His poor mother!" said the clergyman with a sort of habitual, conventional lamentation, as if it could matter to that poor mother! Dr. Barrère turned upon him quickly. "Go to them—tell them—it will save them something," he said with sudden eagerness. "You can do no more here."

"It seems impossible," the sheriff repeated, turning again to the bed. "Is there a glass to be had?—anything—hold it to his lips! Do something, doctor. Have you tried all means? are you sure?" He had no doubt; but astonishment, and the novelty of the situation, suggested questions which really required no answer. He touched the dead hand and shuddered. "It is extraordinary, most extraordinary," he said.

"I warned you of the possibility from the beginning," said Dr. Barrère; "his heart was very weak. It is astonishing rather that he bore the strain so long." Then he added with that stern look, "It is better that it should be so."

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The words were scarcely out of his lips when a sudden commotion was heard as of some one hurrying along the stony passages, a sound of voices and hasty steps. The door which, in view of the fatal ceremonial about to take place, had been left open, was pushed quickly, loudly to the wall, and an important personage, the Mayor of Poolborough, flushed and full of excitement, hurried in. "Thank God," he cried, wiping his forehead, "thank God, it's come in time! I knew they could not refuse us. Here is the reprieve come at last."

A cry, a murmur rose into the air from all the watchers. Who could help it? The reprieve—at such a moment! This solemn mockery was more than human nerves could bear. The warder who had been poor Jim's chief guardian broke forth into a sudden loud outburst, like a child's, of crying. The sheriff could not speak. He pointed silently to the bed.

But of all the bystanders none was moved like Dr. Barrère. He fell backward as if he had received a blow, and gazed at the mayor speechless, his under lip dropping, his face livid, heavy drops coming out upon his brow. It was not till he was appealed to in the sudden explanations that followed that the doctor came to himself. When he was addressed he seemed to wake as from a dream, and answered with difficulty; his lips parched, his throat dry, making convulsive efforts to moisten his tongue, and enunciate the

necessary words. "Heart disease—feared all the time—" he said, as if he had partly lost that faculty of speech. The mayor looked sharply at him, as if suspecting something. What was it? intoxication? So early, and at such a time? But Dr. Barrère seemed to have lost all interest in what was proceeding. He cared nothing for their looks. He cared for nothing in the world. "I'm of no further use here," he said huskily, and went toward the door as if he were blind, pushing against one and another. When he had reached the door, however, he turned back. "The poor fellow," he said, "the poor—victim was to be given to his family after—. It was a favour granted them. The removal was to be seen to—to-night; there is no reason for departing from that arrangement, I suppose?"

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The officials looked at each other, not knowing what to say, feeling that in the unexpected catastrophe there was something which demanded a change, yet unable on the spur of the moment to think what it was. Then the mayor replied faltering, "I suppose so. It need not make any change, do you think? The poor family—have enough to bear without, vexing them with alterations. Since there can be—no doubt—" He paused and looked, and shuddered. No doubt, oh, no doubt! The execution would have been conducted with far less sensation. It was strange that such a shivering of horror should overwhelm them to see him lying so still upon that bed.

"Now I must go—to my rounds," the doctor said. He went out, buttoning up his coat to his throat, as if he were shivering too, though it was a genial September morning, soft and warm. He went out from the dark prison walls into the sunshine like a man dazed, passing the horrible preparations on his way, the coffin! from which he shrank as if it had been a monster. Dr. Barrère's countenance was like that of a dead man. He walked straight before him as if he were going somewhere; but he went upon no rounds; his patients waited for him vainly. He walked and walked till fatigue of the body produced a general stupor, aiding and completing the strange collapse of the mind, and then mechanically, but not till it was evening, he went home. His housekeeper, full of anxious questions, was silenced by the look of his face, and had his dinner placed hastily and silently upon the table, thinking the agitation of the day had been too much for him. Dr. Barrère neither ate nor drank, but he fell into a heavy and troubled sleep at the table, where he had seated himself mechanically. It was late when he woke, and dark, and for a moment there was a pause of bewilderment and confusion in his mind. Then he rose, went to his desk and took some money out of it, and his cheque-book. He took up an overcoat as he went through the hall. He did not so much as hear the servant's timid question as to when he should return. When he should return!

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After the body of poor Jim had been brought back to his mother's house and all was silent there, in that profound hush after an expected calamity which is almost a relief, Agnes, not able to rest, wondering in her misery why all that day her lover had not come near them, had not sent any communication, but for the first time had abandoned them in their sorrow, stood for a moment by the window in the hall to look if, by any possibility, he might still be coming. He might have been detained by some pressing call. He had neglected everything for Jim; he might now be compelled to make up for it—who could tell? Some reason there must be for his desertion. As she went to the window, which was on a level with the street, it gave her a shock beyond expression to see a pallid face close to it looking in—a miserable face, haggard, with eyes that were bloodshot and red, while everything else was the colour of clay—the colour of death. It was with difficulty she restrained a scream. She opened the window softly and said:

"Arnold! you have come at last!" The figure outside shrank and withdrew, then said, "Do not touch me—don't look at me. I did it: to save him the shame—"

"Arnold, come in, for God's sake! Don't speak so—Arnold—"

"Never, never more! I thought the reprieve would not come. I did it. Oh, never, never more!"

"Arnold!" she cried, stretching out her hands. But he was gone. Opening the door as quickly as her trembling would let her, the poor girl looked out into the dark street, into the night: but there was no one there.

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Was it a dream, a vision, an illusion of exhausted nature, unable to discern reality from imagination? No one ever knew; but from that night Dr. Barrère was never seen more in Poolborough, nor did

any of those who had known him hear of him again. He disappeared as if he had never been. And if that was the terrible explanation of it, or if the sudden shock had maddened him, or if it was really he that Agnes saw, no one can tell. But it was the last that was ever heard or seen of Dr. Barrère.

MARGARET OLIPHANT.

A WILL AND A WAY.



IT WAS in that pleasant season of the year when there is a ladder at every apple-tree, and every man met on the road is driving with his left hand and eating a red apple from his right. At this season, as regularly as the year rolled round, old Carshena Hubblestone nearly died of cramps, caused by gorging himself with apples that fell almost into his mouth from the spreading boughs of fruit trees that fairly roofed his low-built house. This was, as it were, Carshena's one dissipation. The apples cost him nothing, and his medical attention after his bouts cost him nothing either, for he was the son of a physician, and though his father was long since dead, the village doctor would not render a bill.

"Crow don't eat crow," Dr. Michel answered, roughly, when Carshena weakly asked him what he owed. The chance of thus roistering so cheaply is not presented to every man, and reluctance to let such a bargain pass was perhaps what helped to lend periodicity to the old man's attacks. Dr. Michel always held that this was his chief incentive, and, be this as it might, it was very certain that apples and bargains were the only two things on earth for which Carshena was ever known to show a weakness, creditable or discreditable. Most small communities have their rich men and their mean men, but in the village of Leonard the two were one.

As the years passed on and Carshena's head whitened, it naturally grew to be a less and less easy task for Dr. Michel to bring his patient back to the place where he had been before apples ripened. If the situation had not tickled a spice of humor that lay under the physician's grim exterior he would have refused these autumnal attentions. As it was he confined himself to futile warnings and threats of non-attendance, but he always did obey the summons when it came. The townsfolk of Leonard would all have taken the same humorous view of this weakness of Carshena's but for the trouble which it gave his too-good sister Adelia—liked and pitied by every one. Adelia nursed her brother in each attack with a tenderness and anxiety that aggravated all the community. Nobody but his sister Adelia was ever anxious over Carshena. It was, therefore, like a bolt from a clear sky when, in this chronicled autumn, the following conversation took place at the Hubblestones' gate. Dr. Michel's buggy was wheeling out to the main road as Mr. Gowan, the town butcher, was about to drive through the gateway.

"Well, doctor," called the genial man of blood, a broad grin on his round face, "how's the patient?"

"He's gone, sir," said Dr. Michel, drawing rein. The butcher drew up his horse sharply, his ruddy face changing so suddenly that the doctor laughed outright.

"Gone!" echoed Mr. Gowan. "Not gone?"

"Yes, sir, as I warned him time and again he would go."

The butcher shook his head and pursed his lips, the news slowly penetrating his mind. "Well, I certainly would hate to die of eatin' apples," he said at last.

"I guess you'll find you hate to die of anything, when the time comes," said the more experienced physician. "Carshena," he added, "got nothing he didn't bring on himself, if that's any comfort to him."

"Don't speak hard of the dead, doctor," he urged. "We've all got to follow him some day. He wasn't a nice man in some ways, Carshena wasn't, but—"

"He was a nasty old man in most ways," snapped the doctor.

"Don't say such things now, doctor, don't," urged his companion. "Ain't he paid in his full price, whatever his sins was? Poor soul! he can't be worse'n dead."

"Oh, yes, he can, and for one I believe he is," interrupted the doctor. His crisp white hair seemed to Mr. Gowan to curl tighter over his head as he frowned with some thought he was nursing. "You haven't seen the will I had to witness this morning!" he burst out. "Just you wait a little! Upon my soul! the more I think of it the

madder I get! It's out of my bailiwick, but if I were a lawyer I'd walk right up now under those old apple-trees yonder, and before that man was cold on his bed I'd have his sister's promise to break his old will into a thousand splinters! Wait till you hear it. Good-morning."

When the will was read and its contents announced, the town of Leonard, including its butcher, took the doctor's view to a man.

"A brute," said Dr. Michel, hotly, "who has let his old sister work her hands to the bone for him, and then turned her off like some old worn-out horse, has, in my opinion, no right to a will at all. How about setting this will aside in his sister's interests, judge?"

A little convocation of the leading spirits of Leonard were met together in Dr. Michel's office to discuss the matter of Carshena's will, and what should be done with Adelia, cast on the charity of the village. Judge Bowles, when appealed to, raised his mild blue eyes and looked around the company.

"Adelia," he said, "is the best sister I ever knew. Had the man no shame?"

"Shame!" said the town's barber, with a reminiscent chuckle; "why, he came into my parlors one day and asked me if I'd cut the back of his hair for twelve cents, and let him cut the front himself; and I did it, for the joke of the thing! He saved thirteen cents that way."

"Gentlemen, gentlemen!" demurred the judge; but amid the general laughter the tax-gatherer's voice rose:

"There isn't a tax he didn't fight. This town got nothing out of Carshena Hubblestone that he could help paying; and now he leaves us his relatives to support."

Judge Bowles rose to his feet.

"Gentlemen," he said, in mild but earnest rebuke, "the man is dead. We all know what his character was without these distressing particulars. It is entirely true that we owe him nothing, but a dead man is defenceless, and his will is his will, and law is law. Did you ever think what a solemn title a man's last will is? It means just what it says, gentlemen—his last will, his last wish and power of disposition writ down on paper, concerning his own property. It's a solemn thing to break that."

"A man's no business having such a will and a disposition to write it down on paper," said the doctor. "What were the exact terms of the will, judge?"

"Very simple," said Judge Bowles, dryly. "The whole estate is to be sold, and the entire proceeds, every cent realized, except what is kept back for repairs and care, is to be applied to the purchase of a suitable lot and the raising of a great monument over the mortal remains of Carshena Hubblestone."

"While his sister starves!" added Dr. Michel.

"Gee!" exclaimed the kindly butcher. He had heard all this before, but thus repeated it seemed to strike him anew, as somehow it did all the rest of the company. They sat looking at each other in silence, with indrawings of the breath and compression of lips.

"There is this extenuating circumstance," said the doctor, with dangerous smoothness; "our lamented brother was aware that unless he erected a monument to himself he might never enjoy one. We—the judge, Mr. Gowan, and myself—are made sole executors under the will—without pay. In Carshena's life Adelia was his white slave. In his death, doubtless, he felt he could trust her to make no protest. I wish you could have seen her with him as I have, gentlemen. I shall call it a shame upon us if we let her eat the bitter bread of our charity. She's been put upon and trodden down, but she's still a proud woman in her way, and we've got to save her from a bitter old age. We've got to do it."

"It's the kind of thing that discourages one's belief in humanity," said the judge, in a lowered tone. "This affair might be only absurd if it weren't for the sister's share in it. As it is, it's a revelation of human selfishness that makes one heart-sick."

Dr. Michel's laugh rang out irreverently.

"It's perfectly absurd, sister or no sister," he said. "Nobody, not one of us, loved Carshena in life—though I think now we didn't hate him half enough—and here in death he's fixed it so the town's got to pay for his responsibilities while his money builds him a grand monument! I call that about as absurd as you'll get anywhere. I'll grant you it makes me downright sick at my stomach, judge, but it

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don't touch my heart. No, sir. Keep your organs separate, as I do, gentlemen. There's one thing certain"—he drew the eyes of his audience with uplifted finger—"if we can't outwit this will somehow, we'll be the laughing-stock of this whole county. I don't care a snap of my finger if Carshena has a monument as high as Haman's gallows, if only his sister is protected at the same time."

"Well, short of breaking the will, what would you suggest, doctor?" asked Judge Bowles, with a little stiffness. He had not liked the familiar discourse on his organs, but the doctor did not care. The judge was ruffled at last, which was exactly what he desired.

"Suggest?" he cried, laughing. "I don't know; but I know there never was a will written that couldn't be driven through with a coach and six if the right man sits on the box. You're the lawyer, judge."

The judge was a lawyer, as he then and there proceeded to prove. He rose to his feet and spoke in his old-fashioned style:

"Gentlemen, I think I speak for this company when I say that we strongly object to the breaking of this will as a bad precedent in the community. We wish it carried out to the very letter. Our fellow-townsmen knew his sister's needs better than we, and he chose to leave her needy. There are many, many things this town sorely wants, as he also knew, but he chose to use his money otherwise. What a monument to him it would have been had he built us the new school-house our town requires! The wet south lot down by the old mill is an eyesore to the village. Had he used that land and drained it and set up a school-house there, or indeed any public building, what a different meeting this would have been! He was our only man of wealth, and he leaves not so much as a town clock to thank him for. No; a monument to *himself* is what his will calls for, and a monument he shall have. If we failed him here, which of us would feel sure that our own wills would be carried out? In the confidence of these four walls we can say that the difficulties of the inscription and the style of monument seem insuperable. I know but one man to whom I would intrust this delicate commission. I feel confident that he would not render us too absurd by too conspicuous a monument or too florid an inscription. Need I name Dr. Michel?"

"Out of my bailiwick," cried the doctor—"way out of my bailiwick." But his voice was drowned in the confusion of the popular acclaim that was forming him into a committee of one. The kindly butcher made his way to the doctor's side under cover of the noise.

"Take it, doctor; now do take it," he whispered in his ear. "There ain't a man in the town that can shave this pig if you can't. I was sayin' just yesterday you're lost in this little place of ours. You've got more sense than's often called for here. Here's the chance for you to show 'em what you can do. Do take it."

The physician looked at the wheedling little butcher with a glance from his blue eye that was half kindly, half irritated. "Well, I'll take it," he cried; "I'll take it; and I thank you for your confidence, gentlemen."

It was a full month before the little company met again in the doctor's office, but during that period they knew Dr. Michel had not been idle in the matter intrusted to his care. He was seen in close conversation with the town's first masons, the best carpenters, the local architect, and these worthies, under close and eager examination, gave answers that dashed the unspoken hopes of those who questioned. Here were *bona fide* bids asked for on so much masonry, so much carpentering, and the architect had been ordered to send in designs of monuments, how high he deemed it unprofessional to state; but arguing inversely, they judged by the length of his countenance that the measurements were not short—he had particularly hated Carshena. It was, for all these reasons, a rather anxious-looking company that met in Dr. Michel's office at his summons, and the doctor's own face was not reassuring as he opened the meeting.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, slowly, "it's a thankless task you've given me, but such as it is, I hope you will find I have performed it to your satisfaction. Here are various plans for the monument to be erected to our late fellow-citizen, and here is a plan of the ground that it has seemed to me most suitable to purchase. It has been a task peculiarly uncongenial to me, because I, I suppose, know more than any of you here how this money is needed where it ought to have gone. I saw Adelia yesterday, and lonely and ghost-ridden as

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that old house would be to any of us, it's a home to her that's to be sold over her head to build this." He laid his hand on the papers he had thrown down on the table before him. The little company looked silently at each other, with faces as downcast as if they were to blame. It was Judge Bowles who spoke first.

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"Gentlemen," he said, "we must not let ourselves feel too responsible in this matter. We are only following our plain duty. Show us the monument which you consider best, doctor."

The doctor was silently turning over the papers. "Family feeling is a queer thing," he said, meditatively. "I saw Adelia the other day, and I asked her if she wanted a neighbor to sleep in the house at night.

"There's nothing here for robbers to take, Dr. Michel," she said; 'and if it's ghosts you think I'm afraid of, I only wish from my heart ghosts would come back to visit me. Everybody of my blood is dead."

"It's very pitiful," said Judge Bowles, slowly.

The doctor turned on him instantly. "Do you seem to feel now that you could countenance breaking the will, judge?"

"No," said the judge, shortly, as one who whistles to keep his courage up.

The doctor's fingers drummed on the table as he paused thoughtfully.

"Carshena," he said, "if you can believe me, measured out the kerosene oil he allowed for each week on Monday; and when it gave out they went to bed at dusk, if it gave out on Friday night. But one thing Adelia did manage to do. So long as a drop of oil was in the measure a light stood in a window that lit up the ugly turn in the county road round the corner of their house. I know her light saved me from a bad collision once; some of you also, perhaps. She's kept that little lamp so clean it always shone like a jewel up there. The window-pane it shone through had never a speck on it either. That's what I call public spirit. And it's public spirit, too, that makes her keep sweet-smelling flowers growing on the top of the old road wall. In summer I always drive past there slowly to enjoy them. When she comes on the charity of the town she may console herself by remembering these things. She did what she could (in spite of Carshena), and nobody can do more. Here are the plans for his monument, gentlemen. I would like to have your vote on them."

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The little company, as if glad to move, drew about the table as the doctor opened out the plans in a row. The butcher, whose ruddy face looked dim in his disappointment, and whose despondent chin hung down on his white shirt bosom, picked up one of the designs gingerly and examined it.

"Are they all alike, doctor?" he asked.

Judge Bowles looked over Mr. Gowan's shoulder.

"Each design seems to be a hollow shaft of some kind, with a round opening at the top," he said, and looked inquiringly over his glasses at the doctor, who nodded assent.

"They are all hollow. You seem to get more for your money so. The round opening at the top of the shaft can be filled with anything we choose later. I might suggest a crystal with the virtues of the deceased inscribed on it. Then, if we keep a light burning behind the glass at night, those virtues will shine before us by night and by day."

Judge Bowles lifted his eyes quickly. The doctor's face was unpleasantly satiric, and his blue eyes looked out angrily from under his curling white hair. Judge Bowles sat down, leaning back heavily in his chair, his perplexed eyes still on Dr. Michel's frowning brow. Mr. Gowan, with a look as near anger as he could achieve, moved to a seat behind the stove. His idol was failing him utterly. He felt he himself could have done better than this. Dr. Michel's roving eyes glanced round the circle of dissatisfied and dismayed faces, and then for the first time he seemed to break from his indifference:

"This is all very well, gentlemen—very well indeed. The facts are, you gave me a commission, and bound me to fulfill it strictly and to the letter, and now you are dissatisfied because I have followed your wishes. What did you expect? If you had left the matter to me without restrictions, I should certainly have tried to break the will, as I told you. Briefly, here is my report. We shall have about twenty thousand dollars all told to invest in a monument over our lamented brother. Any one of these hollow masonry structures here will cost

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about ten thousand dollars. As to the purchase of a suitable lot, which the will directs, I think even Carshena would declare it a good bargain to pay nothing whatever for the land, and that I can arrange, I believe. I have good reason to suppose"—he began to speak very slowly—"that the town would, without price, allow us to erect this monument on that unsightly bit of wet land to the south, near the old mill, if we in turn will agree to drain the grounds, keep them in good order, plant flowers and shrubbery, and further promise to keep a light burning all night in an opening at the top of the monument. I spoke of a crystal set in that opening, with the virtues of the deceased inscribed upon it, but we can, if we choose, carve those same virtues in the more imperishable stone below, and print something else—a clock face perhaps—on the crystal above. That's a mere minor detail."

Judge Bowles, whose gaze had been growing more and more bewildered, now started in his chair and sat suddenly upright. He stared at the doctor uncertainly. The doctor cast a quick look at him, and went on rapidly:

"If you will allow me, I'll make my report quickly, and leave it with you. I have a great deal to do this morning in other directions. It has occurred to me that as the base of the monument is to be square and hollow, it would be easy to fit it into a comfortable living-room, with one, or perhaps two, small rooms built about it. I have not mentioned this to the architect, but I know it can be done. The will especially directs that repairs and care be allowed for." The doctor was talking rapidly now. "The monument will not cost more than ten thousand, the clock about two. Twelve thousand from twenty thousand leaves eight thousand. The yearly interest on eight thousand and the fact that we could offer free residence in the monument should let us engage a reliable resident keeper, who would give the time and attention that such a monument and such a park would need."

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The doctor paused, and again looked about him.

The whole circle of faces looked back at him curiously—some with a puzzled gaze, but several, including Judge Bowles, with a half-fascinated, half-dismayed air. Mr. Gowan alone preserved his look of utter hopelessness.

"Who'd take a job like that?" he said, gloomily. "I wouldn't, for one, live in a vault with Carshena, dead or alive."

"Oh, the grave could be outside, and the monument as a kind of monster head-stone," said the doctor pleasantly. "My idea was to have the grave well outside. Four or five hundred and a home isn't much to offer a man, gentlemen, but I happen to know a very respectable elderly woman who would, it seems to me, suit us exactly as well as a man. In fact, I think it would considerably add to the picturesque features of our little town park to have a resident female keeper. I think I see her now, sitting in the summer sunshine at the door of this unique head-stone monument, or in winter independently luxuriating in its warm and hospitable shelter. I see her winding the clock, affectionately keeping the grave like a gorgeous flower-bed, caring for the shrubbery, burnishing the clock lamp till it shines like a jewel, as she well knows how to do, and best of all in her case, gentlemen, I happen to know from her own lips that she has no fear of ghosts. Why, gentlemen, what's the matter? I protest, gentlemen."

At that moment Mr. Gowan might be said to be the doctor's only audience. The rest of the company were engaged in whispering to each other, or speechlessly giving themselves over to suppressed and unholy glee. Judge Bowles was openly wiping his eyes and shaking in his chair. Dr. Michel looked around the circle with resentful surprise.

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"You seem amused, gentlemen!" he said, with dignity; and then addressing himself to Mr. Gowan exclusively, as if that gentleman alone were worthy to be his listener, "Would you object to a woman as keeper, Mr. Gowan?"

"What's her name?" asked the butcher.

A roar of laughter, not to be long suppressed, drowned his words. Mr. Gowan looked about the shaken circle, stared for a moment, then suddenly, as comprehension, like a breaking dawn, spread over his round face, he brought his hand down hard on his fat knee.

"Well, doctor," he roared, in admiration too deep for laughter, "if you ain't the dawgornest!"

The doctor's wiry hair seemed to rise and spread as wings, his

eyes snapped and twinkled, his mouth puckered. "Will some one embody this in the form of a motion?" he asked, gravely. The judge dried his eyes, and, with difficulty, rose to his feet.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I move that we build this monument with a base large enough for a suite of rooms inside; that we set this structure on the lot which our good doctor has chosen; that we ornament it with an illuminated clock at the top; and further, that—that this female keeper be appointed."

"Seconded, by Harry!" roared Mr. Gowan.

The doctor, with his hands on his hips, his body thrown far back, looked with the eye of a conqueror over the assembly. "Those in favor of the motion will please say Aye; those opposed No. It seems to be carried! it is carried," he recited in one rapid breath.

"Amen!" endorsed Mr. Gowan, fervently.

And this warm approval of their butcher was in the end echoed as cordially by the most pious citizens of Leonard. After the first shock of their surprise was over, natural misgivings were lost in enjoyment of the grim humor of this very practical jest of their good doctor's, that visitors now actually stop over a train to see. Many a village has its park, and many a one its illuminated clock; it was left for Leonard to have in its park a grave kept like a gorgeous flower-bed, and at the grave's head a towering monument that is at once a tombstone, an illuminated clock and a residence.

Who the next keeper may be it is one of the amusements of Leonard to imagine. The present keeper is a happy old woman, whose fellow-citizens like nothing better than to see her winding the clock, caring for the flowers, burnishing the town lamp; in summer sitting in the sunshine at the door of the head-stone monument, in winter luxuriating in that warm and independent shelter.

"I feel as if Carshena knew just what was best for me, after all, doctor," she said to her physician, in his first call upon her in her new home; and that worthy, with a nod of his white head, assented in the readiest manner.

"Doubtless, madam, doubtless," he said, "Carshena had all this in mind when he made me his executor. Didn't you, Carshena?" He winked his eye genially at the grave as he passed out, and with no shade of uncertainty or repentance in his mind, climbed into his buggy and went on his satisfied way.

MARGARET SUTTON BRISCOE.

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DOCTOR ARMSTRONG.

I.



COLVIN ARMSTRONG tried to take up his pen with an air of happiness and relief, for it was the last chapter of his great work which he was about to commence. But the effort failed, and he leaned back in his chair, thoroughly tired out—too jaded to be brisk or energetic.

It was not his professional work that tired him. A London surgeon, with a magnificent reputation, he had more than enough to do; but he was only forty, and his constitution was of iron. Work agreed with him: it was Thought that utterly prostrated him at times. No sooner was his last engagement fulfilled, or his last patient despatched, than he retired to his library and gave himself up to the great psychological problem that racked his brains. Night brought a short relief: he slept from twelve till six; but morning renewed his wrestlings, and it was only the necessity of attending to his surgery that freed him from the incessant train of thought. Would that his head were as cool as his strong, firm hands!

It was the Mystery of Human Pain that was haunting him. Until two years back he had never given such questions a thought, but then the problem began to force itself upon him. How was it that so many suffered a living martyrdom, whilst he himself never knew a moment's pain? How was it that, having no personal knowledge of pain, he nevertheless felt such an overpowering sympathy with those who suffered, and had such an instinctive inborn gift of giving relief? And then the larger, less personal questions: Was there any guiding hand allotting pain to innocent mortals? Were they really innocent? If there was design in it all, from whom came the design, and what was its purpose? Was it for good, or evil, or both? If no Providence guided humanity, what was the origin of pain? Why was it allowed to be? And so on, in an endless train of thought, one problem suggesting ten others, till the subject broadened out to the doors of Eternity itself, and the mind reeled before its own imaginings.



VACCINATING THE BABY

Armstrong flew to his books for assistance, and primed himself with the ideas of the metaphysicians; but he was not satisfied, and a strong impulse led him to try his own hand at solving the mystery. Gradually, after much hard reading and thinking, he evolved a theory which, though far from satisfactory, seemed ampler and better than the ideas of the old philosophers; and then, slowly and laboriously, he committed it to paper. As the work grew, he became more convinced of the truth which seemed to lurk in his views, the foundation of real discovery on which his theses were based.

Something of his marvellous insight into disease and distortion seemed to have entered into the book, and he was eager to give it to the world.

So this was the last chapter! By Jove! how hot and close the room was! It was annoying to feel so dull and listless, but there was some excuse: nine o'clock at night is not a time when a man is at his freshest, and there was nothing so wearing as this closely woven intellectual work, where every thread had to be followed to its end, every detail thought out, every possible ramification explored, and the mind kept at its highest tension throughout, straining to cover the whole ground and to order in logical sequence its myriad elusive thoughts. Difficult? Why, there was nothing to compare to it! But what was the good of magnifying troubles? Here was the final chapter, the conclusion which was to be so masterly, already mapped out in his mind, only waiting to be transferred to paper. Armstrong wiped his damp forehead, and seized the pen. The room was lit as he liked it, with only a lamp casting a subdued light on his desk; the rest in deepest gloom. Now was the time to begin. But he was terribly tired.

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* * * * *

Kr-rk!

Armstrong leaned back in his chair, and pressed his hand to his head. Something inside seemed to have broken with a snap, or a tiny shutter had fallen away, as in a camera, revealing a hidden lens in his brain. His head was clearer and freer, as if some clogging veil had suddenly been removed, and before his eyes there burned a new light, steady and cold, but brilliant. A cooler, purer air filled the room. The present melted away from his vision. * * *

* *

Far away—so far that everything was dwarfed, but yet as distinct in every detail as though it had been close at hand—Armstrong saw a vision.

A dark underground dungeon, with damp standing in beads on its bare stone walls; a man, bound, gagged, and helpless; another, black-masked and sullen of movement; a third, seated on a small platform, with his face in shadow. A feeble hanging lamp, swaying to and fro in the draughts of the cell, was the only illumination.

The vision came nearer and nearer, and grew larger as it came, until it reached Armstrong and filled his room, and he felt the dank breath of the dungeon stir his hair. He looked again: the masked man was at his elbow, the man on the dais was above him—unrecognisable in the shadow, but smiling gently; that much he could see. Then he looked at the third man, the prisoner; and a thrill of dread went through him, for he recognised himself,—in old-world, long-forgotten garb, but still himself. And then the whole grew real, with a deadly reality; he was no more a mere spectator, but a part of the vision, and the vision was a part of his own existence. The chill of the room fell on his spirit, filling him with vague, horrible forebodings: the present mingled with the past, and his spirit passed into the limp, helpless figure on the rack. He—he himself, and none other—was the victim in the torture chamber, and the world was black around him.

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There was a clank of steel on the floor, as though little instruments had been dropped, and then a sudden sharp pang struck him from an unseen source. Another, another, and yet another,—a very multitude of keen stabbing pangs. In uncontrollable agony he raised his voice to shout with pain, but the gag stopped him, choked him, throttled his curses. And the dark figure smiled from above.

Then came hot, burning, throbbing pains that shot through him, turning the blood in his veins to fire, and gnawing his vitals till they consumed away. He tried to turn, to roll, to ease himself in any way; but he was bound and rigid and helpless, and his efforts only increased the torture. And still the figure sat motionless above him. He turned his streaming eyes upwards in mute appeal, and his answer was a smile.

Then the sharp pains and the burning misery ceased for a while, and his aching limbs rested, and all seemed over. But the presiding fiend waved a silent signal, and worse came—stretching, straining torture, that nearly pulled the wretched frame asunder (well if it had!), and dull grinding agonies, worse than the sharper pains, more cruel and relentless than the stabs or blows or thrusts.

And then the worst of all—the whole in combination. Crushing, grinding, distorting, straining, breaking, bending, blinding, burning, flaying, racking, stabbing—more than the mind can picture or words describe—in turn and together, and all the more horrible, coming unseen and sudden and unawares. Crush and rack and burn and grind, till the brain was on fire and the body groaning under its burdens; till the face was furrowed with tears of agony, the whole frame shapeless and broken, limbs useless, muscles tortured, twisted and crushed, nerves shattered, and the spirit within flaming with miserable, hopeless hate. Madness? No; that had come in the first silent moments of fear and pain, but the cruel hand had driven it away, and now there was only PAIN—deep, unfathomable Pain.

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Then came a low whisper, the cool breath of Death waiting softly outside the chamber, and the wounded soul fluttered for a moment in joyous answer. But the human fiend above knew it, and the torture stopped. Sore, blistered, broken, and useless, he was flung aside to endure still longer in his misery, and Death turned sighing away.

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Armstrong sprang from his chair with curses on his tongue and fury in his heart, and grasped convulsively at the retreating vision. But it was far, far off, and melting slowly into air.

Then a great calm fell upon him, and he knew what he had seen. It was a scene from a former life—his last existence—and it was vouchsafed to him as a lesson, a glimpse of the everlasting order of life. The inspiration of a great Message glowed on his brow and in his soul. And this was the Message which he read, clear as the words of a seer:—

“For inasmuch as thou hast suffered pain and bitterness of spirit in the past, so shalt thou now know freedom from such; and to thee it shall be given, by thy past sufferings, to discern and make lighter the grievous burdens of thy fellow-men. And the pain that thou hast felt in thy veins shall give thee understanding above all others, that thou mayest cure man’s infirmities and heal the sick of his house.”

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II.

The light of a great revelation dazzled Armstrong for a while, but he rose from it with renewed strength and hope and courage, resolved to devote himself more than ever to the healing art. And first he destroyed his manuscript, for his theories were shattered and forgotten. The mystery of human pain was still unsolved; but was it for him to solve it? Providence had given him another mission,—to heal and cure. And Providence had given him the clue to one mystery, at all events—his own great sympathy with sufferers and insight into suffering. Sometimes he wondered whether another revelation would follow; but none came, and he pursued his usual career, doing good and working hard. The idle speculations, the restless quest of secret things, which had haunted him and wearied him before, were now of the past, and he lived for work alone.

But more was to come—unexpectedly and without warning.

It was an ordinary case he was treating: brain surgery. The man, a wretched creature, suffered severely, and was in a broken state of health; Armstrong had traced it to brain pressure, and saw his way easily to put things right by a cerebral operation. He was just concluding an examination, and the patient lay quietly in the great chair, soothed by a slight injection of morphia. Armstrong turned away to get a light—it was five o’clock on an autumn day, just beginning to grow dark—when suddenly there came that strange grating “Kr-rk” in his head, and he felt the room whirl around him. He clutched hard at a table near him, but it receded from his grasp and he felt himself falling down, down, down in giddy helplessness. Then the movement stopped, and he felt, as before, that some weight had been lifted from his brain, and a new, unused sense developed in him. But this time there was no clear light, no pure air, no vision.

What was coming? Something, he felt, was in store—some strange, new revelation—and he waited eagerly. As the prophets of old were inspired, so light had come to him, and now perhaps he would learn one more secret of the troubled world.

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But nothing came; all was blank darkness around him, and an uneasy sense of foreboding stole slowly over him, till his hand shook

and his face grew damp with cold sweat.

What was that? A far-off mocking laugh? And * * * O God in heaven! Not *that* again! Not *that*!

He tried to call again, for pangs worse than of death were racking him; but something cold was thrust into his mouth and choked him. And then his eyes, shut tight in the clenched agony of pain, opened again, and he saw the streaming dungeon walls, the swaying lamp, the masked torturer, and the grim shadow-figure seated motionless on the dais above him; and his heart sank within him, and he turned sick and faint.

For one brief moment the masked man turned away—to heat his irons, perhaps, or rest his arms, weary of their heavy work—and all Armstrong's spirit went up in one short, agonised, burning prayer, in one deep, strenuous remonstrance.

"I have felt it before," he cried. "I have endured it before, and I know its meaning. Must I go through all again? Have I failed in my duty? Save me from pain and madness before it is too late! O God of cruelty, Pain-giver, merciless, wicked, infernal, save me, save me, preserve me!"

His words, stifled by the gag, reached no human ear; but in the cell a new presence was lurking, and on his face fell a hot, quick breath.

A voice spoke in his ear, very soft and gentle and low.

"You blaspheme in vain," it said; "God has not sent you this vision, but *I*."

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III.

The torture was over, and Armstrong waited quietly for the moment of restoration to the world; but it did not come, and a new fear seized him. What if he never recovered from this state? As the Powers of Good had vouchsafed him the first vision, so the Powers of Evil had mocked him with the second—the same as the first, but infinitely more terrible, for through the former a subtle strength of will had sustained him, and he had emerged from it wiser, happier, and stronger, whilst now he felt himself deserted and unaided, and * * * Heavens above! What would come next? The physical torture was over, but now his mind was on the rack, and it was worse, far worse!

The two grim figures remained in the cell, motionless as statues. A strange detachment of mind, a mystic duality of self, was torturing Armstrong. Here he felt the pangs and achings of the most terrible pain; yet at the same time he knew that it was all unreal, and his thoughts turned to the world above—his work, his house, his friends, the very patient in his chair, waiting and wondering. Somewhere between the two lay madness, and his spirit cried for peace—a world all vision, or a world all reality—anything but this perplexing, torturing union of the two.

Quick as thought came the answer. "Look around before you go."

It was the soft voice he had heard before—gentle, but insistent. But he had seen too much of that hateful cell, and he closed his eyes in tight resistance.

"Look around," said the voice, even more gently than before.

A shuddering fear seized Armstrong.

The spirit read his thoughts. "You are afraid: you dare not look at *me*. But you shall not see me. Look!"

He put his hand to his head and covered his eyes with a convulsive movement.

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"Listen!" said the voice. "You have not even seen your enemy. Would you not know him?"

A cold sickness fell on Armstrong's spirit, and he shuddered. Why see the monster who had tortured him, the human fiend who could be nothing other than repulsive?

Then the voice spoke again, more gently than before.

"Listen! I am the God of Evil, but I befriend you. I pass my hand along your frame, and the pain leaves you. I touch your eyes with my fingers, and they open. Look around!"

Armstrong rose, sound and strong. The dungeon was dark, but in its recesses he could see two cowering figures, striving to hide themselves from his eyes. One was the masked man; one was the director, the inquisitor, the author of all his misery.

"See how he hides from you," whispered the voice. "But you shall not be denied. TURN!"

The sudden thunder of that last word echoed through the vault, and then there came a short, sharp, double flash of blinding light. The first flash showed a crouching, cowering figure in the background, with pale, set face, and cruel eyes; the second struck Armstrong full in the face and felled him to the ground.

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Dazed and frightened, as after a hideous nightmare, he pulled himself together. The match he had taken up was still in his hand, and he turned back, mastering himself with a great effort, to his patient.

He lighted the big burner and turned it full on the chair. The man, roused from the lethargy of morphia, slowly opened his eyes.

Armstrong staggered back, stifling the cry of horror that rose to his lips; for in that one glance he saw, clear and unmistakable, the face of his torturer—reincarnated, but still the same.

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IV.

Armstrong turned aside to hide his excitement. After all, then, the vision had not been in vain: it was the complement of the first; and now all was clear. The Mystery of Human Pain! His own great book on the subject! He laughed aloud. All that thought and time and labour had been wasted, and here was the truth, shown to him in a dream—the truth that all the world should know. A strange exaltation filled his spirit.

"I suffered pain, and now I reap my reward—strong, happy, a healer of wounds, myself knowing no suffering. *He* inflicted pain and torture, and now he suffers for it."

The patient in the chair moved uneasily and groaned. Armstrong went on: "A righteous Judge rewards me for what I have undergone, and scourges him for the evil he has wrought."

"The Lord have Mercy on his Soul!"

It was a deep voice that spoke, the words booming and reverberating like the notes of heavy bells. It touched a new chord in Armstrong's mind, and sent the blood throbbing and pulsing through his head. "The Lord have mercy on his soul!" Why? What mercy had *he* had for others? And with that the fury of hate returned to him and surged through his veins, till he felt himself more demon than man. Every pang, every pain, every racking agony that he had suffered in those two terrible visions, returned to him threefold, burned into his soul, branded on every limb and sinew. Curse him with the curse of the martyr, and blast him with the breath of his iniquities!

And then a cold, unnatural calm fell upon Armstrong, and his quivering hands grew steady and cunning as before.

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It was all so easy! The man lay there, half conscious—with enough sensation left to feel every torture inflicted on him, but yet unable to speak or groan. It was a carefully managed anæsthetic, administered just sufficiently to glaze the eyes and paralyze the tongue, but no more. And the brain lay so near at hand!

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The mad fury of revenge had left Armstrong, and he was cold, scientific and deliberate—no movement hurried, no torment left untried, and all done with the mechanical, even touch of the skilled workman. A pang for a pang, a stab for a stab, a scald for a scald; Armstrong remembered each pain he had endured, and paid it back threefold. On the subtle mechanism of the head he played as on a keyed instrument, sending hot, shooting pains, and dull, numbing clutches, to the remotest parts of the wretched frame.

All the poor worn nerves centered within his grasp, and to his eyes they were visible throughout their hidden course, coming to one common end, where he grasped them as with a handle, and turned and ground and twisted and crushed, till they stretched, strained, groaned and quivered under his racking touch. He hissed taunting words in his ears—words that he knew could not be answered; he mocked at the helpless agony. And all the while he watched the blue lips, striving to curse and moan, but bound by the hellish drug as with a gag; and the bloodshot, straining eyes, too fixed even to appeal; and the dumb agony of the whole wretched

form. And a grim, silent laughter shook him.

But it could not last forever: his hand wearied, and his head reeled. He fell to the ground in a swoon. * * *

Bells were ringing—light, airy, joyous bells; and he roused himself. The bells grew slower, fainter—died out altogether—and in their place a voice was in his ears, very soft and low. What was it saying? It was so faint, so indistinct * * *

“On *your* soul may the Lord have mercy!”

Armstrong rose as from a dream. In the chair lay a shape, not mangled, indeed, but pale-faced, shrunken, distorted, horrible. He bent his head down and listened to the heart; there were two feeble beats, a faint flicker, and then it stopped.

There was a strange catch in the surgeon’s breath. The room was hot and close; he pushed the curtains back, and looked out. It was night now—a deep blue sky, studded with a myriad stars. And one star shot upwards in a blaze of silver light.

Armstrong turned away, breathing heavily. There was the body still, and there were the little instruments he had used.

The present did not stir him, gave him no thought; but the knowledge of the future was upon him, and he groaned aloud in the new-born agony of his soul. For he knew what he had done: it was his chance, and he had missed it; it was his trial, his ordeal, and he had failed * * * And in the next life on earth his torture would be longer and harder to bear. The Lord would have no mercy on his soul.

D. L. B. S.

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DR. WYGRAM'S SON.

CHAPTER I.



WHEN I met Dr. Clarence Wygram a few weeks ago, I had not seen him for nearly fifteen years. We were boys at school together, and fast friends at that time, but our intercourse since then has been very intermittent. Since he lost his wife in Southern Italy, many years ago, much of his life has been spent abroad, and, though he is to be seen in London at intervals, I seldom catch a glimpse of him. We do not belong to the same set in town, and as, being possessed of an ample fortune, he has never engaged in practice as a physician, his wandering and unoccupied life is little akin to my own. We do, however, meet occasionally by accident, when we talk over old times, vow to see more of each other in the future, and then part for—perhaps, other ten years. Such acquaintanceships as this of Wygram and myself are the most unsatisfactory of all—they can scarcely be called friendships. Life, in my opinion, is too brief for such unfrequent greetings. It is important, however, that I recall, for a moment, this penultimate meeting with my old friend. It happened long ago, but the circumstances are still fresh in my memory. As I have said, this was our last meeting but one, and the date some fifteen years ago.

I was about to travel to the North by the night mail, and accidentally stumbled against Dr. Wygram on the crowded platform at Euston. He is always pleased to be facetious, when we do chance to see each other, in regard to our mutually altered appearance since our last meeting, and predicts, in jocular fashion, that, ere long, we shall certainly pass without recognition on either side. There is some truth in what he says, yet, to judge by my friend's careworn and haggard appearance on this occasion, I should say he was aging somewhat faster than myself.

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It seemed that we were to be fellow-travellers. He also was going north, though not so far as myself, and I willingly shared a compartment, which he had already secured for himself and his son, a stripling youth, apparently about fourteen. The latter was returning to school after the Easter Holidays, and his father (who, by the way, is not above the Cockney weakness of calling every big school a college) was accompanying him on the journey. I remember that, for the first hour or two, we had enough of conversation to beguile the time. Wygram had, of course, been abroad—I forget where, or for how long, but we were quite agreed—we always are, on this point—to view the simple fact of his absence as being a perfectly sufficient and satisfactory explanation of the time that has elapsed since our last meeting, however long that interval may be. After that, our conversation began to languish. Our old friendship notwithstanding, we have really very little in common. Having spent a somewhat fatiguing day, I felt disposed to doze, and I believe that I ultimately slept.

When I awoke, with a start, we were travelling at a high rate of speed. On the seat directly opposite to mine reclined my young travelling companion, apparently asleep, the lamplight falling full upon his upturned face. He seemed to all appearance not very robust; I think his father had hinted as much to me on the platform before we started. The boy's sleep was a somewhat restless one, and he shifted his position uneasily, as, ever and anon, the oscillation of the carriage half aroused him. As, only half awake myself, I sat drowsily watching him, I suddenly became aware that his father, who was looking over some papers by the aid of a reading lamp at the farther end of the compartment, seemed to wish, by a sign that he made, that I should join him. The thought struck me at the time, that perhaps he desired some conversation with me while his son was not a listener. I accordingly shifted my travelling rugs, and took a seat opposite to that of my old friend.

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The impression, on my part, that he did not wish the boy to overhear what he said was partly confirmed when my companion began the conversation in tones so low as to be barely audible above

the rattle of the train. But I confess that I was somewhat unprepared for the substance of his communication, even when I did catch his meaning. At first, what he said was almost unintelligible to me, but at length I contrived to gather, from what he told me, that some trouble (affliction, I think, was the word he used) had lately overtaken him, and he seemed, though indirectly, to appeal to me for sympathy under his trial. The appeal, however, was entirely indirect, as no particulars were afforded—at least, if they were, I failed to understand their meaning. Under these circumstances, I was about to inquire, as delicately as I could, what the nature of his difficulty might be, when I chanced to notice that, as he spoke, his eyes would every now and then wander from looking in my face, and turn, as it were unconsciously, in the direction of his boy, not apprehensively, or as if he were afraid of him as a listener, but gently and tenderly, as if in deep solicitude on his account. This being the case, I forebore to press the father with questions which might be considered intrusive. The trouble to which he alluded was perhaps connected with the lad's future, perhaps with something else concerning him, anyhow the secret, whatever it was, seemed to lie in that, or in some other equally delicate quarter, for Dr. Wygram did not give me any explicit details—rather avoided doing so, with a reticence quite unlike his customary frankness. But he had a favour to ask of me. It came to that, in the end.

"You know," he said appealingly, "you are my oldest friend—almost my only friend now, for my wandering life does not gain me new ones, and I beg you, most earnestly, to aid me, to help me, in this trouble—" Here he paused as if about to make some disclosure, then, checking himself, "to counsel me, when I ask you, at a future time."

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Of course, my somewhat pardonable curiosity had no further excuse, but I murmured that I would be very glad if, at any time, I could be of service to him. I added that our old friendship justified such a claim on his part, and that, for my own, I would gladly meet it, when necessary. I confess I thought that the reserve accompanying his request was somewhat singular.

"Ah, but promise! promise to me!" (he repeated the word with such passionate emphasis as to startle me); "promise that if I write you at any time and ask you to come to my help, you will do it—wherever I may be."

This last clause of his request was a tolerably comprehensive one, as, from the doctor's well-known migratory habits, the summons might possibly be indited from Mongolia, or the farthest recesses of Crim-Tartary. But to pacify him, for I saw that my old friend was strangely perturbed, I said that I would do what he wished, at any time, if I could; which latter clause covered the aforesaid difficulty so far. He seemed relieved by my assurance. His manner grew calmer.

"I cannot tell you more just at present," he said (this with a glance at the boy), "except that I am in sore trouble, from which, at another time, not now, the counsel of a friend may relieve me. It concerns one near and dear to me" (ah! then the secret did lie there), "and you are the only one I could trust. Perhaps, in time, my trouble may be dissipated" (this with a hopeless, sickly smile), "and then you will be glad I have not bored you with it, but if not, and if I seek fulfilment of your promise, remember!" With which words he abruptly broke off the conversation.

Shortly afterwards my fellow-travellers reached their destination. Dr. Wygram had, by this time, completely recovered his vivacity. When wishing me good-bye, a silent pressure of the hand, more prolonged than usual, alone betrayed any recollection, on his part, of our midnight conversation. I did not recover my own equanimity so rapidly; the interview came back upon me, as I sat alone for the rest of the journey, somewhat too vividly for that. A nameless uneasiness possessed me. I wearied myself with possible explanations of Wygram's alleged troubles. Money difficulties were out of the question in the case of one so well off as he, so simple and unostentatious in his mode of life, and he would be the last man to gamble. His son—pooh! The birch was the best cure for boyish peccadilloes, and he would get that on going back to school. Still, reason with myself as I might, Dr. Wygram's nameless trouble remained with me; the boy's sleeping face in the lamplight, the father's urgent entreaty "remember," these did not pass away. After all, I would reproach myself for having promised to obey the summons of my friend whenever it might come; how awkward that

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might be! Why could not he, if so anxious for my counsel, arrange to come to me? Altogether, it was not until several days had elapsed that I shook off the disagreeable impression left by the journey. As for Dr. Wygram's possible summons, I looked for that, more or less confidently, for several months, then my expectation of its coming began to fade. As a matter of fact, it did come after all, but not for fifteen years. Then it came upon this wise. I had been from home for some days. On returning, a pile of letters awaited me. Sorting them over one by one, the last in the heap was addressed in an unmistakable handwriting. "Wygram's summons at last," I said to myself, as the mist of the years rolled away and I was once more travelling northwards in the train; once more my friend's voice in my ear, "remember!" once more the lamplight on his son's sleeping face.

Opening the letter, I read as follows:—

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Low Tor Cottage, by Liskeard, Cornwall,
Sept. 3, 188—.

Dear F.:—Remember promise given long ago. Pray come as soon as possible!

Thine

CLARENCE WYGRAM.

In the circumstances, what could I do but make arrangements, as speedily as I could, to keep my promise? Within twenty-four hours I was on my way to Cornwall.

CHAPTER II.

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GIG awaited my arrival at the nearest railway station, and a short drive brought me to Low Tor Cottage. Dr. Wygram met me at the door. Considering the lapse of years since our last interview, I was, of course, prepared to find my friend looking much older; but I was scarcely prepared to see him so utterly feeble-looking and broken, alike, apparently, with age and sorrow, as when he greeted me in the doorway. He bade me welcome in hurried nervous tones; evidently he laboured under the influence of suppressed emotion. We entered the sitting-room: the dinner-table was set for two persons only. He apologized for his secluded quarters, and the humble arrangements of his household. "I have only been here for a month or two," he explained, "since my return from the Continent." A staid, elderly maid-servant here entered the room. It was, of course, too early for any confidential talk between my host and myself; and, as the servant waited upon us during dinner, anything but commonplaces were out of the question. I judged from what I saw, however, that Dr. Wygram was living alone; perhaps it was better so. Our intercourse would be the more unrestrained.

Somehow, I do not know how it happened, I was the first to break the ice, upon the question of the object of my visit. And this prematurely, in fact within half an hour of my arrival. Now I had mentally cautioned myself, on the way down, against precipitate allusions to the purpose of my coming; yet, as it chanced, I stumbled upon the delicate topic, unawares, before the servant had left us to our wine. It was, then, on his son's account that Dr. Wygram sought my presence here. As much I gathered from his silence, sudden and pained, when I made the remark. Of course after this, and until we were alone together, I turned the conversation into other channels, in what I fear must have seemed a very clumsy fashion. My host grew more and more absent and distraught. When at length we drew our chairs near the fire, for the autumn evenings were growing chilly, he had not opened his lips for some minutes. I was quite unprepared for what was to come. No sooner were we alone, than, in his attempt to speak, he burst into tears. It was long before he regained his composure. At first all he could utter was a renewal of his thanks to me for coming to see him in his loneliness—his worse than lonely life, as he termed it.

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I could make nothing of all this, but I endeavoured to assure him of my earnest desire to help him, if only he would frankly confide in me as his friend. It was pitiful to see how, even after this invitation,

it pained him to make any avowal. He sank into a reverie for a few moments, then, quickly rising to his feet and laying a hand on my shoulder, said:—

“I will show you my sorrow, my friend, rather than speak of it myself. What I show you will speak for itself, for all words are vain.”

So saying, he motioned me to follow him, and led the way from the room, carrying with him a small shaded lamp.

When we entered an adjoining apartment the shadows there were so dense, and the light we had with us was so feeble, that, for some moments, I could discern nothing. A dull fire smouldered in the grate, but shed no light on the interior of the room, which seemed furnished as a small parlour. There was a large sofa at the farther end, and someone lay upon it covered with rugs. Dr. Wygram held the light a little lower, the rays fell upon an upturned face, that of a boy apparently asleep. I started, for was it not the self-same face upon which the flickering light of a railway carriage lamp had fallen so many years before? The very same, in every lineament, nothing was changed.

I am not naturally quick in coming to a conclusion. Things dawn upon me now even more slowly than of old. I was startled for the moment, nothing more; though a creeping horror moved already towards my heart, I had not felt its actual touch.

“That is my sorrow,” said the father, turning to me, without diverting the rays of the lamp from his son’s face; then, without another word, motioned me to follow him out. I did so. The shadows fell once more upon the sleeper, even as the shadows of the years had fallen, till that moment, upon my recollection of his features.

On a sudden the full significance of what I had seen rushed upon me.

“Great God!” I cried, “what is this, Wygram? Speak!”

We were in the corridor now, and he did not return an answer. We re-entered the lighted room. My patience gave way.

“For Heaven’s sake,” I said, “Wygram, tell me what is the meaning of this! How is your son—the boy sleeping yonder—the same, unchanged—?” The query died upon my lips, for he to whom I spoke was pale as ashes. I read the answer of my inarticulate question, there and then, in his face. By virtue of some nightmare spell, the boy I had seen so many years before, the boy, who by this time should have been a grown man, was slumbering, *still a boy*, in the room we had just quitted.

They say that when, in dreams, anything manifestly absurd or inconsistent presents itself, the dreamer at once awakes. In the sitting-room of the cottage that night, seated beside my old friend, how often did I think myself dreaming, and long for the moment of waking to be precipitated by the seeming contradiction I had just witnessed! For some time neither of us spoke. Dr. Wygram sat motionless with the blank and, as it were, featureless expression on his countenance which I have so often seen sudden calamity impart. Yet his affliction, new and inexplicable to me as yet, must have become familiar enough to himself. After all, it must have been its first, its only revelation to another, which, as it were, reawakened himself to a sense of its utter bewilderment and hopelessness. And to me (of all men) he had turned for help, for counsel, in circumstances so astounding! What could I do? My own brain was in a whirl. The sense of wonderment once past, a painful search for possible explanation succeeded—explanation of what? That was the puzzling difficulty. A problem was before me, but, from lack of all precedent, the conditions of effectual presentation were wanting. How, then, attempt the solution?

It must have arisen, I suppose, from the mental confusion under which I laboured that I can give no very lucid account of what immediately followed. I cannot tell at what period of the evening the silent current of our several thoughts flowed into a stream of conversation. But I reproduce here the substance of Dr. Wygram’s narrative, in his own words, as far as possible, omitting some details not germane to the narrative.

“My son,” commenced Dr. Wygram, “inherited his mother’s malady, that which in her case proved fatal, pulmonary consumption. The unmistakable symptoms developed themselves in him at an early age. All the so-called remedies had been tried without avail. Humanly speaking, my boy was doomed, my house was apparently to be left unto me desolate. At first I was in despair, a despair lightened to me at last, however, by a gleam of hope. You

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are aware that I have devoted my life to the study rather than the practice of medicine. Being untrammelled with regular avocations, I have been enabled to explore, more fully than many of my professional brethren, what may be called the by-paths of study—those less explored tracks which are open to the medical scientist who is, by training, a chemist as well. The practice of scientific medicine, among us in this country, at all events, is in its infancy, although many, whose interest it is to conceal the fact, will assure you to the contrary. If any proof were needed of my assertion, the lame and halting methods in use at the present day would suffice. The insufferable greed for money so shamelessly manifested renders the modern practitioner only a better-class charlatan. Their failures are so gross, their expedients to conceal these failures so unblushing, that I have long recommended an adoption by the public of the Chinese system. The far-seeing Celestials only pay their medical adviser when they are perfectly well. When they fall sick his pay stops till he can restore them to health.

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“But there is a second, and a higher path, known only to a few, and these enthusiasts, careless of the rewards of the crowd. It is but a dim and perilous way at the best—it is easier to deride those who attempt to traverse it than to follow them. The herd of the profession eschew it for the most part. Present-day materialists will have nothing, accept nothing, which cannot be seen, tasted, handled, brayed in a mortar, fitting fate for themselves as purblind fools! See how reluctantly, how incredulously, the results of even such a coarsely unmistakable remedy as electricity are received by the profession. Yet electrical energy, in medicine, is a clumsy weapon compared with others in the armoury of transcendentalism. There are blades infinitely keener for the expert—viewless brands, wielded by few—the peerless Excalibur itself, known to still fewer—for its point of a truth turneth every way, to guard the path to the Tree of Life.” Here he shuddered, but after a pause went on: “These higher methods have their risks, their inseparable dangers. Remember that experiment must at last be made upon the living, human, subject. Demonstration upon a score of tortured puppies will not avail. Is *it* a wonder that the crude experimentalist, great at the torture trough, and brave in *its* cruelties, recoils when the higher issue is at stake? But as I said, my boy was doomed, save, as I hoped, in the last resort of transcendentalism. That last resort I tried, but not until numberless trials in the laboratory had convinced me that my method must avail. I had discounted every possibility of failure. So long did I delay that the lamp of life had almost, with him, burned to the socket. But I was wary; I knew well that the step I was about to take was an irrevocable one, and my chief anxiety was to prevent a possible miscarriage of consequences. My plan, in short, promised to secure for one, already within sight of death’s portal, a lease of life prolonged—by how many months or years I could not tell—that question lay in darkness, but at least prolonged beyond what I could reasonably expect considering his condition. A growth of new vital force—which yet was not a growth—everything pointed the other way, let me say a stock, was to be grafted into the decaying and wasting organism, permanent in its character, constant, without flux or reflux. But (ah! that but which mars all that blooms and hopes!), like all gifts added from without, unlike all properties resident within, it, the gift, had an imperfection, a strange, deadly, and irremediable fault. It grew not, progressed not, aged not (do not start!); and this, its thrice-accursed property, was so malignantly, so devilishly potent, beyond hope of elimination or reduction, that it subdued unto itself whatsoever it touched or joined. Life preserved under its influence would be preserved, not in activity but as it were in arrestment, in default of needed repair, or rather with a subtle supply and repair of its own so elusive as to evade detection.

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“Thus,” continued Dr. Wygram—“thus, with all my caution, I erred—erred as all do, misled by some devil’s wile, who work against the gods. Fool that I was, my own caution deceived me, and that lying legend of him who sought for immortality, but forgot the advent of old age. But it is past now; others would have slipped on that insuperable threshold where I fell. I exulted in the thought that my boy would drink of the water of life and so defy the killing years—but I forgot that *he was not yet a man*—knew not that I was condemning him to a life of immaturity. Hurry misled me at the last. Before I knew it, he was almost gone—then I took the irrevocable step. It was well that I worked in secret. No eye but mine saw him

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as (oh, wondrous change!) he rose from his sick-bed with an assured gift of life in every limb and pulse, so sudden and startling that I dreaded the coming of life's angel almost as much as I had the advent of him of death. For a time, I say, I would almost, unknowing, have undone that which had been done—but that stage passed, and I only watched and waited."

Dr. Wygram paused. Was it fancy that as he did so I thought I heard a light footstep in the room above us? The speaker did not seem to notice it, but went on:—

"For a time I knew no fear, that I had erred I did not know, as yet. For months he advanced in growth towards manhood. Then the spell began to work its hellish will. As he was then, as he is now, so will he ever be. A blight fell upon him, a chill mildew rained itself upon the issues of his life. A true death in life is his, for life hasteth to fruition and then falls; but this existence, with which I have dowered him, continues changeless, dateless, ageless, as the years of the Everlasting. I tell thee," screamed the father, as he sprang to his feet in a frenzy of uncontrollable horror—"I tell thee my boy will never die!"

Overmastered by the contagion of his excitement, I too had risen from my seat. As we faced each other in silence, a breathing murmur rose on the air, formless at first, then died away. Again a hushed murmur, then a crash of chords from an instrument in the room above. He of whom we spoke was playing Chopin's "Marche Funèbre."

CHAPTER III.

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NEED not enter into the details of my stay at Low Tor Cottage, even if I were able to reproduce them with correctness. My residence there was, to me, a prolonged nightmare, with all hope of an awakening denied me. Dr. Wygram had so completely surrendered himself to despair as to be incapable of making any effort. It would have been a positive relief to myself had I been able to have considered him insane, and the mystery before me a delusion springing from that cause. But that conclusion was shut out most effectually by my own personal testimony (of which he always eagerly availed himself) as to his son's identity, and his practically unaltered condition after an interval of so many years. I had every opportunity of assuring myself on this point. Young Wygram, though shy and backward, preferring to mope in solitude, was our companion after a day or two. But he never seemed wholly at ease, would not join in any sustained conversation, and had an apathetic listlessness about him which was positively repellent. It was vain to try to arouse either father or son from the overwhelming depression into which both had apparently sunk. Some melancholy drives we took together in a pony phaeton through the solitudes of West Cornwall did not enliven us much. It is a haunted land at its best, with its rolling moorlands, and its mystic Dosmery Pool, fabled as ebbing and flowing in its silent depths in sympathy with the tides of the distant sea. As day after day slipped away, I began to feel myself as partaking of my friend's hopelessness. Yet, if I hinted the uselessness of continuing with him, he would become almost frantic. As he pathetically repeated to me, I was his only friend, the only one to whom he could confide his sorrows, so insupportable when borne alone. Gradually he persuaded me, on one point, against my better judgment. It was finally agreed between us that ere I left some steps should be taken on his part to endeavour to obtain a reversal, or part reversal rather, of the conditions under which his son laboured (I use the periphrasis as the plain words to me are unspeakably painful), by something of the same methods by which they had been compassed. The prospect to me was very distasteful, indeed revolting, nor did Dr. Wygram's laboured explanations convey much information to my non-professional mind. It is useless to detail them here, they would be intelligible only to the expert. But I could not deny him what he asked. I fancy his wish was to secure some witness of his own moral innocence, should any untoward accident happen. I cannot blame him; indeed, I think he would have been justified in taking almost any steps, short of taking his son's life, in the unparalleled

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circumstances of the case.

And the time was short. That was another perplexity. The constant state of nervous apprehension which overcame Dr. Wygram whenever his residence in one place lasted any time, pointed, of itself, to the necessity of making haste. Perhaps he magnified this difficulty; I cannot say. But there was something about their retired life which seemed likely to invite gossiping curiosity, in a country district more especially. That the neighbours had already questioned him as to the nature of his son's *delicacy* he assured me over and over again. What could they mean? "He has been watched," the father would say, excitedly. "We have already been here too long. They notice his unaltered appearance since our arrival. A growing lad, such as he appears, would have made some progress in the time, and they notice that he does not—nor ever will," he would add bitterly, "unless my last efforts should prove successful." It was idle to try to reason him out of these fears—for all I knew they might be real. It was pitiful to think how long they had possessed him, during many weary years. When I had met himself and his son fifteen years before, they were, even then, travelling as fugitives from place to place to avoid detection; still more harrowing to think that, in the father's case, from his rapidly aging look and growing feebleness, these wanderings must soon cease. Of his son's fate, in that overwhelming contingency, I could never trust myself to think. The thought of it often overcame Dr. Wygram himself. He told me once, that on one occasion, when abroad, the terror of this self-same prospect so unmanned him that he had attempted to confide in a brother practitioner, an Englishman, resident, I think, in Milan. "Like most countrymen of his craft abroad," said my poor friend bitterly, "he proved to be utterly incredulous. I might have known it, before exposing myself to his coarse ridicule. The line of my studies has been so utterly outside the old groove of pill and bolus, lancet and catheter, it is little wonder that the crowd will have none of its results. This professional brother only laughed in my face, rubbed his hands in glee, as at a good joke, asking me if I would not part with my recipe for a consideration, seeing he had some half-dozen youngsters of his own whose growing powers added to the tailor's bill. English medical men are proverbially obtuse, but for the full development of their sheer obstinacy and mulishness they should be transplanted to the soil which gave birth to transcendentalism."

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It was a breathless autumn evening when, in my presence, Dr. Wygram commenced his second experiment with his son. The dim scent of the shrubberies stole in through the open windows—over which the blinds were drawn. On a couch in the centre of the room lay young Wygram in a deep slumber, super-induced by an opiate which his father had administered, to aid the further stages of the treatment. A brass chafing dish lay upon the floor, containing some smouldering embers; from a tripod upon the table hung a small retort of crimson glass which glowed like a ruddy gem in the flickering light of the spirit lamp underneath.

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With arms stripped bare to the elbows, Dr. Wygram bent over his son, watching the depth of unconsciousness in which the latter was immersed. For nearly an hour my friend had not spoken a word. I did not wish to interrupt him, but I saw by his manner at length that the critical moment had arrived. He turned to me at last, and in a broken whisper told me that a few moments longer would decide his success or failure. "We shall now, I trust," he said, "have insight granted us in regard to a hitherto hidden mystery."

I do not know whether he ever obtained the insight in question, but I know that it was never granted to me. For, at that moment, loud voices were heard in the corridor. The door was unceremoniously thrown open, and three men entered the room. Their leader, a puffy, red-faced individual, fixed me with his glittering eye from the moment of his coming into the room. "That is the man!" he said, to his subordinates, pointing, at the same time, to me as I stood irresolute.

A sudden panic possessed me that instant. To escape by the door was impossible, as the men stood beside it, but the window behind me was handy. I turned, lifted the blind, and precipitately jumped into the garden a few feet below. I do not believe that I ever ran so fast in my life as I did on that occasion through the mazes of the shrubbery. My one frantic desire was to get away at all hazards from that dreadful dwelling, though from what I fled I could not have told. I only knew that horror, the accumulated horror, of the

past weeks, compressed into the moment, possessed me to my very heels. A wretched dog prowling about the garden gave chase to me as I fled, under the impression that I was making off with some portable property belonging to the establishment; but I soon left him far behind, and I do not think that the men joined in the pursuit, beyond the limits of the cottage, if, indeed, they followed me at all. In my terror I never looked behind, but ran through fields, hedges, and ditches till I arrived, breathless and hatless, at the nearest railway station. The officials seemed somewhat surprised at the appearance I presented, but I got a ticket without question, and was soon seated in a railway carriage on my way to London.

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These memoranda, written after a long period of nervous prostration, must be published, if for my own exculpation alone. Shortly after their committal to paper, a longing curiosity impelled me to inquire as to the fate of my old friend. I had promised not to desert him, and that promise I had scarcely kept. At all hazards, then, I resolved to go to Cornwall once more, even if by doing so, I should fall into the hands of the authorities, as I doubted not he had done. At all events, my own innocence was beyond question.

On the Paddington platform my apprehensions in this latter respect were redoubled. A young man standing beside me, when I was taking out my ticket, certainly eyed me very narrowly.

"One of the minions of the law," I said to myself; "the affair has got wind after all." As I was about to take my seat he came forward and asked if he had the pleasure of addressing Mr. F— of Blank Street. Resolved to brazen it out to the last, I admitted my identity.

"You are acquainted with Dr. Wygram, I think?" he continued, interrogatively.

I owned that I was. Denial, at this stage, would have been useless.

"I am his son," he said smilingly.

"His son!" I gasped. Then, after all, Dr. Wygram's second experiment had succeeded, and he who was before me had been freed from the spell of his youth. Yes, there was no doubt of it! He was now a man! "Is it possible?" I repeated, gazing at him with astonishment.

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"I think there is no doubt of it," he replied coolly. "You will be sorry to learn that my father is far from well," he resumed. "I have been from home for a long time, but am just going down to see him, in Cornwall."

"Just going down to see him?" This was mystery upon mystery.

"My dear sir," I said in despair, "I am very sorry indeed to hear of your father's illness, but would you kindly answer me one question as distinctly as you can. If you are Dr. Wygram's son, how is it that you do not remember me?"

"I do now most distinctly," he replied. "I remember travelling with you and my father, many years ago, when I was going to school in the North."

Heavens! Then all the years, since then, had been a blank to him!

"Have you no recollection," I suggested, "of having been with your father since then, a short time ago, in Cornwall?"

"Ah! that is my brother," he quickly returned. "Yes, *he* was with my father, when he took ill—been with him too long, in fact, for the good of either. My father, I am sorry to say, has for some time been quite unhinged mentally."

I should think he has, was my inward comment, for I saw it all in a moment. There were two young Wygrams; both of these I had seen when they were youngsters of the same age. Why had I not thought of this before? Is it not my special weakness that things dawn upon me very slowly? The rest, of course, was Dr. Wygram's delusion, ultimately necessitating his being placed under the care of his friends.

"My dear sir," I replied, after a pause, and with some effusion of manner, "I sincerely trust that your father's distressing illness may be but temporary. On his being able to receive the message, kindly present him with my warmest regards. Meanwhile, one question more before we part, for I am not going by this train; I—I have changed my mind. How many years, may I ask, may there be between your own age and that of your brother?"

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"About fourteen or fifteen," was the reply.

“Quite so; and when you were youngsters of about the same age, say, were you not considered very like one another?”

“Remarkably so,” he answered, laughingly, “as like as two peas.”

G. M. McCRIE.

ON THE INDIA FRONTIER: THE DOCTOR'S STORY.



“WANT Berlyng,” he seemed to be saying, though it was difficult to catch the words, for we were almost within range, and the fight was a sharp one. It was the old story of India frontier warfare; too small a force and a foe foolishly underrated.

The man they had just brought in—laying him hurriedly on a bed of pine-needles, in the shade of the conifers where I had halted my little train—poor Charles Noon of the Sikhs, was done for. His right hand was off at the wrist, and the shoulder was almost severed.

I bent my ear to his lips, and heard the words which sounded like “Want Berlyng.”

We had a man called Berlyng in the force—a gunner—who was round at the other side of the fort that was to be taken before night, two miles away at least.

“Do you want Berlyng?” I asked slowly and distinctly. Noon nodded, and his lips moved. I bent my head again till my ear almost touched his lips.

“How long have I?” he was asking.

“Not long, I’m afraid, old chap.”

His lips closed with a queer, distressed look. He was sorry to die. “How long?” he asked again.

“About an hour.”

But I knew it was less. I attended to others, thinking all the while of poor Noon. His home life was little known, but there was some story about an engagement at Poonah the previous warm weather. Noon was rich, and he cared for the girl; but she did not return the feeling. In fact, there was some one else. It appears that the girl’s people were ambitious and poor, and that Noon had promised large settlements. At all events, the engagement was a known affair, and gossips whispered that Noon knew about the some one else and would not give her up. He was, I know, thought badly of by some, especially by the elders.

However, the end of it all lay on a sheet beneath the pines and watched me with such persistence that I was at last forced to go to him.

“Have you sent for Berlyng?” he asked, with a breathlessness which I know too well.

Now, I had not sent for Berlyng, and it requires more nerve than I possess to tell unnecessary lies to a dying man. The necessary ones are quite different, and I shall not think of them when I go to my account.

“Berlyng could not come if I sent for him,” I replied soothingly. “He is two miles away from here, trenching the North Wall, and I have nobody to send. The messenger would have to run the gauntlet of the enemy’s earthworks.”

“I’ll give the man a hundred pounds who does it,” replied Noon, in his breathless whisper. “Berlyng will come sharp enough. He hates me too much.”

He broke off with a laugh which made me feel sick.

I found a wounded water-carrier—a fellow with a stray bullet in his hand—who volunteered to find Berlyng, and then I returned to Noon and told him what I had done. I knew that Berlyng could not come.

He nodded and I think he said, “God bless you.”

“I want to put something right,” he said, after an effort; “I’ve been a blackguard.”

I waited a little, in case Noon wished to repose some confidence in me. Things are so seldom put right that it is wise to facilitate such intentions. But it appeared obvious that what Noon had to say could only be said to Berlyng. They had, it subsequently transpired, not been on speaking terms for some months.

I was turning away when Noon suddenly cried out in his natural voice, "There *is* Berlyng."

I turned and saw one of my men, Swerney, carrying in a gunner. It might be Berlyng, for the uniform was that of a captain, but I could not see his face. Noon, however, seemed to recognize him. [208]

I showed Swerney where to lay his man, close to me, alongside Noon, who at that moment required all my attention, for he had fainted.

In a moment Noon recovered, despite the heat, which was tremendous. He lay quite still, looking up at the patches of blue sky between the dark, motionless tops of the pine trees.

His face was livid under the sunburn, and as I wiped the perspiration from his forehead he closed his eyes with the abandon of a child. Some men, I have found, die like children going to sleep. He slowly recovered and I gave him a few drops of brandy. I thought he was dying and decided to let Berlyng wait.

I did not even glance at him as he lay, covered with dust and blackened by the smoke of his beloved nine-pounders, a little to the left of Noon and behind me as I knelt at the latter's side. After a while his eyes grew brighter and he began to look about him.

He turned his head, painfully, for the muscles of his neck were injured, and caught sight of the gunner's uniform. "Is that Berlyng?" he asked, excitedly. "Yes."

He dragged himself up and tried to get nearer to Berlyng. And I helped him. They were close alongside each other. Berlyng was lying on his back, staring up at the blue patches between the pine-trees.

Noon turned on his left elbow and began whispering into the smoke-grimed ear.

"Berlyng," I heard him say, "I was a blackguard. I am sorry, old man. I played it very low down. It was a dirty trick. It was my money—and her people were anxious for her to marry a rich man. I worked it through her people. I wanted her so badly that I forgot I—was supposed—to be a—gentleman. I found out—that it was you—she cared for. But I couldn't make up my mind to give her up. I kept her—to her word. And now it's all up with me—but you'll pull through and it will all—come right. Give her my—love—old chap. You can now—because I'm done. I'm glad they brought you in—because I've been able—to tell you—that it is you she cares for. You—Berlyng, old chap, who used to be a chum of mine. She cares for you—God, you're in luck! I don't know whether she's told you—and I was—a d—d blackguard." [209]

His jaw suddenly dropped—and he rolled forward with his face against Berlyng's shoulder.

Berlyng was dead when they brought him in. He had heard nothing. Or perhaps he had heard and understood—everything.

HENRY SETON MERRIMAN.

DOCTOR GREENFIELD.



R. GREENFIELD looked round his small study with satisfaction and a touch of pride. In spite of the book-cases filled with treatises on medicines and diseases, and the inevitable patient's chair, the room still managed to be an attractive one. The book-cases were of oak; the dreaded chair lay claim to be a particularly good specimen of an early Sheraton; and over the chimney-piece, and on all available space of the soft green-colored walls hung good mezzotint prints in dark frames.

The servant put a match to the log-laid fire, for although it was May, there was an evening chill, and a sensation of damp.

The Doctor had dined early, with the expectation of a long drive, so his evening at home was unintentional, and caused by the little piece of pink paper which now lay unheeded at his feet. He stretched himself, felt how tired he was, and how luxurious was this unexpected evening at home. Then he remembered the cause and, with an involuntary movement, stooped and picked up the paper from where it lay. He opened it and read it again, though he had done so several times already.

A telegram so short, but he knew what it had meant to the sender of it; a lifelong message of despair, of shipwrecked hopes and utter loneliness. "Charlie died this evening." Dr. Greenfield read it out loud quite slowly—and once more it fluttered to the ground, and he sighed. So it was all over; the eight weeks' watching; the alternate hope and despair; the grim fight with death—and death had triumphed. He saw the girl, the sender of the message, standing as she had done when he told her that her brother must die. He thought of the weeks during which time he had been so much thrown with this girl—Juliet Carson—the days which they had spent together watching by the sick man's bed, fighting the battle of skill and science with destiny.

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And all the time his mind dwelt on it, he knew it did not really touch him—the worst part to him was that his science had failed him. For a moment he let himself believe that the constant facing death, which as a doctor he was bound to confront, had hardened his feelings, made him callous, and taken his sense of pity and sympathy from him; but he was too honest, and he remembered with a true flash of conviction that it had always been so, and memory took him back over many years, and he seemed to hear his nurse saying, "Master George has no heart, he didn't feel his father's death a bit." And it came to him how right she had been, how he had wanted to care, but something wouldn't let him; he could not cry as his brother did, and he had felt as if he belonged somewhere else. All his later life, too, he had known it. He had no sympathy, no pity, and he knew that others felt the want in him, though often they did not know what it was. He had lived for thirty-five years now, and he had never cared for anyone; and for the first time to-night, as he sat and looked into the fire, he knew that his life had been only half complete, that he lacked what was the best, and that his whole existence had been colourless. Still, as he argued against himself, if he had lacked the best, he had also missed the worst: many of his friends had gone; he had wanted to care, but the power was not there; he had seen piteous sights; he had witnessed heartrending scenes of poverty and despair, but they had all been nothing to him; they had passed by, and he had forgotten.

Somehow the image of Juliet to-night came back to him; the girl in her sorrow and loneliness with no one left to her; and he wondered why his heart was not wrung with pity. Although she did not stir his heart, or his senses, he could see she was beautiful; but for some other man, not for him. A new and painful sensation of loneliness suddenly swept over him, a horrible whiff of middle age, a foretaste of the solitude of old age, which must overtake him, but he could do nothing to help himself, he had no will, no power. He sat on in his deep reverie, with his eyes fixed on the burning logs. Then he got up from his chair and went to the window and looked out on the May evening.

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It was half-past eight o'clock, and the chill which comes just after sunset was in the air. He stood looking into the clear blue distance, listening to the nightingales and the hum of the bees. Then suddenly he saw a sight which astonished him—a procession winding its way down the long avenue of limes which faced his window: a curious procession, too—a funeral—it was unlike any he had seen before. It gave him a strange sensation. Preceding it were men and women, chanting as they went.

They paused as they came near to him, the singing ceased, and several made a gesture as if they would ask him to join them; then they drew back as he heard one say, "Ah, not him; he knows no pity, he has no love, he cannot come;" and they passed on, taking up their chant; and for the first time in his life he knew he was an outcast and a pariah. He was hungering and thirsting for someone to help him and pity him.

Behind them came men carrying the body of the dead man, and he bowed as they went by. Once more he looked, and he saw three figures—three white-robed women, walking together. And the one who walked in the midst had the eyes of Juliet Carson, and in her hands she held a large cup. The three paused as they came near to him, and it seemed to him as if a veil fell between the rest of the procession and them, the music got fainter, and he was left alone with these three; something within him told him that they held in that cup the power of pity and love, that they alone could give them to him, and he cried to them to take pity on him. Then Juliet, for it was Juliet, spoke to him; her eyes were troubled, though her face shone with a radiant smile, and her voice came to him as a soft wind, and stilled his despair and restlessness.

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"Listen," she said, "and know what you ask. We are three sisters, Love, Joy, and Sorrow, and if you drink of this cup you can never again be as you were. You would wish, likely, to take only Love and Joy, but as love brings joy, so also it surely brings sorrow, and you cannot take one without the other. Say, will you take Love, and in so doing accept Joy and Sorrow as they come?" and she paused while he made his choice.

But with eager, trembling hands he took the cup she offered him and drank thirstily, and then—his whole being was flooded with hope and delight, and as he handed the cup back to Juliet in her radiant form of love, she bent forward a little and kissed him—a kiss which thrilled his soul, and sent the life-blood rushing through his veins. Then the figures vanished. Once more he heard the faint sound of distant music, and then—and then * * *

The Doctor straightened himself in his chair, and looked round him in a dazed, bewildered manner.

"A dream," he murmured. "Is it possible? I, too, of all men."

He looked round him. The May morning was breaking into his room, the birds were singing, the sun was up. So then he had fallen asleep in his chair, and all that seemed so real, so tangible, was nothing but a dream—a dream of possibilities, and an awakening to realities.

As his mind grew clearer, he remembered all that had taken place the night before—ah! that telegram was the reality; and once more he stooped to pick it up. But, as he read it, a new feeling, and yet not a new feeling came to him—the sensation of his dream. It made him giddy, and he went to the window to steady himself, and to feel the air. But in him, and all around him, he was conscious of a change; a rush of almost divine pity and love swept across him. Ah! that, then, was no dream; he was in touch with the love, the sorrow, and pity of the world; he shared them all; he was one of them, he was no longer the pariah, the outcast; and more than that, he too loved, and his love had been alone with her suffering and sorrow all night. Last night he had not cared; to-day the pity of it almost stifled him.

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He threw up the window and stepped onto the lawn; the fresh dew was upon everything, and he stretched himself in the rays of the sun, and thanked God that he was alive. He looked long up the avenue, where in his dream he had seen the procession come down, and he shuddered when he thought how they had left him—no, not all—and his heart beat as he thought of Juliet Carson, and how she had come to him at the time of his great want. And the thought of her brought back to him the reality and the present, and, as he listened to the clock striking six, he knew that his restlessness must wait; he who had waited all his life was now impatient for two hours

to be over. Ah! had it come to this. He smiled at his own impetuosity, but had not the heart to rebuke himself.

He spent the next two hours wandering up and down his garden, listening to the morning sounds, as the world woke bit by bit to its day's work. He watched the workmen pass by his gate on their way to take up their daily toil, and he wondered why he had never pitied them—his had been so much more a case of pity. Though worn and tired, and perhaps saddened, they, too, had loved; they had somewhere, sometime, romance in their lives.

As the church clock struck eight he made his way to the stables and ordered his dog-cart. His own voice had a conscious sound in it, and he felt all the world must know he was a changed man. As he drove through the deep lanes, with the honeysuckle, pink may, and wild cherry blossom all in their beauty before him, he felt that there was only life, only beauty in the world, and all the sorrowful and sad side of it had fled away. But as he neared the old manor house, where death triumphed, his beating heart quietened somewhat, and he felt a touch of sorrow come over him.

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He was evidently expected, for he was admitted at once into the long low room, into which the sun was pouring. The window was thrown up, and as he paused he felt that the stillness of death was in the house. Then he heard a slight movement and turned. At the open window stood Juliet, the sun's rays lighting up her white gown, and her brown hair; her eyes had the troubled expression of his dream, but there was no radiance in the sad, weary, little face. In her hands she held great branches of white lilacs, lilies, and roses.

He went to meet her with outstretched hand, and a great pity in his heart spiritualizing his human love.

"I knew," she said simply; "I knew you would come." Had she, too, seen the vision, or was it in his face?

And did she bend her head as in his dream?—for his lips found hers, and that kiss drew the bitterness from her sorrow, while it opened up his new life for him, sweeping away all the years he had left behind, and flooding his soul with light and love.

And although they were in the presence of death, did not love triumph?

LADY MABEL HOWARD.

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DR. GLADMAN, A SKETCH OF COLONIAL LIFE.



IT WAS Christmas morning in Southern latitudes. The thermometer stood at 80 degrees in the shade, and we had just finished a really splendid run across the Pacific, right away from the Cape, without touching, and we were all delighted to be once more about to stand on terra firma. I had signed articles in London, at a shilling a month, as surgeon, to the good ship "Teneriffe," the Company naturally considering the said shilling good pay in addition to a free passage for myself, and at a reduced rate for my wife, to Sidney.

We were passing a lighthouse, and could see the smoke rising from the little settlement at King George's Sound. The houses and harbour itself were hidden by the first of the many headlands that were between us and the narrow opening to the anchorage. There was the usual bustle on deck and tramping to and fro of the sailors, who were getting the anchor clear and the decks in readiness to let go.

My wife and her sister were making certain changes in their dress that they might be ready the moment we dropped anchor to go ashore. I could hear my wife ask her sister Rosie if she could really believe "this everlasting voyage was over?" as I was hurriedly finishing off my letters in the saloon to take ashore. I had just fastened and sealed up a long letter to my friend H. at "Bart's," and another to my mother in peaceful Devonshire, and had done the same for some half dozen or more of my wife's, when I heard the orders, "Hard a-port," "Ease her," "Slow," passed to the wheel and engine room as the pilot's boat came alongside. It was manned by four rowers in man-o'-war's-man dress, and a tiny golden-haired boy, who didn't look more than ten, in the stern holding the tiller ropes in his little brown fist, and keeping his eyes fixed on the pilot's movements till he was safe on deck. Then he said authoritatively, "Let go the rope; fall astern," rolling the "r" and giving it "starn" in the approved style.

I ran down the companion-way again, and knocked at our state-room to tell my women-folk to come up and see him—they both are so fond of children. On going in I found my wife standing in the midst of open portmanteaus, fastening on her sister's white veil or puggery, attired herself in shore-going garments, and with another long red-and-white-striped puggery shading her own neck. My wife insists on considering Australia tropical!

"Do they wear gloves, do you suppose, in this place?" she said, taking a long pair of grey ones off the cabin sofa, with a somewhat scornful emphasis on the "this place" which expressed her private feeling about Australia generally.

"Of course they do; life in Australian towns is the same as life anywhere else," I said, proud of my information, derived from the blue-books of the Agent-General.

My wife smiled. She has a peculiarly sweet way of smiling sometimes, instead of answering one, which is equivalent to her to having the last word, and is far more than equivalent to me, and very trying, as I have to conjecture what the last word would have been.

We all went on deck. The pilot's boat was already some distance astern, and we could hardly see the little boy. We found we were steaming slowly through the blue water, past the swelling furze-covered headlands, the one we had just passed being crowned by a white lighthouse, with what looked at the distance a tiny white cottage, with neat palings and outhouses round it.

The pilot was in command on the bridge. We could see his figure against the sky, standing on the narrow strip of a platform, from which the officer of the watch rules his seagirt kingdom with an even more absolute despotism than that of the sultans of the "Arabian Nights." His broad back, upright figure, and strong hands grasping the rail in front, gave one a sense of security, though the

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quick clear enunciation of the necessary orders was not quite that of a sailor, or at least did not sound so, after the jolly roar to which we were accustomed in our skipper.

For all that, we soon found ourselves safely anchored well in sight of the tiny jetty of the straggling collection of wooden and corrugated iron buildings that form the town of Albany.

The ship was at once surrounded by a swarm of copper-coloured savages—lads and men, from apparently ten years old to about thirty—more or less nude, who proceeded, one out of each pair in their rough boats, to dive into the clear blue water after the coins the passengers threw in, and which they came up holding in their white teeth, shaking the water out of their close black curls.

We were watching two of these chattering gleaming “bronzes,” as my wife called them, averring that unless you looked upon them as statuary they were really not proper, when the captain came up to us, as we leant over the bulwarks, to introduce the pilot, who stood just behind him with an amused smile at my wife’s last remark.

“Doctor, let me introduce Dr. Gladman, our pilot, to you,” said our skipper. “Mrs. M. and Miss N., this is our parish doctor, health officer, and pilot—Dr. Gladman.”

The pilot bowed, and holding his peaked cap in his left hand stood with his close curling grey hair uncovered in the glowing Australian sunshine, while he shook hands with my wife and her sister. “Welcome to Australia, ladies,” said he, still holding his cap.

“Thank you, doctor,” said my wife. “But are you not afraid to remain uncovered in this dreadful sun?”

“Not for a short moment, madam,” he replied, and added, glancing at her delicate pale face and the more blooming cheeks of her sister, “We naturalised Australians long ago gave up all hope of having your beautiful English complexions,” replaced his cap.

“Naturalised?” echoed Rosie, looking ready to shake hands over again. “Are you really an Englishman, Dr. Gladman? Oh! I am so glad. I was afraid every one would be Australian—Colonial now.”

Dr. Gladman laughed. “A good colonist,” he said, “but not a Colonial. No, it certainly seems a very long time ago, but I did originally come from ‘Home,’ as we say out here. I was born in Buckinghamshire, and bred at Bart’s.”

The magic word Bart’s—my beloved hospital!—completed the charm Dr. Gladman’s fine head, clever face, and quick cheery speech had worked.

Here was a brother in arms, at the first push off! As we made the tour of the ship together, necessary before he could give us our clean bill of health and a soul could leave the ship, I found he had known several of the older men of my time who were youngsters in his. He had qualified fifteen years before I did, but by the time we had reached the cabin to go over the ship’s papers with the captain he seemed an old friend. There is something in the air of strange lands that draws Englishmen together. I had been sent out for my health; so had he, he told me with a jolly laugh, “quite a wreck, they said, ten years ago!” I told him the latest medical news from England, and found he was only a fortnight behind me! and saw his *Medical Journal* and *Lancet* as regularly as I did. As we sat down to the saloon table, I asked him how they managed for a pilot, supposing a ship should come in and signal for one, while he was away across the bay, or over on the bush, in his capacity of doctor.

“Oh,” said Dr. Gladman, “it doesn’t often happen. You see the regular liners—the P. and O. and Orient boats—don’t require a pilot, they come in so often. I don’t quite know why you signalled for one, skipper,” he added, turning to the captain, who had ordered sherry to be put on the table, and was sitting with his elbows well squared putting his very black and inky signature to the ship’s papers.

“I’ve never been in here as skipper before. Why, it must be four years since I was here at all, Gladman. I was chief officer on the ‘Regulus,’ don’t you remember, when I last came into the Sound? Let’s see, in 1880 it was.”

“Ay, so you were,” returned the pilot; “but,” he added, turning to me, “one of my boat’s crew has a pilot’s license too, and can take a boat in quite as well as I can. If they don’t care to have him, they have to wait till I get back, if I am out. Once or twice I’ve been run very hard though, doing pilot and doctor at the same time almost.”

“I remember, Gladman, just this very day, eight years ago,”

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struck in the captain, "you took in the 'Badger' for Captain D—. I was his mate then, just before that awful gale of wind when the old jetty was nearly washed to pieces. It was the first time I ever saw you, and you were off then to some good lady—do you remember?"

"Yes, I remember that," said the pilot, balancing his silver pencil-case on his finger. "I hadn't my little coxswain with me then, had I, skipper?"

"Hadn't you? Oh! no—of course you hadn't"—and the skipper laughed. "He was only born that night, was he? Dear, dear, how time flies! So he is eight years old to-day! Here's to him!" And the skipper raised his glass, and so did the doctor, saying to me, "It's the little chap you noticed in my boat—my little coxswain."

I drank my glass also to the little fellow's health, and then the captain said:

"Tell the doctor, Gladman, how you came to take him."

"What is his name?" I said. "I saw a curly-headed little fellow in the stern of your boat, and also that you had four men besides. That is a good large crew, isn't it, simply to pull you out to a ship and back?"

"It isn't a man too much, either, doctor, and when you have seen our Breaksea in a storm of wind and rain you'll agree with me. Besides, that gig is all I have to take me to my patients across the bay, up the harbour to the town. Of course there is a path to the town round the cliffs from the lighthouse, where I live."

"You saw it as we passed, doctor. Gladman is lighthouse-keeper, among other things," put in the skipper.

"But," went on the pilot, smiling at the interpolation, "it is a long way round, and I haven't time for long ways round. We get all our provisions, too, by the boat, and my wife goes to church and pays her calls in it. She is a first-rate sailor, isn't she, skipper? And as for that monkey, Jack—my little coxswain—he's a far better pilot than I am."

"Is he now?" said the captain. "Tell the doctor how you came to take him," he said, with a sailor's love of a good yarn.

"He is not your son, then?" I said, a little surprised; for I had noticed that the child was more carefully dressed than one would expect one of the crew's lads to be.

"Well, he is, and he isn't. My wife and I adopted him. We lost our little one—it was a girl though—the day he was born. Yes, it is eight years ago to-day our little one was down with scarlet fever. She was nearly two. There had been an epidemic of it in the town, but I never knew how the child got it, up there miles away, unless, you know, doctor," he said a little sadly, "I took it up to the cottage myself—I always feared so. I used, before then, to think if I had been to any infectious cases in the town, that after the couple of hours' row across and round the point I should be safe and not take anything up to the cottage. Anyhow, the little thing had it, and badly; I hadn't much hope in the morning. My poor little wife—she was one of your Bart's sisters before I married her—literally fought the disease inch by inch, and we both of course did all that could be done. I had sat up half the night—Christmas Eve—with the little maid. It was one of those bad throat cases, doctor," said the pilot, a little gruffly, turning to me.

I nodded, and he went on: "About seven, one of the men at the lighthouse came to say a pilot was signalled for by a ship off the head."

"That was the 'Badger'—ay. I remember you coming aboard in the cool of the morning, as well as if it was to-day," said the captain.

"The other fellow was away," continued the pilot; "so I had a bath and changed all my things, and left the poor wife, who was beginning to lose hope, sitting with the baby on her lap. I hardly thought it would live till I got back. Just as I rounded the headland—or was it a bit farther on, skipper—?"

"Thereabouts," said the skipper.

"We met a boat from the town, and one of the boatmen called out to know if I was aboard, because I was wanted in Albany. His wife was taken bad.

"You know what that means, doctor!" grinned the skipper.

"I ought to, captain," I said, hearing as he spoke a smothered murmur from our state-room, from which I guessed that the dead silence which had till then prevailed therein was only another proof of the truth of the saying, that women are curious beings.

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Wholly unconscious that he had any other hearers than myself and the captain, the pilot went on:

"We were steaming into the harbour as quick as we could, so I told the man to fall astern, and we towed them behind us. When I got to Mrs. Rogers, I found that she was better, and that I shouldn't be wanted probably that day at all; but I did not intend to go back home—I thought it best not; but after an hour or two I saw my boat run in alongside the jetty, and one of the fellows come ashore. In a few moments, Rogers brought me a note from my wife begging me to come back if I possibly could; she was frightened about the child.

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"I knew I could do nothing, but I couldn't bear the thought of the wife's being all alone up there and looking for me—and perhaps, later on, I shouldn't be able to go—so, as I found when I went up to Rogers' cottage that everything was put off, and my patient preparing her husband's tea, I set off home again.

"The day had clouded over, and the hot wind that had blown off the land all day had died down, and there was that dead silence we always have before a black squall of wind and rain comes up from the sea.

"Before we got across the bay, gusts of wind dead in our teeth caught us once or twice and curled the water round her bows; and just as I jumped ashore, the first dash of rain came. As I stepped on to our verandah, a great roaring gust nearly swept me away.

"I went up to the windows, and took down one of the outside shutters my wife had put up to protect the glass, and saw her sitting with the little one in her arms. She was relieved to see me, and beckoned to me to go round and come in. But, you know," said the pilot, clearing his throat, "I couldn't go in, going back, as I was, to the good woman in labour over at Albany. It wouldn't have been safe."

"No," I said, "I suppose not;" but I wondered if I should have been so conscientious if it had been I.

"It may have been hard of me, perhaps," said the pilot, looking straight in front of him; "but I thought it right; and I could do nothing; I knew that when I left in the morning. I opened the window and told the wife how it was. She was very good; she wanted me to come in, of course, if only to kiss the little thing before it died. But I told her I did not think I ought. I couldn't *do* anything for the child; it was dying then."

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The good honest fellow stopped a moment, and again I heard a movement, and I thought a stifled sob, from our cabin; but the captain broke in in a rather unnecessarily loud voice:

"You were quite right, doctor. It was very good of you. I couldn't have done it myself, I should have felt so for the missis."

"I felt for my wife," said the pilot, in rather a hard voice; "but I couldn't have done any good," he repeated, as if afraid to trust himself to say anything else. Then he went on:

"She sent the girl out with some food for me in the verandah; and we watched the little one, she inside and I out. I couldn't hear anything in the room, the wind roared and shook the verandah so; but I could see the child was breathing slower. Then my wife put her hand under the wrap to feel its little feet." He broke off, and then added:

"I didn't see the end. One of the men came up to say they had signalled for the doctor from the town. So I had to start back. The gig tore through the black seas before the gale. It was a pitch dark night, about eight when I started. I got to Mrs. Rogers just in time. The youngster was born about midnight. The mother did very well, and when I left, about four in the morning, the bay was like a sheet of glass, and the sun rising without a cloud over the cliffs. The jetty had been washed away, all but the stonework, and my men had had to beach our boat right up on the road.

"When I got back, I found the wife on the lookout by the lighthouse. She had heard nothing of us, of course, since I left the night before."

"That was a hardish day's work," said the skipper—"thirty hours of it.

"Well, I was not sorry to get my boots off, and get some sleep, before I started on my round. I'd a longish ride that day to the telegraph construction camp, over the hill there," said Dr. Gladman, getting up from the table and taking his cap.

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"And your little girl—doctor?" said my wife, suddenly appearing

at her cabin door, tears on her cheek and a little gasp in her voice.

"It was dead, ma'am," said the father, and turned to the companion and went on deck.

We saw very little more of Dr. Gladman while we were in Albany. My wife and her sister went up to the lighthouse and called on his wife. They came away charmed with her and the dainty little household she reigned over. My wife was enthusiastic over the trim garden, cool little parlour, and "exquisitely clean kitchen," and "would you believe it," she said, "she has only one maid-servant, and that a girl of seventeen!"

"I think," she said impressively, stopping in our walk up and down the deck, as we were taking our last turn that night after leaving Albany, gliding past the shadowy coast under the wonderful Southern Cross—"I think they are both splendid, those Gladmans."

A burly figure leaning over the bulwarks, puffing clouds of smoke into the still night air, turned round, and the captain's voice said:

"That's what they are, ma'am. That's the sort of colonist this country wants; a man like Gladman is worth a whole shipload of the ne'er-do-wells they're so fond of sending out. As for such like!" he pointed with his elbow, as he replaced his pipe, to a group of dissipated-looking youngsters coming up from the bar, whose determination to drink more than was good for them had been a source of worry to him all the way out—"As for such like," he said, with a look it would do many intending emigrants good to have seen, "I ask you, doctor, what's the good of them?"

—*Gentleman's Magazine.*

DR. WRIGHTSON'S ENEMY.



FOR the last thirty years, Dr. Wrightson had been the sole medical adviser of the little town of Oakhampton, and he was still a hale, hearty, jovial, stout gentleman, of about sixty years of age.

Dr. Wrightson lived in the High Street, in a long, low, white house, which never failed to look as clean and bright as if it had been thoroughly done (apparently fresh from the foundry) announced in large letters to every passer-by that this was the abode of Dr. Wrightson. To the left of the white house stood the surgery, which was marked by a glaring red lamp and several bells, and over this surgery presided a helpless and timid young man named Titmas, the doctor's only assistant.

Many wondered how it was that Dr. Wrightson did not engage a partner in his business; but that gentleman invariably turned a deaf ear to all hints of this nature. He was strong and well, he said, and able to do his work himself without any help at present. There would be time enough to talk about a partner when he grew to be an old man. The real fact of the matter was, that Dr. Wrightson could not bear to admit "a rival near his throne." He was fond of his profession, proud of his reputation in it, and very jealous of every other practitioner. A partner would have driven him distracted; and I doubt if he would ever have allowed him to feel a single pulse, or to have sent so much as a black draught out of the dispensary, without his express permission.

Besides this, Dr. Wrightson had another reason for wishing to keep all the practice of Oakhampton in his own hands. The doctor had a daughter—his only child, and the very apple of his eye. To make, or save a fortune for Fanny was the first great object of Dr. Wrightson's life, his one daily anxiety; and in this task the worthy doctor found an able and willing coadjutor in his sister Penelope, who shared all his hopes and fears, and seconded his endeavours to make a handsome provision for pretty Fanny. A partner would necessarily have been very much in the way of this project. If he did half the work, he would also have divided the profits, and that would by no means have suited Dr. Wrightson's purposes; and, in short, a partner, or even an assistant above the calibre of the inoffensive Titmas, who had not two ideas in his head, would have caused Dr. Wrightson tortures of jealousy and uneasiness.

Fanny Wrightson had been carefully brought up at a first-class boarding-school; for her mother died when she was a very little child, and Aunt Penny, who then came to take charge of her brother's establishment, though an excellent housekeeper, was scarcely equal to the responsibility of undertaking the education of her niece. The day she was seventeen, Fanny returned to Oakhampton as a "*finished*" young lady, with a variety of rather useless accomplishments, and a very slender stock of common sense.

Fanny had, moreover, a fine taste for romance, which seemed to be in some danger of fading away from pure inanition at Oakhampton, when an event occurred which startled the whole Wrightson family from their usual equanimity, and raised a storm of conflicting emotions in the heart of pretty Fanny.

"What *do* you think? what *will* you say? what *is* to be done?" exclaimed Miss Wrightson, as she entered her brother's room in an excited manner one afternoon just before dinner-time.

"Well, Penelope, what's the matter now? Is the house on fire, or are there burglars in the cellar, or what?" asked Dr. Wrightson, quietly looking up from a medical journal which he was perusing with deep attention.

"No, no, brother! but something quite as bad. That old house in Church Street is taken, and by whom, do you think? By a medical man! There! His name is Peirce—Montague Peirce—and they are coming in at Lady Day."

"The deuce they are!" cried Dr. Wrightson, throwing down his

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journal with a bang. "Much good may it do them! I flatter myself the poor man may go back where he came from without having done *me* much injury. I have not lived in Oakhampton all these years without being able to hold my own against any impertinent upstart in the kingdom; and so you may tell him, if you see him, with my compliments—my most respectful compliments. Ha, ha, ha! a pretty joke, indeed. Poor Mr. Montague Peirce! I am sorry for him. His prospects are not very lively, poor fellow! Eh? Fanny, my dear, what have you got to say about it?"

"I say it's a horrid, wicked shame," replied Fanny, throwing her long curls over her shoulders, "and I quite hate this Mr. Montague Peirce already. What business has he to come poking his nose into Oakhampton, of all places? as if anybody would ever think of sending for him when they could get my dear old darling papa to attend them. The idea of such a thing! But never mind, Aunt Penny, perhaps Mr. Peirce will take some of the poor people who can't pay, off papa's hands; and then he will have more time to spare for us at home."

"Bless the child! that's not a bad idea," said Dr. Wrightson. "So we'll let him have some of the *very* poor people, shall we? Yes, yes! so he shall. Excellent practice for a rising man. Give him confidence and experience, won't it? We'll hope, though, the poor fellow has not a large family to support, or else that he has some private means of his own. He won't live in that house for nothing, I can tell him."

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"The rent alone is sixty pounds a year," remarked Miss Wrightson; "and the garden is being thoroughly set in order, Mudge tells me. Mudge has been employed to do many little odd jobs about the house, and I met him coming out of it just now. Mudge hears Mr. Peirce is a single man—quite a young man—but has his mother living with him. He was doing well in London, and was reckoned very clever there, so the servants told Mudge; but the air did not suit the old lady, and so they have come to settle in the country. I can't think whoever can have advised them to come to Oakhampton, of all places.

"Some ignorant busybody who did not know what he was about, you may depend upon it," said Dr. Wrightson. "Now, let's go to dinner, Penny."

"It's not as if you were ever ill, you know, or unable to attend to your duties," continued Miss Penelope, as she walked into the dining-room, "or as if, when you did go away for a day or two, you could not get Mr. Halliday, from Littleton, to come and look after your patients. It's such a ridiculous thing of a young man to come down from London, and try to cut you out at Oakhampton, brother."

"It merely evinces great folly and presumption on the part of the young man, my dear Penny, and so we'll say no more about the matter."

But from that day forward the favourite topic in the Wrightson family was the last enormity committed by Mr. Montague Peirce.

"I saw that fellow's trap standing at Hornibrook's door," Dr. Wrightson would suddenly observe; "that fellow" being the very mildest designation that was ever bestowed to Mr. Peirce.

"Oh, yes! I daresay you did. The man makes free with everybody, I hear," Miss Wrightson would reply, indignantly. "He goes and pays people long visits, and bores them to death, I've no doubt, and then hopes all the town will take it for granted that he is attending them."

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It was very disagreeable for poor Dr. Wrightson, when he drove through the streets in his neat, respectable, blue brougham, to meet this young Peirce dashing past in his light, smart-looking dog-cart, drawn by a big chestnut horse; and it was most unpleasant for the whole family to go to church every Sunday, knowing they were liable to be jostled against "those Peirces" in the aisle.

Miss Penelope declared she could hardly bear to walk down the street, lest she should meet her adversaries; and as for Fanny, she could not think how it happened, but she never went near the windows without seeing the "dreadful man" pass by. It was curious, that, under these painful circumstances Fanny should spend the greater part of her time in looking out of the window. To be sure, Mr. Peirce was as good-looking and pleasant a young man as could be met with on a summer's day, and the old lady, his mother, was quite a picture in her rich black silks; but the Wrightsons insisted upon considering the Peirces as their mortal enemies, and would not

listen to a word in their favour.

The rest of the inhabitants of Oakhampton were naturally less rancorous against the intruders. The Peirces were not likely to injure them in any way. Mr. Priestly, the rector, his wife, and daughters, of course, called on Mrs. Peirce, and pronounced her to be a very lady-like, well-informed, agreeable person. The Pentelows, and the Fanthoms, and the Hornibrooks, and the Goslings, and old Mr. Lillywhite, thought it incumbent upon them to follow the example of the Rector, and it was soon rumoured that the Peirces were not unlikely to prove a great addition to the society of Oakhampton. Young men were scarce articles in that locality, and Mr. Peirce, not having much to do, entered with great zest into the cricket matches, and the croquet parties of the neighbourhood.

Besides, Oakhampton was a place that was improving rapidly. That is to say, a railroad had lately run through the town, and, in consequence, fresh villas, streets, terraces, and squares, were rising up in every direction. Quite a new population had been formed during the last few years, and many of these new comers, who had not known Dr. Wrightson from their cradles upwards, rejoiced in the advent of the new doctor and determined to patronize Mr. Peirce from London at once. There were, indeed, other persons in Oakhampton, old inhabitants who should have known better, but who were so perverse and ill-judging as to prefer the treatment of Mr. Peirce to that of Dr. Wrightson, who was by this disaffected party termed "a twaddling old woman." Others, again, there were, who had been affronted occasionally, when, on sending for Dr. Wrightson himself, they had been put off with "that stupid creature, Titmas," who never seemed to know what he was about; and these now gladly employed the rival practitioner. With the best intentions, poor Dr. Wrightson could not possibly make himself ubiquitous, or attend to fifty patients at once. Thus it happened one unlucky day, when Dr. Wrightson had been to pay a visit to his old and faithful ally, Lady Cardozo, who lived about five miles from Oakhampton, that Mrs. Pankhurst's little girl took the opportunity of swallowing a pin, which stuck in her throat, and frightened the whole Pankhurst family into fits. As the case was one quite beyond the powers of poor Titmas, Mr. Peirce was called in, and extracted the pin with so much promptitude and skill that Mrs. Pankhurst was delighted with him, and asked him to prescribe for her own nervous affections at the same time, and also, to call the next day and see how the child was going on. It is true that Mr. Pankhurst (as in honour bound) called on Dr. Wrightson immediately, and explained to him fully all the circumstances of the case, but that headstrong and unreasonable old gentleman could not be induced to see the thing at all in its proper light. He looked annoyed and huffy, and remarked in his most caustic manner, "that if Mr. and Mrs. Pankhurst were satisfied with the attendance of Mr. Peirce, that was all that could be desired." Dr. Wrightson had not the slightest wish to interfere, and thought Mr. Pankhurst could not do better than secure the services of the young man altogether. Having been so successful in his treatment of Miss Pankhurst, he would doubtless continue to give advice to the rest of the family. Perhaps when Dr. Wrightson said this, he never expected to be taken at his word; but it did so happen that the very next week the whole of the little Pankhursts (eight in number) were seized, in regular rotation, with the scarlatina, and Mr. Peirce was in regular attendance at Pankhurst Park for the next three months. This was a terrible blow to Dr. Wrightson, for Pankhurst Park was one of the most profitable households in the neighbourhood; and the Pankhursts were rich, influential people, and kept a good deal of company; and of course Mrs. Pankhurst went about in her usual idiotic manner, recommending Mr. Peirce as the most wonderful man of the age, and the only doctor worth consulting in the county.

Still Dr. Wrightson and his sister shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders, and repeated "that fellow would be found out before long." Now, it so happened that the garden of Dr. Wrightson's house in High Street stood at right angles with the garden of Mr. Peirce's house in Church Street, and at a certain point, the walls met. Fanny Wrightson's bed-room window commanded an excellent view of the Peirce's garden, and it was a never-failing source of interest to watch the proceedings of the Peirce family. She was anxious to see what "the enemy" did, when he was at home, and she soon contrived to make herself complete mistress of his movements, and became intimately acquainted with his habits and customs. He was

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very kind and attentive to his mother, that was certain, and apparently he was good to his servants and spoke civilly to them. They looked as if they had a great regard for him; even the fat, lazy, old tabby cat loved him and followed him about, and jumped upon his shoulder whenever she could get the opportunity. Fanny could not help rather taking a fancy to that old cat of the Peirces, and when she got over the wall into the Wrightson's garden, Fanny was actually guilty of giving her some milk sometimes when her aunt was out.

It was about this time Fanny took violently to the study of Shakspeare. "Romeo and Juliet" was her favourite play. What sweet passages there were in "Romeo and Juliet!" Nothing could be more striking, for instance, than that part where Juliet exclaims—"Oh, Romeo! Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?"

And how affecting were the lines—

"My only love sprung from my only hate,
Too early seen unknown; and known too late,
Prodigious birth of love it is to me,
That I must love a loathed enemy."

But nothing would induce either Dr. Wrightson or his sister to allow the poor Peirces any quarter. He was an interloper and an adversary of the most aggressive nature. If Mr. Peirce happening to meet Dr. Wrightson in the street, should, in the innocence of his heart, take off his hat in passing, the old gentleman would turn his head the other way and pretend not to see him, or would coldly return the greeting with a gesture of intense disgust.

When Miss Wrightson and Mrs. Peirce met at the house of some mutual acquaintance, as was not unfrequently the case, the spinster would draw herself up, tuck in her chin, and curtsey in her stiffest manner to the widow, and declining all conversation, would sniff alarmingly during the whole period that Mrs. Peirce remained in the room. Neither the doctor nor his sister scrupled to express the utmost solicitude for all Mr. Peirce's patients. They feared any sick person ran a very poor chance who had Peirce for their medical attendant, and they did not hesitate to say that rather than be left to the mercy of "that inexperienced, conceited young fool," they would prefer being in the hands of Mr. Titmas himself.

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In spite of all they thought, said, and looked, however, Mr. Peirce's practice increased daily. The farmers and their families flocked to his door on market days, for "the young man from London" had performed some almost miraculous cures, it was stoutly averred. Then many of the tradespeople thought it fair to give "young Peirce" a turn now and then, and his reputation spread to the servants of some great families in the neighbourhood. Old Lady Cardozo's own maid actually refused to consult Dr. Wrightson about her digestion, and announced boldly "that Mr. Peirce had done such wonders for her cousin, Mrs. Hogsflesh, the butcher's wife, in a similar case, that rather than not have the benefit of his advice, she would walk all the way into Oakhampton on her own legs, and pay him for it out of her own money." And so good an effect had Mr. Peirce's medicine upon the malady of Mrs. Milliken, that the good woman entreated her mistress to try just one bottle of it, for her ladyship suffered sadly from precisely the same symptoms as Mrs. Hogsflesh. The dose, taken surreptitiously and in great fear and trembling by old Lady Cardozo, was most efficacious, and though she was too loyal to her old friend to desert Dr. Wrightson altogether, still Lady Cardozo sent Mrs. Milliken constantly into Oakhampton on secret embassies to Mr. Peirce for further supplies of his very excellent remedy for a weak digestion.

And so the autumn slipped away, and the trees grew bare, and the winds howled, and the damp, chilly fogs of November fell upon the little town of Oakhampton, and the more Fanny saw of her father's enemy, the less it became in her power to hate him, as she felt a good and dutiful daughter should do. This made her very unhappy at times.

Lectures on scientific subjects were quite an annual institution in Oakhampton during the long winter evenings. Fanny Wrightson had always been a very regular attendant at these lectures, not that she understood what they were about, the least in the world, or that she came home a bit wiser than she went out, but the lectures offered some excuse for a very mild kind of dissipation, and Fanny's life was a monotonous one. This year Fanny was more devoted than ever to

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the "pursuit of knowledge under difficulties," for Mrs. Peirce and her son were sure to be at the Athenæum, and it sometimes happened (Fanny declared she never knew how) that she found herself seated next to the Peirces, and then Mr. Peirce would very good-naturedly explain to her everything that she could not understand, and would make the most abstruse subjects as simple to her as A B C.

Dr. Wrightson never went to lectures. He was too tired of an evening, even if he had no patients to visit, and he was glad to take his "forty winks" in his armchair by the fire. Aunt Penelope was too much afraid of risking a bad cold to stir out after dark, and so Fanny was duly called for every Thursday evening at half-past seven, by her neighbours, the Pentelows, who also left her again at her own door about ten o'clock; and when she returned, Dr. and Miss Wrightson were too sleepy to ask many questions, or to make any stringent inquiries as to Fanny's adventures. She thought it was not worth while to wake them up and make them uncomfortable by telling them about the Peirces, and I have no doubt that if they gave the matter a moment's thought, they took it for granted that Fanny invariably sat between her friends, Eliza and Harriet Pentelow.

It chanced, however, one Thursday morning, that Dr. Wrightson descried in a shop window a notice, stating that Montague Peirce, Esq., was to deliver a lecture on chemistry at the Athenæum that evening, and he instantly came home, in great wrath and indignation, to forbid Fanny or any of his household to attend the lecture, as usual, on pain of his heavy displeasure. Not any member of his family, he declared, should "encourage the man to make a Tom-fool of himself by giving lectures."

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In vain Fanny remonstrated and entreated and coaxed her father to let her go, that once. Dr. Wrightson was inexorable, till his pretty little daughter in despair burst into tears, and then Aunt Penny interfered, and assured her father that he had better say no more about it. "Fanny was moped to death at home, and after all, it would be amusing to hear what a mess the young idiot made of his lecturing, and how he would be the laughing-stock of the place, with his absurd conceit and presumption." So Fanny at length obtained a reluctant consent. It was raining hard when the Pentelows called for her, but Fanny did not care for that. Wrapped in her large waterproof cloak, she tripped along the muddy streets to the Athenæum, feeling very proud and very happy, and firmly convinced that if she had been forced to stay at home her heart must have broken at once. Mrs. Peirce saw her as she entered, and made her a sign to come and sit by her, and the old lady was so good and kind as to confide to Fanny her nervous fears for "Monty," though, at the same time, she was quite sure his would be the best lecture of the season. And such was soon the opinion of everybody in the room. Mr. Peirce had so fine a voice, so happy a delivery, and such a thorough knowledge of his subject, that the attention of the audience was attracted, even by the first few sentences.

Mrs. Peirce and Fanny were gratified to their hearts' content by the acclamations of applause which greeted the close of the lecture.

The evening wound up with some amusing experiments with laughing gas by which several school-boys and a shopman or two were thrown into convulsions of laughter. This proved so catching, that the whole room was in an uproar of merriment, and the audience clapped and screamed, and stamped and cheered, till the whole street resounded with the sounds of their mirth. At the very height of this confusion, a rough, dirty-looking man was observed to press hastily through the crowded hall, towards the platform. His eager looks and evident anxiety caught the attention of the lecturer, and he instantly went forward to meet him.

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After speaking to the man for a moment, Mr. Peirce's countenance changed to an expression of the deepest concern and alarm. He whispered a few words to his mother, and immediately left the room.

"What is it? What has happened? Is anybody ill?" inquired Fanny of Mrs. Peirce.

"My poor child," said the old lady, putting her arm around Fanny's waist affectionately, "something very terrible has happened. I hardly know how to tell you that your father has met with a sad accident. Can you bear it bravely? They say it is now freezing very hard out of doors, and the streets are slippery. It seems Dr. Wrightson, on his way to see a patient, has fallen down

and hurt himself severely. They have sent for Montague. Let us try to slip quietly out at that side door, and we shall be at home as soon as they are."

It was quite true, that the rain had soon turned to sleet, and the sleet had frozen as it fell, and the streets were a perfect sheet of glass, in which the houses were reflected as in a mirror.

Dr. Wrightson had been sent for to a sick person, and in picking his way cautiously along the pavement, he had been suddenly startled, just as he passed the Athenæum, by the shouts of laughter and applause that issued from its partly-opened doors. In his astonishment and irritation at these unexpected sounds, the doctor made a false step, his foot slipped from under him, and he fell, with his head on the curbstone and his leg doubled under him; and there he lay, stunned and helpless, till some workmen passing by, ran to his assistance.

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Seeing he was perfectly unconscious, the men fancied he was dead, and this was the report that one of them carried to Mr. Peirce.

When Fanny and Mrs. Peirce made their way into the street, they found that it was hardly possible to walk without falling. No horse could keep its footing at all, and people were slipping and sliding about in every direction. It was with considerable difficulty that the two ladies reached Dr. Wrightson's door in safety, and there they were met by a melancholy cavalcade. The good old Doctor lay on a shutter, borne by half-a-dozen strong men, and was followed by a crowd of sorrowing friends. At the head of the procession walked the Rector and Mr. Peirce.

At the surgery-door appeared Mr. Titmas, frightened at the tramping of so many feet, who, when he learnt what had occurred, speedily lost the little stock of presence of mind he had ever possessed, and collapsed altogether into a state of helpless imbecility.

Miss Wrightson, who was summoned down-stairs by the shrieks of the parlour-maid, instantly fainted dead away, in the front hall, just as the lifeless form of her brother was brought into the house.

Nobody seemed to have any presence of mind but poor little Fanny, who stood there, pale and trembling to be sure, but quite ready to obey Mr. Peirce's directions, and to make herself useful in every possible way. Under Mrs. Peirce's superintendence a bed was soon prepared for Dr. Wrightson, in his own study; splints and bandages were procured from the surgery, and Mr. Peirce proceeded to examine the injuries sustained by the poor gentleman.

His head was badly cut, but it was hoped that no great harm was done in that quarter; his right leg, however, had sustained a compound fracture, and he seemed much bruised and shaken by his fall. Mr. Priestly strove to help Mr. Peirce, Mr. Titmas being quite incapable of being of the slightest use to anybody, and Mrs. Peirce proved herself to be a most valuable and experienced nurse. As soon as Miss Wrightson was restored to her senses, she sat crying and rocking herself backwards and forwards, in a corner of the room, declaring that her brother was dying, and that she should not long survive him, while Fanny knelt by her father's bedside, patiently watching the proceedings of Mr. Peirce and his mother, and waiting upon them in a quiet unobtrusive way, which raised her very much in their opinion.

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The first words spoken by Dr. Wrightson were, "Send for Halliday immediately. I don't know what has happened; but it seems to me, I am ill, and Titmas is no better than a fool. But don't send for that fellow Peirce, whatever you do. D'ye hear? all of you. I tell you I won't have the man in my house as long as I am alive to be the master of it."

"Ahem! my good friend," began the Rector, gently clearing his throat, "it is not possible to send to Littleton to-night; the roads are quite impassable. You have had the misfortune to slip down yourself, and your leg has been broken. It is now set, and will, we trust, under the blessing of Providence, be ere long restored to use."

"Nonsense! Don't tell me," cried the Doctor, angrily, "Halliday must and shall be sent for. He will come directly he knows I am ill. My leg shall not be set till Halliday comes. Let no one dare to meddle with it."

"Oh! my dear, dear father," said Fanny, throwing her arms around him, "do be good and let Mr. Peirce doctor your leg; it will soon be better, if you will only lie still and be patient. For the sake of your poor little Fanny, do let Mr. Peirce stay with you now. Oh!

Mr. Peirce, please don't mind what he says. Don't let papa send you away. If he should say anything a little rude you won't listen to him, will you? I think he is so ill he scarcely knows what he says. Dear Mrs. Peirce, pray ask your son to stay here, whatever papa may say against it."

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"Nothing will induce me to leave him, as long as I can be of the slightest use to him, Miss Fanny, you may depend upon that," said Mr. Peirce, firmly.

In the meantime, Dr. Wrightson tried to move, but fell back with a moan, and shut his eyes again. His face was quite contracted with pain.

"Calm yourself, dear sir," began Mr. Priestly once more. "Consider that your system has sustained a severe shock. You cannot keep your mind too quiet. Leave everything to us, and try to sleep. Let me entreat you to lie still, and trust yourself to the kind care of my very excellent young friend here, and his good mother. Believe me, you could not possibly be in better hands."

"My patients! what will become of my patients?" groaned Dr. Wrightson presently. "That fellow will inveigle away every patient I have. If I lose my practice in Oakhampton, I am a ruined man this night. I am too old to go away and begin life afresh elsewhere. You will be left a beggar, my poor child, if I lose my patients here."

"If you would allow me, Dr. Wrightson, to act as your assistant, till you are able to make some arrangement with your friend Mr. Halliday, I can only say I should be most happy to do so," said Mr. Peirce. "I would, of course, work strictly under your directions, and follow out your wishes in every respect; and I would take care to make it understood that I was only taking your place for the time being. There! now will you consent to go to sleep with an easy conscience?"

Dr. Wrightson did not answer for some minutes, then suddenly holding out his hand to Mr. Peirce, he exclaimed, with tears in his eyes:

"I am at your mercy, sir; I shall lie here for many a long week to come, and maybe I shall never again be the man I was. There is a fine opening in Oakhampton, sir, for a rising young man now. You had better take advantage of it. I am not able to help myself."

"Thank you, Dr. Wrightson; then you will let me have my own way," said Mr. Peirce, quietly; "and you will consider me as your junior partner till you are quite strong and well again. Nay, if you have any scruples about the matter, you shall pay me, just as you do my friend Titmas—there need be no obligations between us. And by the by, to begin with, where were you bound to this evening? I had better just run round there at once, and when I return I shall hope to find you quite comfortable and fast asleep. My mother will remain here to-night; she is a capital nurse." And the young doctor, feeling amply repaid for his services by a look of intense gratitude from Fanny, retired to get his instructions from Mr. Titmas.

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The next day the snow fell fast and lay thick on the ground. All communication between Oakhampton and Littleton was entirely cut off for more than a week. No Mr. Halliday could by any possibility come over to attend to the medical requirements of Oakhampton. Mr. Peirce, however, cheerfully trudged about in his great jack boots, though he was often up to his waist in the snow, and he never failed faithfully to report progress to Dr. Wrightson of all his patients, humoring the old gentleman by invariably asking his advice and opinion, though, perhaps, he did not always follow it very implicitly.

On Christmas Eve, Mr. Halliday, with some difficulty, made his way to the bedside of his old friend, and expressed himself highly delighted with the progress Dr. Wrightson had made. Nothing could have been more judicious, he declared, than Mr. Peirce's mode of treatment. The leg was going on marvellously well, and though it would naturally be a tedious process at the doctor's age, still the bones were knitting famously already. Dr. Wrightson was most fortunate at such a moment to fall into such skilful hands. "There was not one man in a dozen who could have made so neat a job of such a case." So said Mr. Halliday emphatically.

"Ah," sighed Dr. Wrightson; "it's all very well, but I'm done for, Halliday. I have had a great shake; I shall never be fit for much work again after this. I never was ill before in my life, and at my age one can't stand this sort of thing. My poor child here will suffer for it. I ought to have looked out for a partner before this, and have got

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a good round sum down, for a share in the business. Now it is simply worth nothing at all. That young fellow Peirce has got hold of all my patients. They seem to take a fancy to him, and no partner of mine will have a chance against him. But he's a clever dog, and knows what he is about; I must say that for him."

"Then, in the name of goodness, why not make him your partner, Wrightson? It is quite out of the question that I should come over from Littleton to look after your patients, and so I tell you plainly. I could not undertake it. Why not get this young Peirce now, to put his money in with yours, and save you all the hard work? That will be your plan, depend upon it. You will then have Oakhampton entirely in your own hands, and carry all before you."

"That's what they all say," replied Dr. Wrightson; "but the man would not be such a fool as to consent to it, when he can get all my connection away from me for nothing, if he chooses to try. The ladies are all for him; he is popular enough here already. They are tired of me. I am old and worn out, and past my work now, and Peirce is the man to suit them henceforth in Oakhampton. I can see it plainer every day."

"Oh, papa! dear papa! pray don't talk in that dreadful way," cried Fanny, who was in the room; "Mr. Peirce is only anxious to work for you, and be of use to you, till you are better. I assure you he would gladly be your partner, or do anything to make you happy and comfortable. Indeed, and indeed, papa, you may believe me when I tell you this."

"Bless my heart alive! Fanny, how do you know what Peirce wants? Why, Fanny, child, what's all this mean, eh? How the girl colours, and how guilty she looks, a little minx! Come, child, tell me what makes you think Peirce would like to be my partner instead of my rival? I should like to know."

"Here is Mr. Peirce, ask *him*," replied Fanny, hiding her blushing face behind the red moreen curtains of her father's bed.

"My object, sir, is not so much to be your partner as your son," said Mr. Peirce, coming forward boldly. "If I can combine the two relations, I shall indeed esteem myself a fortunate man. Will you let me help you to work for our dear Fanny? I do not think you can be more devoted to her interests than I am. Let me see. Suppose we say a share in your practice would be worth fifteen hundred pounds—I have that sum lying idle at my banker's at this moment. It shall be paid into your account as soon as you please. Then I am not entirely without private means. My father left me an income of about eight hundred a year. Will you come to terms and give me Fanny's hand into the bargain?"

"What! so you've got possession of her heart safe enough, I'll warrant me, you young rogue, and I have not a word to say for myself. I'm fairly conquered; you've won the day. Fanny, where are you? To go and play such a trick to your poor old bed-ridden father! Eh! are you not ashamed of yourself, miss?"

"No, papa, not a bit!" said Fanny, coming out of her concealment behind the curtain; "and you have nobody but yourself to thank for it, after all; for if you had not abused poor Montague from morning till night, I dare say I should never have thought of him twice, or troubled my head about him in any way. As it was—"

"You never thought of anybody else I may venture to hope, and I am duly grateful to your father for it," added Mr. Peirce confidently.

"Well, well, well! Have it your own way. I am a poor, broken-down, useless, helpless, old man; but I did not think my own daughter would have gone over to the enemy. When there are traitors in the camp, I've nothing for it but surrender at discretion. Make your own terms—give me no quarter—I've deserved it all for being a wicked, jealous, uncharitable, ill-natured old brute. You've heaped coals of fire enough on my head, Peirce, if that's any consolation to you."

"To-morrow is Christmas Day," said Fanny, gently taking her father's hand, and putting it into that of her lover. "Now, father dear, promise me you will never have any more enemies as long as you live, which we hope will be very, very long, now you have Montague to take all the hard work off your hands. In Oakhampton, at least, let us always have in future 'Peace and good-will towards men.'"

THE COMING OF THE SHIP: THE DOCTOR'S PATIENT.

A selected reading from *The Head of a Hundred*. Edited by Maud Wilder Goodwin. Dr. Humphrey Huntoon, a young Englishman, in the early days of the colonies comes to this country in pique at the coldness of Elizabeth Romney, his sweetheart, who is above him in social station. The story is filled with charming pictures of colonial life and sentiment. In the opening part of this reading, Huntoon, in a burst of confidence, tells his old friend, the ship-captain, of his disappointment in love. In the second part a new ship comes from England.



IS strange what lightness of spirit comes with the laying bare of a sore heart. Verily, a trouble half told is half healed. Here I, who had not been merry for months, found myself now smiling in the dark, as I talked of those pleasant days of old. Then, like a mourner ashamed that he hath forgot his grief, I caught up my melancholy once more.

"Well, well! All that is over and gone. If she loved me in those childish years (and I still think she did), she outgrew the foolishness soon enow. Yet, from time to time, as she grew into maidenhood, she let drop some word, some hint, as tho' she would say, 'Perhaps!' but ere I could pry into the meaning of her words her eyes gathered merriment, like as if they were laughing at the poor fool who allowed himself to be cheated thus.

"Once, ere I went to Oxford, I rode beneath her window. She, leaning out of the casement, did drop a sprig of lad's-love, which a moment before she had been holding to her lips; then, when I looked up, with my heart in my eyes, she slammed the window to, and a moment later I heard her calling her dog within."

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"Tush, tush, lad! A woman's ways are like the maze at Hampton Court. If thou lose the clew, thou mayst wander round and round forever and be no nearer coming out. Why didst thou not ask her flat, would she have thee for her husband?"

"Why not, indeed. Ah, therein lies the root of all my bitterness! When I had finished my studies at Oxford and got my degree as a physician and surgeon in London, I found myself with a scanty portion of a thousand pounds. Yet had I none the less high hopes of carving my way to fame and fortune, as other men have done from still lower estate. This did I write to Sir William Romney, and in a packet I enclosed a letter to his daughter.

"Therein I told her anew what she knew of old, that I loved her. I asked her not to share the fortunes of a poor adventurer. I did but seek a pledge that she would grant me a year and a day, and a promise that if by that time I had aught of success to lay at her feet, she would look on my suit with favor."

"It was done like thyself, Humphrey. What answer made she?"

"Answer! Oh, it makes me mad to think on't! She might have said me nay, and yet I would have gone my way loving her like a knight of old, without hope of reward or return; but to be flouted and baited, and badgered and mocked, when I had offered her that poor thing, my heart—oh, it was ill done!"

The instinct of my body to keep pace with my restless and turbulent soul led me to stride up and down, striving to master the storm within me. When I took my seat again, Captain Chester drew me on to speak further.

"Perhaps," he said, "the maid was but the mouthpiece of her father. I hear of him everywhere as a hard, cold man."

"Oh! Ay, ay, ay," I broke in, "I have said all that over and over to myself, like a madman, since ever I received Sir William's cool note of dismissal, inclosing the daughter's mocking lines; but whenever I would soothe my sore heart with the thought that she wrote it not of her own free will, my reason says: 'Tis false, and thou knowst it!'"

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She would brave a thousand fathers if she really loved, and her will was crossed. I know, of course, that her refusal jumped with her father's wish."

I was down for a week with that wretched James City fever. By day I shivered, and by night I burned with a consuming heat. Pory said it served me right that I, who had come hither hoping to fatten on the misfortunes of others, should myself fall a victim.

Thus he talked, like himself, and equally like himself he stayed by my bedside day and night, scarcely taking off his clothes, tending me as if I were a baby, and mixing doses of the bark, a sovran remedy, till he saw me well on the road to recovery.

My convalescence he cheered as he had cured my illness. One day (I was quite recovered then) my lively friend came bounding in, full of excitement.

"A ship lieth in the harbor," cried he, "and she hath brought—what think ye?"

"Sooth, I know not. How should I? And if I did, 'twere cruel to spoil thy sport by saying so. What is this wondrous cargo?"

"Why, twenty maids, come out with one that is already betrothed to Babcock, the blacksmith!"

"Well, what of it?"

"What of it, man! Why, 'twould be the making of the colony could we get twenty score in place of one. Ay, I say, 'twould be the making of this colony. A shipload of good wives were the best cargo England could send us."

"And thou wouldst choose the handsomest for thyself, by right of thine office, I dare be sworn."

"Nay, not I. I have ever had too poor luck at play to throw dice with Fate for such heavy stakes." With this he ran out, laughing.

When he was gone, I stretched my head forth from the window of my lodging. Yonder in the river, a tall ship lay black against the shining water. I could see the sailors in their glazed hats and loose, flapping breeches, casting anchor to the time of their harsh song. Skiffs and canoes were plying busily betwixt the ship and the shore. One curious thing I noted, that, whereas only one went out in each canoe, two came back; and then, as mine ear caught the ringing of the church bells, and mine eyes marked the gallants who had gone of late ill-clad and worse shaven, now tricked out in bands of fine lawn and ruffles at their wrists, a sudden light brake on me, and I realized that all this was because the twenty maids were come, and straightway these bachelors, who till now had been quite content in their single estate, must set their silly hearts on being married.

"Ho! there, Master John!" I shouted, as I caught sight of Pory's grizzled head and pointed beard under my window. "Read me this riddle: 'What is that which flies when pursued, and pursues when fled from?'"

"A maid."

"Verily, thou art a shrewd fellow to have guessed it. Come up, therefore, and tell me all thou knowest which thou mayst do, and yet be gone in five minutes."

"That my civility may the more brightly shine against the foil of thine uncivil words, I will come, and, to heap coals of fire on thy head, I will tell thee of the scene on shipboard. The choosing of husbands and wives went on as merrily as the choosing of partners for a country-dance. It was a busy market, I can tell thee."

"A market—how meanest thou?"

"Why, 'tis thus they manage it, by bargain and sale; and belike 'tis as good an arrangement as any, since when the husband hath paid down his hundred pound of tobacco for a wife, he is bound to make himself believe he hath a bargain, and the wife, seeing he hath set so high an estimate on her worth, in honor must strive to live up to his valuation."

"And was every one of the twenty maids married thus?"

"Ay, all but one, and she remained without a partner from choice, which thou wouldst have declared impossible. Many offered for her, though she wore her veil and coverchief close and would not show her features. But she would look at none, and went off at the last to lodge with her friend—one that was taken to wife by Miles Cary. I was somewhat struck with curiosity over the conduct of the one unwed maid, and I searched out her name in the ship's register, where she is set down as Elizabeth Devon. Now, fare thee well! for

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my five minutes are over, and if I told thee more, 'twould be what I know not, and, ergo—lies."

After my nimble-witted friend was gone his way, I sat for long, looking down into the street and watching the bridal couples as they passed from under Parson Buckle's blessing to their new homes. All this billing and cooing and setting up of new households made me feel but the more lonely and doleful. So I went not abroad that day, tho' I was well enow to be out, but sat reading and studying with no other comforter than my pipe. But, to say truth, the pipe is no mean consoler, and there is no friend that doth so adapt himself to thine every mood, so partake, as it were, the very shade and subtlety of thy thought and feeling, as tobacco. Well, as I sat thus, the day wore on to evening. The flame in my pipe was expiring with a final flicker, when a knock sounded at my door.

"Come in!" I called, and Miles Cary entered.

"Why, how now, Cary! Art thou come to complain of thy bride of half-a-dozen hours? Hath she beaten thee over the head with the new broomstick, and thou art ashamed of thy black eye, and come to get it healed by stealth after dark?"

"Nay, 'tis nowt that," answered the burly yeoman, as he stood awkwardly twirling his Monmouth cap on the end of his finger.

I saw that my jests were less amusing to him than to me; so putting off my jibing tone, I asked him seriously if aught were ailing in his household.

"Ay, 'tis the friend of my wife." He grinned with sheepish pleasure over the last word.

"Is that the unwed maid, Elizabeth Devon, of whom Master Pory spake?"

"Yes; her arm was hurt on the ship in the storm, and methinks it must have been ill-treated, for, in place of mending it grows ever worse; yet have we had a hard task to persuade her to see the leech, and even now am I come without her consent. I fear me she is o'er-headstrong; but my Kate will have nowt said to her save wi' cap in hand, and she gives more attention to her friend than to her husband."

"Well, well, that is but natural. Grumble not, Cary; but remember that thy courtship must be done after marriage, and be content to bear awhile with coolness."

I took up my box as I spake, and we went out into the night together. As we walked through the town, I marvelled much that all should be changed of a sudden. 'Twas no longer a camp, but a village. For good or evil, the first English homes had been planted here in the heart of the wilderness.

We stopped before Cary's cottage, and I marked its shining neatness. The stepping-stone in front of the door was polished as smooth as marble, and the floor within, for all it was but of logs rudely smoothed with an axe, was clean and neatly set in order.

As I stepped into the kitchen, which served for hall and parlor and dining-room all in one, I was greeted by the mistress of the house with a deep-bobbing courtesy which brought her short skirt down over her bright stockings, and almost hid the high heels and pointed toes of her wedding slippers.

"Is thy friend badly hurt?" said I.

"Ay, sir, she suffers much, but she bears it ever with so brave a heart and so cheerful a face that none would guess it to look at her."

"Hast thou bandages and swathing-cloths at hand?"

"Nay, not rightly at hand, but a plenty in the sea-chest, which hath not yet been opened. Wilt thou lend a hand—*Miles?*"

I could but smile to watch the coquetry with which the name was spoken, and to see how a soft tone and glance oiled the wheels of life and made the half-sulky husband her willing slave.

Foreseeing that the uncording of the chest would be a matter of time, I stepped to the door of the nearer chamber (the house boasted but two), and finding it ajar, I bowed my head to its low proportions and entered.

The room had been filled with flowers, in honor of the home-coming of the bride. 'Tis wonderful to me how thoughtful and tender to women these rough fellows oft be. The window-sash, its panes filled with oiled paper, was swung open and the night wind blew the perfume of wildrose and honeysuckle in my face. I can feel it still. A single candle shed a dim light around and threw a yellow ray on a

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wooden armchair close to the table.

As I turned me toward this chair, suddenly my heart stopped beating. If the thing had not been so wildly impossible, I could have sworn it was Elizabeth Romney herself sitting there. The maid, whoever she was, had the same delicate curve of ear and throat, the same droop of the eyelid, the very trick of the hand lying open palm upward on the knee.

I brushed my hand across my eyes and looked again. My God!—Incredible!—It could not be!—yet what a likeness!

Then I told myself that I was going mad from dwelling too long on one thought. I must speak and break the spell. As I opened my lips, a sudden searching conviction fell upon me like a lightning flash that this was indeed she, the one woman in the world to me.

I gasped out: "*Elizabeth!*"

The maiden turned, and for the first time caught sight of me standing thus in the doorway. She gave one low cry of "*Thou!*"

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After that one word we faced each other in blank silence. The folk in books have ever some pat speech ready for such a moment; but in real life 'tis not so. How could I speak when my brain was whirling like a millwheel, and my voice choked in my throat? I stood still and looked upon her, and the longer I looked, the harder I found it to believe my eyes were not playing me a trick.

Yet 'twas but the truth they told me. There she sat—she that had been brought up to be tended and waited upon, and compassed about with luxuries, now sick and suffering, with only a wooden armchair to rest upon, and a cottage roof to shelter her. How, in God's name, had it come to pass?

Her face was deadly pale, for all she had been three months on the sea; and now, as she gazed at me, she grew even whiter, and swayed as though she would fall in a swoon. But all the while she kept her eyes fixed steadfastly on mine. They were eyes never to be forgotten by one who had seen them once. I have heard folks praise the brilliancy of her glance and the curling length of her eye-lashes; but, to her lover, there lay a subtler charm in the tender trouble of her eye-brows, bending slightly downward toward the inner corner. I noted it now as distinctly as the drowning man counts the bubbles in the water.

I was the first to find my voice, and I hated myself that it sounded hard and stern, when I was mad to fling myself at her feet and entreat her to trust herself to me. But that abominable diffidence of mine, which is so akin to pride, made me seem in her eyes, I doubt not, like a pragmatist schoolmaster chiding a recreant child.

"Elizabeth Romney!—am I dreaming, or is it indeed thou—come on the ship with the maids?"

An angry flush swept over the whiteness of her cheek and rose to meet the hair that curled in childish rings round her little ears.

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"Thou art thinking, perhaps, that I, too, like these others, am come three thousand miles in search of a husband?"

I knew not what to say, and so I said nowt.

"Well, believe 't if you will!" she flung out, her eyes one blaze of wrath; "but believe not that thou art such a husband as I would seek—not though thou wert the only man on this side of the ocean, and though all the tobacco in Virginia were the price in thine hand."

"I am not likely to believe that, Mistress Betty," I answered bitterly. "Yet would I rather believe anything than that this journey is a mad prank of thine without rhyme or reason. Wild and venturesome thou hast ever been, but never unmindful of thy sex or thy station."

"Which means that now I have shown myself unmindful of both. I thank thee, Humphrey Huntoon; but till I seek thy counsel, do thou keep thy censure!"

I know not what we might have spoken further, for anger was hot in both our hearts; but at that instant Dame Cary and her good man came in, bearing a roll of linen and a whale-oil lamp, which, vile smelling as it was, gave a brighter light than the candle.

As it shone on the maiden's face, the look of illness and suffering was more plain to be seen; and I cursed myself for a fool that I had forgotten all this time the arm I had been called to tend. I took the linen from Dame Cary's hand and tore it into strips.

"Will you be good enough to let me see the hurt?" I asked, in a constrained voice. Without a word, she threw back her short cape

and showed me the right arm wound round and round with clumsy swathings, which I straightway set to work to unwind. It was well that my calling had trained the fingers to work coolly.

I went near to breaking out into oaths when I laid bare the arm and saw how great a bungler had had charge of the hurt there on the ship. As it was, that which had been so ill done must be undone.

The doing of this cruel kindness went near to break my heart, yet she who suffered bore it without a groan. The free hand grasped the arm of the chair more closely, and the face was set in the look of one who would die ere look or sound of weakness be wrung from her. Only the sharper drawing down of the eyebrow marked the strain and stress of suffering.

At length, after a time which seemed to me longer than any month I have known since, the poor arm was rebound in a pair of splints hastily made from barrel staves. As I swathed it in band over band of linen, I turned to Dame Cary—I dared not trust my voice to address that other. “Your friend,” quoth I, “hath an excellent courage.”

“That hath she!” broke in Miles Cary, who had the true English love of bravery, and who, as he stood by, holding the lamp while I worked, had been greatly stirred by the sight of the maid’s endurance. “Had we but a company of soldiers like her, we had no need of a stockade round about James City.”

“Ay,” put in his wife, “but ye should have seen her on the sea! In that great storm when her arm was broke, she was the only one of us that screamed not, nor wailed, nor wished herself on land; but went about cheering and encouraging all.”

Methought I saw a glance of warning pass from the girl in the chair to the woman in waiting, for she straightway brake off her discourse, and spake quite sharply to her husband, bidding him go before with the light, that we might follow without breaking our necks.

So they went out and I walked behind them stupidly as far as the door. There I found my wits, and, turning back, I stepped close to the armchair.

“The doctor,” quoth I, in a low voice, “craves pardon for the hurt he could not help.”

“The *doctor*,” she replied, also speaking very soft, “is pardoned in advance, for he hath but done his duty. For the friend, ‘tis another matter. I cannot soon forget that he has failed me.”

“Yet he, too, hath but thy good at heart, and that thou wilt some day confess; and so must I leave thee. Good-night, madam!”

I spoke the last words in a louder tone, and, bowing low, I passed out of the chamber.

MAUD WILDER GOODWIN.

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DR. PENNINGTON'S COUNTRY PRACTICE.



NEXT to her husband and her children there was nothing that Mrs. Graham liked better than worrying herself. To a degree far beyond that attained by any other woman in Marston, she enjoyed "the luxury of woe," and during the last few days she had been indulging in it without stint. For during those days there had been five burglaries in that town, and the little place, ordinarily no more excited than most summer resorts, had become almost hysterical. First of all the post-office had been robbed, and then, as though that robbery had been merely by way of practice, the thieves on the next night had broken into a private house. Other robberies had followed in quick and defiant succession, and within twenty-four hours the little red brick railroad-station on Orawaupum Street had been broken into, and the money in the safe stolen. Then indeed there was excitement, for, as in all small towns not too remote from large cities, the station was the real centre of town life, and its misfortune was looked on almost as a sacrilege.

Even the summer residents seemed to consider it as such, and when, as was the custom at Marston, the ladies drove down to the station in the late afternoon to meet their husbands on their return from the city, not one but looked at the little red building as though she expected to hear it cry out against the profanation.



A VIOLENT FALL

The older ladies sat comfortably in their carriages, and, in voices pitched high because they were in the open air, talked volubly of the burglaries. One and all agreed that they would never have expected a burglary in Marston, and Mrs. Graham, by reason of her power of self-worry, speedily obtained a high and commanding position among them as a sort of possible martyr. The younger ladies, at the urgent entreaties of their own or their friends' inquisitive little brothers, left their carriages and moved in a pretty crowd upon the station. There the boys pointed out the drawers from which the money had been stolen, and the girls examined them from a distance with respectful interest. There, too, they saw the station-master in close conversation with an important-looking person, while a young man seated on the desk in the office swung his legs vigorously and looked bored. He brightened up obviously, however, at the sudden influx of pretty girls, and removed his hat. The other men merely glanced at the intruders and continued their conversation.

When they had seen everything, the young ladies retreated to the platform, from which they carried on an animated conversation with their elders in the carriages, while the bored young man came to the window and looked at them with admiration.

Suddenly all the talk was checked. Then a murmur of respectful admiration ran through the crowd of ladies, and the coachmen sat up straighter and flicked their horses. Even the ubiquitous small boys became silent, as into the station yard whirled an open carriage in which sat a young and very pretty woman. As soon as it had drawn up near the platform, the talk began again, this time all directed at its occupant.

"How do you do to-day, Mrs. Marmaduke?" was the first remark from everybody, with a rising inflection on the second syllable of "to-day;" and when Mrs. Marmaduke had replied that she was very well, there was a chorus of almost incredulous congratulation. Then there was a hush, broken in a moment by Mrs. Graham.

"Have you heard anything of your silver yet?" she began. Without waiting for an answer, she continued, "I wonder how you bear it so well. I'm sure I shouldn't. I'm dreadfully afraid of burglars, and I know it would kill me to know that they were in the house."

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"But I didn't know it," said Mrs. Marmaduke, with superiority. "Not even Mr. Marmaduke knew that they had been there until afterwards."

"Ah, yes," returned Mrs. Graham; "but to find out, even afterwards, that the horrid men had been there—ugh!—and had taken all your silver—every bit of it—"

"They left some," coolly interrupted the heroine. Mrs. Graham pretended not to hear her.

"You should have had a burglar-alarm," she said, patronizingly. "Mr. Graham is going to have one put in for me."

"We have a burglar-alarm," answered Mrs. Marmaduke. "But it was out of order."

"Oh, how annoying!" chorused all the listeners except Mrs. Graham, who sank back in her seat and signalled for her daughter Clara to come to her.

Just then the train came around the curve below the station, and all the adventurous girls retreated to their carriages. Out from his office ran the old station-master, followed by the important-looking man and by the bored young man. The man who carried the mail-bag to the post-office sauntered up, and for an instant everything was expectation. Then expectation became reality and confusion as the train came to a stop. For a moment there was an outpouring of passengers, then a thinning out of the crowd, and then a sort of stampede of the carriages for the post-office, until, when the train started again, only Mrs. Marmaduke's and Mrs. Graham's remained. Mrs. Marmaduke lay back in hers, looking at her husband, as he stood on the platform talking to the bored young man, while Mrs. Graham, after looking carefully around for her husband, sank back without being able to find him. Clara Graham had looked also, and when she could find neither her father nor her brother she began again the conversation interrupted by the arrival of the train.

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"There were two burglars, mamma," she said. "One was rather an old man, they say, while the other was much younger. And of course there must have been a third one to watch—"

"Drive on, George," interrupted Mrs. Graham; and the coachman had just turned from the platform when the gray-bearded station-master ran out.

"Hi, there! Mrs. Graham!" he shouted, waving a brown envelope, and as the carriage stopped with a jerk, the old man plunged down from the platform and ran to it.

"A telegram from Mr. Graham," he explained, and, while Mrs. Graham opened it hurriedly, he waited with one hand on the wheel-guard.

"Who were those two men talking with you, Mr. Underhill?" asked Clara Graham, inquisitively.

"Wal, the gentleman wi' the red beard—him a-standin' in the doorway noaw," answered the old man, pointing towards the station, "is the representative o' th' *Martson Enterprise*,—Mr. Long his name is. An' t'other one, him a-talkin' to Mr. Marmaduke, 's 'porter fur one o' th' Noo York papers,—I don' rightly know's name."

"Clara," said Mrs. Graham,— "There's no answer, Mr. Underhill. Drive on, George. Clara, your father won't be home to-night; he and Phil are detained by business. They won't be home until to-morrow night."

"Oh, well," said Clara, cheerfully, "of course we shall miss them, but I think we can get along one night without them."

"Ordinarily, yes," her mother answered, promptly. even on her husband. "Ordinarily, most certainly. But there are these awful burglars, and we haven't a man in the house."

"There's George, mamma," suggested Clara. But George with great promptness, spoke over his shoulder, as old coachmen have a way of doing:

"Please, mem, I've got to be 'ome to-night, because o' my wife h'end the baby as she h'expects."

"Yes," said Mrs. Graham, slowly, "George is right; he must be at home. Could your Cousin Will come, do you think, Clara?—No: he's away, too. There's Mr. Frisbie; we might ask him to take care of us. No sensible burglars would think of robbing the parsonage."

"No, I don't suppose they would," answered Clara. "But then Mr. Frisbie wouldn't leave Mrs. Frisbie and the little baby alone. And then suppose the burglars were not sensible—"

"They must be," said Mrs. Graham, with decision, "or they wouldn't have broken into the Marmadukes' house."

"Oh, mamma," suggested Clara, "couldn't we telegraph to somebody to come out to us? We might have a messenger-boy sent out, or two or three, if you wanted."

"I've got a boy, miss," said George, the coachman. "'E might take care o' ye, mem, over night."

But when she found that George's boy was only nine years old, Mrs. Graham shook her head.

"He's too young. And I do not want messenger-boys. They would be so slow, and they wear great rubber trousers and always have their hands in their pockets." This was said very slowly and thoughtfully.

"We might telegraph to some friend in the city, mamma," suggested Clara. "He could come out on the ten o'clock train, and get here before eleven. I don't suppose the burglars would come before eleven."

"Oh, no. They never come before eleven o'clock," said Mrs. Graham, as decidedly as though she had served an apprenticeship with a burglar and knew all the rules governing his entrance into the best houses. The idea of telegraphing to a friend evidently pleased her. "We might telegraph to—to—"

"We might telegraph to Dr. Pennington," suggested Clara, with just the suspicion of a blush. "He would be sure to come."

Her mother did not notice the blush, and was evidently considering the question of telegraphing. Just then the carriage turned in at the Grahams' gate.

"We must telegraph," said Mrs. Graham, nodding her head with great decision. "Yes, we must telegraph, and to Dr. Pennington."

It was later than usual that evening when Dr. John Pennington dropped into the little French restaurant near his office, to which his bachelorhood doomed him, and, as almost every one else had gone, he was forced to eat a solitary meal. As he looked carelessly through an evening paper which he had taken up to pass the time, he happened to notice the following bit of news:

"The village of Marston is very much excited over several burglaries committed there recently. The residence of E. L. Marmaduke, a wealthy merchant of New York City, was entered on Tuesday night, and a large quantity of jewelry and silver stolen. Last night, after visiting several houses with little success, the burglars broke into the railroad-station. Many commutation tickets had been renewed the day before, and the burglars secured nearly two hundred dollars in money. There are supposed to be three men in the gang. No clue to them has yet been found."

"I wonder," thought the doctor, as he slowly sipped his coffee, "I wonder if they have been to the Grahams' yet. If they have, I'll wager a large amount—I'd go as high as my last year's professional income—that Mrs. Graham is now in a state of violent hysterics. If they haven't, she has at least sufficient material to keep her in a state of worry for about one year." He finished his coffee. "I believe I'll run out to Marston to-morrow," he continued, thoughtfully; "that is, if I'm not too much occupied." (Pennington religiously made this reservation, though since he had become a doctor he had never been too much occupied.) "I haven't been there for a long time, and the burglaries will give me a good excuse for leaving my patients."

Having made this determination, he dismissed the matter from his mind, and, finishing his coffee, sat in silence till he had smoked

his cigar. Then he went home to take up his usual task of waiting for patients. When he reached his rooms, he found Mrs. Graham's telegram on his table. It was as enigmatical as women's communications generally are, and was worded thus:

"Will you kindly take ten-o'clock train and spend night with us? Will explain on arrival."

"Spend the night? Will explain on arrival? What on earth can the woman mean?" cried the doctor. "Can any of the family be sick, I wonder? If so, why should she send for me, when there must be other doctors near by? No: that can't be the reason." But, as he could think of no other explanation, he accepted this one as the most plausible, and decided to take his case of medicines with him to Marston. Looking at his watch, he saw that he could barely catch the train, and hastily began to pack his handbag. Then, telling his landlady that he would be back in the morning, he called a cab, and reached the station with five minutes to spare.

A night ride in an accommodation train is not exciting, and Pennington's trip to Marston was monotonous enough. He did not dare to read by the villainous light, and so he devoted his time to speculating on Mrs. Graham's telegram. He stepped from the train at Marston, however, without having come to any definite conclusion on the subject.

"I think, sir," said an elderly coachman, stepping up to the young doctor and touching his hat, "I think you must be the gentl'n h'expected at the Grahams'. Will you step this way, sir? I 'ave the buggy 'ere. These burglaries are h'awful, ain't they, sir?" he began, as he touched up the little mare.

"Burglaries?" said Pennington. "Oh, yes, I did read about some burglaries up here—"

"Yes, sir," said the man, "an' Mrs. Graham is just scared out o' her senses, sir, an' when she got the telegram from Mr. Graham, sir,—come up, Jess,—sayin' that neither he nor Mr. Phil 'ud be up to-night, she sent for you 't once. Ye see, sir," he continued, waxing confidential, "I'm out o' the runnin', on account o' the visitor h'expected at my 'ouse to-night."

For the first time it dawned upon the doctor that it was not for his professional services that he was wanted, but more heroic ones, and he wished that he had left his case of medicines at home. Old George, however, gave him little time for thought, but entertained him with accounts, partly real, partly fictitious, of the daring and ferocity of the burglars who infested the village, until the doctor began to wish that Mrs. Graham had been able to secure any other protector than himself.

As the carriage rolled up to the house, the door opened, and Mrs. Graham, evidently on the watch, rushed out.

"Oh, Dr. Pennington!" she cried, excitedly. "You can't tell how glad I am to see you! I *hope* you don't think it presuming in me to send for you?"

"Not at all," began Pennington, getting out of the carriage; but Mrs. Graham noticed his medicine-case, and interrupted him.

"You've brought your pistols," she exclaimed. "How splendid of you to think of them!"

"Do not for one instant think that you presumed in sending for me," said Pennington, as he ran lightly up the steps and took Mrs. Graham's outstretched hand. "You know, Mrs. Graham, that it can only be a pleasure to me to be of any service to you or Miss Clara."

"It is very good of you, I'm sure, and I shall never forget it; but now come right into the library. Clara will be delighted to see an old friend who has come in time of need. It was she who suggested sending for you," added Mrs. Graham, and Pennington blushed with pleasure. "It's very strange," went on the lady, "that Clara isn't half so worried about the burglars as I am, when it generally takes so much to worry me. Clara, here is Dr. Pennington, pistols and all; wasn't it good of him to come?" she concluded, as she entered the library. Clara came forward to greet Pennington, blushing slightly, and looking so charming that he felt he would be glad to have the burglars come, that he might have the pleasure of defending her.

"I have just told Mrs. Graham, Miss Clara," said Pennington, "that the goodness is all on her side. You can't realize how pleasant it is to see you again. As for my pistols," he added, carefully laying down his medicine-case, "it overwhelms me with mortification to confess that I have left the key of my case behind."

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"Perhaps it is best that you did," said Mrs. Graham, while Clara laughed.

"Don't worry about that, Dr. Pennington," she said, tapping the case lightly. "Wait a moment, and I will bring something that will do as well as the pistols you have here." And she ran from the room. When she returned, Mrs. Graham was insisting that Pennington should take something to eat.

"Here is a weapon," cried Clara, gaily, holding up an old-fashioned muzzle-loading horse-pistol. She handed it to Pennington, who colored as he took it. "I think that will frighten the burglars," she panted, looking at Pennington and laughing.

"Clara," said Mrs. Graham, "I wouldn't have that thing fired off in the house for the world. Your father fired it off once at a cat, and the noise it made gave me a nervous shock I didn't get over for a week. Besides, it brought in all the neighbors,—and some of them were very common people,—who thought we had had a dynamite explosion here."

"But this ancient fire-arm has no hammer," said Pennington, after examining it. "A pistol without a hammer, Mrs. Graham, is like a man without a head,—comparatively useless."

"My ignorance of such things," said Mrs. Graham, with a shudder, "is something stupendous, and I hope you won't laugh at me when I ask what the hammer of a pistol is?"

"Let me show you, mamma," cried Clara, jumping up and taking the pistol from Pennington's hands.

"Be careful, Clara, be careful," cried Mrs. Graham, evidently alarmed at its proximity. "Are you quite sure that it won't go off by itself?"

"Quite sure," answered the doctor. But Mrs. Graham's fears could not be allayed until Pennington had placed the pistol on the bookcase. She gave a sigh of relief.

"I am sure that we shall not need a pistol," said Pennington, "for burglars never come where they are expected."

"Perhaps that is so," answered Mrs. Graham. "I know that I am awfully timid about them. But, doctor—could you—would you—do you mind sleeping on this lounge to-night?"

"Not in the least," cried Pennington. "Why, Mrs. Graham, it looks extremely comfortable."

"It is very comfortable," said Clara, giving it a little pat by way of enforcing her remark. "It is quite out of the ordinary run of lounges. I often take naps on it myself."

"That settles it," cried Pennington. "Now not even wild horses could drag me to a bed of ease."

"I am very grateful to you," said Mrs. Graham, who did not look upon the matter as a trifling sacrifice for the doctor to make. "I think we can make you comfortable, however."

"Of course you can, Mrs. Graham; and then just think of the fame that awaits me if the burglars do come. Why, the papers will be full of me. 'Dr. Pennington defends two helpless ladies from desperate burglars. His only weapon a horse-pistol without a hammer,' and so on."

"I don't see how you can joke about such horrid men; the very thought of them makes me shudder. But we mustn't keep you up all night, doctor. It is long after eleven. Clara, take my hand; you couldn't persuade me to go up the stairs by myself. Doctor, would you mind standing in the hall till we get to our rooms—"

"Like the White Knight and Alice," laughed Clara. "You remember he asked Alice to wait till he was out of sight, because her presence would cheer him—"

"Clara, you saucy girl!" cried her mother. "Doctor, I will send Bridget down to make up a bed on the lounge. Good night," she called again, as she reached her room.

"Don't treat the poor burglars too cruelly, Dr. Pennington," cried Clara, looking over the baluster, and then with a laugh she vanished.

"I wonder what she meant by that," thought Pennington, as he went back to the library. In a minute Bridget appeared with sheets and blankets, and in a short time had made up a bed on the broad lounge. Then she departed and Pennington was left alone.

"Suppose the burglars should come," he thought, as he prepared to turn in. "But it's not likely they will. At any rate, I mustn't let my

imagination run away with me; so here goes." And with that he turned out the gas and settled himself on the lounge, where, in spite of discomforts present and burglars to be, he was soon fast asleep.

He had been asleep, it seemed to him, for hours, when he suddenly sat up, wide awake in an instant. Had he dreamed that he had heard footsteps at the back of the house, or was there really some one moving about? Pennington listened with every nerve strained to its utmost tension. There it goes again! He was sure he heard a noise. It came from the dining-room—and it sounded like the rattling of silver.

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"They're here," he muttered, and drew a long breath. "What in thunder am I to do? Ah! I'll get that old pistol and use the poker as a hammer; the old thing has a cap on it." Crawling softly from the lounge, he groped his way towards the fireplace. The room was as dark as a pocket, and before he had finished his uncertain journey he struck his foot smartly against the coal-scuttle. It rattled. He made a dive to stop it from falling, and in so doing upset it. It fell with a crash loud enough, it seemed to him, to wake the Seven Sleepers.

Despite the pain of his stubbed foot, Pennington did not hug his injured member with the affection usually displayed on such occasions but ground his teeth and listened intently for any sign from the burglars that they had heard him.

A moment of suspense; then he assured himself that they had heard nothing, and, securing pistol and poker, started for the library door. He reached it safely, and, opening it noiselessly, looked out into the hall. A narrow streak of light from the partly-opened dining-room door showed him where to steer, and, grasping the poker firmly in his right hand and the pistol in his left, he tiptoed across the hall. The rattling of silver in the dining-room continued, and almost drowned the nearer and solemn tick of an old eight-day clock, whose brass and iron nerves the doctor envied.

Creeping cautiously to the door, he looked through the crack. The light was turned half on in the dining-room. At the farther end of the room, with his back turned towards him, was an old man, who seemed to be taking silver from the drawers of the sideboard and putting it into a basket at his side.

"The old villain!" thought Pennington. "How cool he is! I wonder where the other two fellows are. Somewhere at hand, I suppose."

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Suddenly the burglar turned half around, as though he were about to leave the room. Pennington shrank back.

"I can't shoot the fellow in cold blood," he said to himself. Just then his hand touched the knob of a door which he knew opened into a large closet. An idea struck him. He opened the door very quietly, and then, picking up the rug from the hall floor, was ready to carry out his plan.

The burglar was nearing the door. "Come up as soon as you can," he said, and as a muffled voice from somewhere answered, "All right," he opened the door and stepped into the hall.

With a bound Pennington threw the heavy rug over the man's head, deftly twisting it so that he could make no sound to warn his comrades. But the doctor had not thought of the basket of silver which the man carried, and it fell to the floor with a crash. There was a quick movement in the direction from which the answering voice had come, and a scream from upstairs. Pennington fairly hurled his prisoner into the closet and locked the door; then he stood a moment uncertain whether to run upstairs to the aid of Mrs. Graham and Clara or search for the other burglar. Suddenly he heard a step behind him. Before he could turn he received a blow on the side of his head. He fell to the floor, where he lay half stunned. Then his hands were tied behind him, and he felt himself picked up by his assailant and held a moment uncertainly in mid air.

"Put him in here, Fred," said a voice, and, to his horror, Pennington heard the key turn in the lock, and the next instant he was thrown into the closet with as little ceremony as he had himself used towards the burglar. Then the door was locked.

A sudden cough from the burglar made Pennington's hair stand on end, and he shivered when he heard the man, sputtering and coughing, feeling audibly for what Pennington knew was his revolver. He was as brave as most men, and at once determined not to lie still at the mercy of a desperate ruffian. Very cautiously he tried to pull his hands out of the bonds that held them. To his joy, he found that the hastily-tied knots would give way at a little straining.

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Meanwhile, upstairs, Mrs. Graham and Clara had gone to bed together for additional safety. Clara did not tell her mother, but to herself confessed that she had every confidence in Dr. Pennington, and so went calmly to sleep. Mrs. Graham was less confident than her daughter, and her sleep was light and broken. The consequence was that the fall of the silver basket woke her up instantly. She gave a scream.

"Clara!" she cried, shaking her daughter. "Clara, the burglars are here!"

"Where?" demanded Clara, sitting bolt upright, and looking in bewilderment out from the mist of her long brown hair.

"Down stairs," said Mrs. Graham, in a hoarse whisper. "Help me, Clara, and scream." With that she set the example by uttering a shriek that rang through the house, waking the servants in their rooms. Clara sprang from the bed, and, scarcely knowing what she did, began piling all the movable furniture in front of the door, while her mother uttered scream after scream with the regularity of a piece of clock-work.

There was a step in the hall, then another.

"There are two of them!" gasped Mrs. Graham, in an interval of screaming. The door was opened slightly. "Push up the bedstead, Clara!" and the two women pushed the heavy piece of furniture against the door. The movement was so sudden that the door closed upon the intruder's fingers. There was a howl of pain.

"Scream!" commanded Mrs. Graham, as Clara caught her by the arm. The girl did not at once obey.

"Oh, mother," she cried, "what do you suppose they've done to John—I mean Dr. Pennington?"

"Let me in," cried a voice in the hall. "Let me in." The two women screamed again. The door was pushed open and a man's head and shoulder thrust in. In desperation, Mrs. Graham picked up the water-pitcher. Rushing towards the man, she threw it at him. It struck the wall and broke, near enough to him to drench him.

"Hold on, I say!" he cried. "Mother, what are you doing? Are you hurt? Have those scoundrels hurt you?"

"Phil!" cried Mrs. Graham and Clara at once. "Phil! Why, what are you doing here? How did you come?" And they rushed upon him, dragging him through the narrow opening and embracing him rapturously.

"What are you doing here?" asked Mrs. Graham again, as she released him. He could not answer at once, but after Clara had let him go, he answered,—

"Well, father at first forgot all about the burglars. We were at the library, working away like beaver lawyers, when he suddenly thought of 'em. He jumped up and said we must come right home, because you'd be scared out of your wits." Here he kissed his mother again. "So we bundled up the papers, and, as we were too late for the ten o'clock train, we came up on the other road, and walked across. We brought Fred with us, too."

"Fred Austin?" asked Mrs. Graham. Phil nodded, and went on:

"Father was sure you'd be awake, but you didn't seem to be, so we looked around, and pretty soon got in through the front window, which was open." Mrs. Graham looked frightened. "Then we felt sure there was something to pay, especially when we saw the silver basket and the silver scattered around on the table and sideboard, and the safe open, so father picked up the silver, while Fred and I ran into the kitchen." Mrs. Graham had gasped when she heard of their discovery, and stood listening with almost tragic intentness.

"We found no one there, but we heard a crash in the hall and ran back. Fred came through the door into the pantry, while I came by the dining-room. First thing I knew I heard somebody fall in the hall, and then Fred called me. He'd found a big fellow standing by the door, evidently waiting for me, and he'd hit him pretty hard on the head. Then we tied his hands with a handkerchief and threw him into the closet."

"Well," said Mrs. Graham, looking relieved, while Clara drew a long breath, "that was good. Where is your father. Bring them both here."

"Isn't father here?" asked Phil. "Why, he came upstairs first—has that scoundrel touched him, I wonder?" And Phil darted out of the room and down-stairs.

"Then there was some one in the house," said Mrs. Graham, "for

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Phil said that Fred had to strike some one."

"Mamma," said Clara, tremulously, seizing her mother's arm, "Fred hit Dr. Pennington!" And she looked at her mother with wide-open eyes of alarm. Mrs. Graham went into the hall, her daughter following her.

"Be still!" commanded Mrs. Graham, opening the door into the servants' hall. "Girls, I'm ashamed of you! Bridget, Eliza! Be still at once!" Her voice had its effect, and the house became quiet again.

Meantime the two prisoners in the closet had not been idle. Pennington at first lay where he had been thrown, noiselessly trying to slip his hands through his bonds. The burglar had evidently rid himself of the rug, and Pennington could hear him groping his way about the closet, now and again colliding with unknown obstacles. He was nearing the prostrate doctor, who redoubled his efforts to free himself. Suddenly the burglar's foot struck smartly against Pennington's head. The man stopped and drew back; then he pushed his foot forward again till it once more touched the doctor. Pennington, who had not quite freed himself when the burglar first collided with him, jerked his hands out of their fastenings, and, springing to his feet, aimed a blow in the direction in which he thought the burglar stood. He missed his aim in the darkness and bruised his knuckles against the wall.

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"Whew!" he cried, jumping with pain. Just then he got a blow from the burglar on his shoulder. He turned on him, but caught his foot on the rug and fell at full length. He sprang up in an instant, however, picking up the rug as he did so, and stood prepared to defend himself as long as possible.

"Have you found your father?" asked Mrs. Graham, leaning over the baluster and looking into the darkness of the lower hall.

"Not yet, Mrs. Graham," answered a voice.

"Why don't you light the gas, Fred?" asked Mrs. Graham, impatiently. There was a scratching of a match, and in an instant the hall was lighted. Just then Phil Graham came from the dining-room.

"I can't find father," he said anxiously.

Clara came timidly half-way down the stairs.

"Fred," she asked, "what sort—who was it you struck?"

"A tall man, standing here. He was waiting for us to come out of the dining-room; but I came up behind and hit him—so," answered Fred Austin, with some pride.

"Lucky he did, too," said Phil. "The fellow had this," he added, holding up a pistol. Then, in a tone of astonishment, he cried, "Hello! it's father's old horse-pistol!"

Clara flew down the stairs to her brother, her long hair streaming behind her. "It wasn't a burglar!" she cried. "It wasn't a burglar! Why did you strike him?" turning fiercely upon Fred Austin, and then bursting into tears of terror.

Mrs. Graham followed her down. "He wasn't a burglar," she explained to the perplexed young men. "It was Dr. Pennington. He came down here to protect us while you were away. He must have heard you and taken you for burglars, and you took him for one, and —"

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"Pennington!" echoed Phil, while Fred looked at Clara, with admiration and contrition, the former real, the latter half feigned. "I put Pennington, if it was he, into the closet," he added, stepping towards the place. Clara was before him, however.

The sound of voices in the hall had already attracted the attention of the two prisoners. The burglar groaned as he heard them, and his groan was fatal to him, for it indicated that he was in the middle of the closet. Instantly the doctor turned and threw the rug in the direction of the sound. His aim was good, and in a moment he had the burglar's head again enveloped. His hands were free, however, and he grappled with Pennington so vigorously that he had much ado to defend himself. Suddenly he gave the burglar a strong shove from him. At that moment the door was flung open.

"John," cried Clara. The burglar fell through the door into the hall. For an instant there was silence. Then the burglar began to kick violently and to shout.

"It's father!" cried Phil Graham, as he made a dive for the half-smothered man and set him on his feet. Mr. Graham looked around wildly for an instant as he got rid of the rug.

"There's a burglar in there!" he cried. "Shut the door. Quick, shut the door!" And he threw himself against it, refusing to move until Fred Austin had locked it. "Whew!" he gasped. "The scoundrel! Have you locked it Fred?—Tried to garrote me—whew!" And he wiped his face and looked around on his astonished family.

"Why, how did you get in there, father?" asked Phil, while Mrs. Graham led her husband to a chair. Clara stood still near the door.

"I was going up stairs with the silver basket, which the burglar had left on the sideboard—"

"No," interrupted his wife, penitently: "I told Eliza I would put the silver in the safe myself, and I was doing it when Dr. Pennington came. I ran out to meet him, and forgot all about the silver. I don't believe there was any burglar at all."

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"Yes, there was," said Mr. Graham, sturdily. "As I was coming out of the dining-room, a fellow threw this rug over me, and then threw me, rug and all, into the closet. Presently he came in after me, I suppose to remove the only witness against him. He was choking me when you opened the door, and I broke away from him." And Mr. Graham pointed to the closet door.

"Why, that's where we put Pennington," cried Austin and Phil Graham. Clara darted to the door and opened it wide.

"John!" she cried again. "Come out, come out." And, in obedience to her call, John Pennington came out.

"Where's that burglar?" he asked.

"There were three of them," answered Mrs. Graham, promptly. "We have got them all." Pennington looked around bewildered. He recognized Phil Graham, and then saw Mr. Graham sitting in the hall chair, the rug at his feet. His face fell.

"This was the burglar you captured," said Mrs. Graham; and Mr. Graham nodded.

"Who hit me, then?" demanded Pennington, rubbing his head. Fred Austin seemed bashful about answering, and Phil spoke up:

"We took you for a burglar and captured you, just as you had captured father."

"Then there were no burglars?" asked Pennington, doubtfully.

"No, there were no burglars," answered Mrs. Graham.

"Well," said Pennington, as he rubbed his head again, "I suppose it's all right, but it's rather hard on a well-meaning fellow—" And he smiled rather weakly.

"It's all right," said Clara, unconsciously laying her hand on his arm.

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"My dear," said Mr. Graham to his wife some time later, as they were in their room together, "my dear, didn't Clara call the doctor John?"

"I didn't think you noticed it," answered Mrs. Graham.

"I did, though," said Mr. Graham. "It seems to me, though there were no burglars to take our silver, that Pennington has taken our little woman's heart."

"Fair exchange is no robbery," remarked Mrs. Graham; and her husband looked at her, and nodded several times as though something pleased him.

BUTLER MUNROE.

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THE DOCTOR: AN OLD VIRGINIA FOX HUNTER.



OW the doctor was a Southerner of the old school. Nor was he merely a North Carolinian, a Tennessean, a Kentuckian or a Georgian—not any, thank you! No; our friend was a Virginian—a real, “old-fashioned, blue-blooded, whole-souled, open-handed Virginian.” And this he was by virtue of eight or nine generations of forebears who had fought, physicked, speechified, fox-hunted, raised negroes and tobacco, in that immortal commonwealth. No day passed but the doctor, in his simple fashion, unconsciously thanked God that he was a Virginian. For did not virtue, valor, honor, gallantry, select the Old Dominion in the days of the Stuarts as their special depot, from whence, in modified streams, these qualities might be diffused over the less fortunate portions of the Western world? To the unsophisticated Englishman, to the ignorant Frenchman or German, an American is an American. If he is not rampantly modern, sensationally progressive, and furiously material, he is nothing at all. But the doctor would scarcely ever speak or think of himself as an American, except in the same sense as an Englishman would call himself a European. The doctor was every moment of the day, and every day in the year, a Virginian above everything; and as I have already said, he felt thereby that a responsibility and a glory above that of other mortals had been conferred upon him by the accident of his birth. I may add, moreover, that he was unquestionably non-progressive, that he was decidedly not modern, while to this day he is so reactionary that the sound of a railway irritates him; and finally, that he was, and I feel sure still is, eminently picturesque.

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The doctor was about sixty-five at the time of which I write (not so very many years ago). He had never set foot outside Virginia, and never wanted to. That a country, however, or climate, or people, or scenery, existed that could be mentioned in the same breath with the old Cavalier colony, never for one moment was accounted within the bounds of possibility by that good and simple soul.

And yet, paradoxical as it may seem, the doctor was proud of his descent from pure English stock. “None of Scotch or Irish, or Scotch-Irish for me. No, I thank you, sir.” “My folks,” he was fond of relating, “were real English stock, who came over way back in early colonial days, and settled on the York River. They were kin to the nobility.” Whatever may have been the accuracy of this last claim, the doctor’s patronymic in Virginia genealogy was above reproach, and would have secured him an *éntree* (had he owned a dress coat, and had he felt a hankering after Eastern cities) into those small exclusive coteries in transatlantic society that still recognize birth as superior to wealth and even intellect. I should not like it to be supposed that my dear doctor, of whom I am excessively fond, was given to blustering about either his State or his descent. Your fire-eating, blowing, swaggering Southerner belongs either to a lower social grade, to the more frontier States of the South, or, to a greater degree perhaps than either, to the fertile imagination of Yankee editors and dime novelists. The doctor was a Virginian. His thoughts and his habits, which were peculiar and original, were simply those of Virginians of his class and generation somewhat strongly emphasized. He was just and unassuming, kindly and homely. There was about him a delightful, old-fashioned, if somewhat ponderous suavity of manner, that the rest of the Anglo-Saxon race have long, long outgrown. Even to hear a married female who was not black addressed as otherwise than “Madam” positively pained him. As for the children, the doctor had a separate greeting for every one of them, let his host’s quiver be ever so full. Ay, and generally something more than that; for the doctor’s capacious pockets were known by the little ones to be almost as inexhaustible in the way of chincapins, hickory-nuts and candy, as his well-worn saddle-bags were of less inviting condiments.

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The doctor’s belief in his country (and by his country of course I mean Virginia) was the religion in which he was born. He would

never have dreamt of intruding it on you. International comparisons he could not make, for he had never been out of the State. I feel perfectly sure, however, if the doctor had travelled over every corner of the earth, that his faith was of that fundamental description which was proof against mere sights and sounds. He would have returned to the shade of his ancestral porch, temporarily staggered, perhaps, but still unconvinced that any land or any people could compare with old Virginia.

The average American in London is a spectacle which has in it nothing inharmonious; on the contrary, in these days it is sometimes hard to distinguish him from the native. To picture the doctor in London, however, requires an effort of imagination from which the intellect shrinks. Of one thing I am sure, and that is, he would be very miserable. He would call in vain for glasses of cold water like that from the limpid spring under the poplar tree at home, of which the doctor consumes about a horse-troughful a day. He would hang over the apple-stalls, and groan over the deficiencies of a country that could do no better than that. He would get up two hours before the servants, and prowl about disconsolate and hungry till breakfast. What an apology, too, for a breakfast it would be without an "Old Virginia hot-beat biscuit!" In his despair of getting a "julep" he might take a whiskey punch before his early dinner. But here, again, how could the emblazoned wine-card, with its, for him, meaningless contents, supply the want of that big pitcher of foaming buttermilk for which his simple palate craves? The pomp and wealth, the glitter and glare of a great capital, would be simply distasteful to our patriarch. In his own land he and his have been for all time aristocrats—after their own fashion, it is true, but still aristocrats. They have been strongly inclined to regard themselves as the salt of the earth—and perhaps they are; a good sturdy British foible this, intensified by isolation and the mutual admiration atmosphere which isolation creates. At any rate, gold lace and liveries and coronets are not indispensable adjuncts of honor and breeding. The doctor, however—if we can imagine him gazing on the stream of carriages rolling past Hyde Park corner on a summer evening—would be sensible, for the first time in his life, to a feeling somewhat akin to insignificance creeping over him. He would hate and despise himself for it, but still it would make him uncomfortable, and he would want to get away home. A depressing suspicion would come over our good friend that the haughty squires and dames knew no more of Virginia's history, or of Pages and Randolphins, and Pendletons and Byrds, than they knew of the obscure Elijahs and Hiram and Aarons that tilled the stony fields of New England. I fear, moreover, that the suspicion would be too well founded. As a Cumberland squire in the eighteenth century might have been disillusioned by a visit to the the capital, so to a much greater degree would our good Virginian friend have in all probability suffered by a similar transportation. Once home again, however, I can safely affirm of the doctor, that these uncomfortable sensations would have vanished in no time. Once more in his cane-bottomed rocking-chair on the shady porch; once more within sight of the blue mountains, the red fallows, and the yellow pine-sprinkled sedgefields of his native land, he would quickly recover from the temporary shocks that had irritated him. The sublime faith in "the grand old Commonwealth" would return, and he would thank God more fervently than ever he was a son of Virginia; not because of her present or her future—for he considered the Virginia he belonged to died with slavery—but on account of her people and her past. The doctor, happily, had been spared all these trials and his faith remained pure and unimpaired. The only capital he had ever visited was the charming little city of Richmond, where every third man or woman he met was his cousin; where most of society call one another by their Christian names, dine in the middle of the day, and sit out on chairs in the street after supper. Richmond is delightful, and so are its people; but its atmosphere would tend to confirm, not to shake, the doctor's homely faith.

Perhaps the Southern States was the only part of the world where the practice of medicine has ever been looked upon as an honorable adjunct to the possession of considerable landed estates and an aristocratic name. As in England there were squire-parsons, so in Virginia there were squire-doctors, men of considerable property (as things go there) both in land and slaves, regularly practising in their own neighborhood. The slaves that constituted the bulk of their wealth have gone, but the lands and the practice

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remain—for those who still survive and are able to sit upon a horse.

The doctor is one of these survivals—and may he long flourish! He had only a moderate property—two farms—of which we shall speak anon. But then he was a Patton; and as everybody south of the Potomac knows, the Pattons are one of the first families in the State—none of your modern and self-dubbed F. F. V.'s are they, but real old colonial people, whose names are written on almost every page of their country's history. Besides this, Judge Patton, the doctor's father, was one of the greatest jurists south of Washington —“in the world,” Virginians said; but as a compromise we will admit he was one of the first in America, and quite distinguished enough to reflect a social halo over his immediate descendants, supposing even they had not been Pattons.

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The original Patton mansion was burnt down in 1840. Nothing was left but the office in the yard, where in those days our friend the doctor pursued his youthful medical investigations and entertained his bachelor friends. The judge was a busy man, and much absent. He was always “laying out to build him a new house;” but death “laid him out” while the scheme was still in embryo. The doctor, who, as only son, became proprietor, had his hands too full, what with negroes, and farming, and physicking, and fox-hunting, to carry it out till the war was upon him, and with its results put an end, as he thought at the time, to everything which makes life sweet.

It must not, however, be supposed that the doctor and his father had gone houseless or camped out since 1840. Not at all. From the old brick office, whose isolation had saved it from that memorable conflagration, there had grown—I use the word advisedly, as applicable to Virginia architecture—there had grown a rambling structure, whose design, rather than whose actual weight of years, gave it an appearance venerable enough to command the respect and admiration of summer tourists from New York and Philadelphia. It was not often such apparitions passed that way, and when they did, it was generally in pursuit of filthy lucre suppositiously concealed in the fields or the forests. Nor are mining prospectors as a rule sentimental, but sometimes they are in America. When such *rarae aves* came by the doctor's front gate, they would almost always pull up and gaze through it with that admiration and respect that Northerners are inclined to pay to anything in their own country that recalls the past.

“Oh, isn't that too quaint for anything!” the ladies who sometimes accompanied them never failed to remark. “That's a real old ramshackle Virginia house, by thunder! and a pretty heavy old fossil inside it, you bet!” said the more observant of the gentlemen.

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The doctor would have gloried in such criticism had he heard it. He hated Yankees; he hated your new-fangled houses; he hated railroads; he hated towns; he hated breech-loading guns; sights and sounds and things that he was not familiar with at five-and-twenty he would have none of when he was between sixty and seventy.

The doctor's house was unconventional, to be sure, while weather and neglect of paint or whitewash had given it an air of antiquity to which it had no real claim. It lay a hundred yards back from the road, and appeared to consist of four or five small houses of varying dimensions, and occupying relationships toward one another of a most uncertain kind. Two of these leaned heavily together, like convivial old gentlemen “seeing one another home.” The rest lay at respectful distances from each other, connected only by open verandahs, through which the summer breeze blew freshly, and lovingly fanned the annuals that spread and twined themselves along the eaves. Almost every style of Virginia rural architecture found places in this homely conglomeration of edifices, which even “old man Jake,” the negro, who has for twenty years looked after the doctor's horses and stolen his corn, described as “mighty shacklin', and lookin' like as if they'd bin throwed down all in a muss.”

It was, however, a real old characteristic Virginia house of its kind. There were squared chestnut logs, black with rain and sun, against which the venetian shutters of the windows banged and thumped in gusty spring days as against walls of adamant. These same logs were got out of the woods and squared, the doctor would tell you, in days “when men had plenty of time and plenty of force (*i. e.*, slaves) to do those things properly.” Then there were walls of pine weather-boarding, erected at a period when, the same authority would inform you, “people began to saw and season their

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lumber five or ten years before they started to build." There were roofs of wooden shingles slanting and sloping in every direction—black, rotting, and moss-grown here, white and garish there, where penetrating rains had forced the slow and reluctant hand of repair. Dormer-windows glared out at you, patched as to their shattered panes with local newspapers of remote date, and speaking of stuffy attics behind, where hornets, yellow-jackets and "mud-daubers" careered about in summer-time over the apple-strewn floors. Then there was the old brick office—relic of a distant past; of a period when the Virginia planters, though surrounded by the finest clay, were so absorbed in tobacco that they sent to England for their bricks. It is probable, however, that these particular bricks were produced upon the spot. At any rate, their comparative antiquity and presumably mellow tone have been ruthlessly effaced, for this is the only part of the doctor's mansion that he has selected for a coat of whitewash. It is used for professional purposes, and is known by the doctor's patients as the "sujery." I know it is hopeless to try, by a bald description of timber and bricks and mortar, to give any idea of how the doctor's rambling homestead appealed to the sense of the picturesque, and to the affections of those of us who were familiar with it and with its inmate. No doubt, however, the latter had something to do with this. Nor should the surroundings be forgotten. The stately oaks that towered high above the quaint low buildings, and covered with leaves and debris the greater portion of that domestic enclosure which in those parts was known as the yard. The straggling, branching acacias that grew close to the house, and spread their tall arms above the roof, littering it in autumn with showers of small, curly leaves, and choking the wooden gutters (for the doctor considered tin piping as a modern heresy) with fragmentary twigs. The fresh, green turf that had matted and spread for one hundred and fifty years around this house and the more stately one that preceded it. The aged box-trees that had once, no doubt, in prim Dutch rows lined some well-tended gravel path, but now cropped up here and there upon the turf, like beings that had outlived their time and generation. The clustering honeysuckles, bending their old and rickety frames to the ground. The silver aspens before the door, whose light leaves shivered above your head in the most breathless August days. The slender mimosa, through whose beautiful and fragile greenery the first humming-birds of early June shyly fluttered; and the long row of straw hives against the rickety fence, where hereditary swarms of bees—let well alone—made more honey than the doctor and all his neighbors could consume.

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Yes! These objects are, and all and many more are, twined around my heart, but the doctor's front gate occupies no such position at all. It was all very well for the people who stopped in the road and looked through its bars at the fine old oaks, the green lawn beyond, and the quaint, straggling structure, and then drove on their way. For those, however, whose duty or pleasure compelled them to penetrate that barrier, it was entirely another matter. It was a home-made gate—a real "old Virginia" gate—put up at the close of the war as a protest, it would almost seem, against Yankee notions of hurry. To look at the tremendous portal, you would have supposed that the doctor was the most defiant recluse, instead of the most hospitable of men. It was, however, a typical Virginia gate strongly emphasized, just as the doctor was a typical Virginia gentleman strongly emphasized. I couldn't speak accurately as to its dimensions, but I have often had to jump for life as it fell, and from the way in which it hit the ground, I should say that it must have weighed nearly a thousand pounds. Its weight would have been of no importance whatever to anyone but the doctor and the posts which supported it, had it been properly hung with two hinges and a latch. No doubt it had commenced life with these advantages; but during all the years I struggled with it, there was no latch, and only a bottom hook-hinge. It was kept in its place by two ponderous fence rails being leaned up against it. The most elementary mathematician will at once arrive at the result which ensued on the removal of these rails (a herculean task in itself) and the opening of the gate, unless extraordinary skill was exercised. It was really a performance beyond a single man; so most visitors, unless they were "riding for the doctor"—in the most serious business sense—holloaed for assistance, or rode about till some of the hands came up to the rescue. It must not be supposed that the doctor's establishment, though strongly typical in a sense, resembled to any

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extent the real old Virginia mansion. The Pattons, it will be remembered, had been burnt out, and the present pile had been originally intended only as a makeshift; but it was such a makeshift as would perhaps be seen nowhere out of Virginia. Of the more substantial family mansions there were plenty crowning the hills in the doctor's neighborhood. Square blocks of brick, some many-windowed and green-shuttered, with huge Grecian porticoes supported by rows of white fluted pillars stretching along their face. Great big wooden barns, others with acres of roof and rows of dormer-windows, and crazy, crumbling porches, and stacks of red brick chimneys clambering up outside the white walls at the gable ends, or anywhere else where they came handy for that matter. There were plenty of these within range of the doctor's house and the limits of his practice, and to the proprietor of every one the doctor was related. The stages of this relationship varied from the unquestioned affinity of cousins and nephews, to that which is undescribed in Virginia by the comprehensive and farreaching appellation of "kin." To be kin of the Pattons, moreover, was in itself a desirable thing in Virginian eyes. Though the doctor lived in such an unpretentious residence, and worked day in and day out as a country practitioner, there were people in the neighborhood holding their heads pretty high, who were always pleased to remember that their father's first cousin had married the doctor's mother's brother.

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With all the doctor's quaint ideas and strong prejudices, I have said that he was a thorough gentleman. He was of the kind meant for use, and not for show. Good Heavens! What would your dashing British Æsculapius, in his brougham or well-appointed dog-cart, have said to my old friend's appearance when setting out for a long winter day's work? I can see him now, riding in at the gate on some wild January day, bringing hope in his kindly face, and good conservative, time-honored drugs in his well-worn saddle-bags. A woollen scarf is drawn round his head, and on the top of it is crammed an ancient wide-awake. A long black cloak, fastened round his throat with a clasp, and lined with red flannel, falls over the saddle behind. His legs, good soul, are thickly encased in coils of wheat straw, wound tightly round them from his ankles upwards. In his hand, by way of a whip, he carries a bushy switch plucked from the nearest tree, and upon one heel a rusty spur that did duty at Bull's Run.

Now do not suppose that the doctor on such occasions was regarded as a scarecrow, or that his neighbors looked upon him as eccentric or even careless of attire; on the contrary, this was a good old Virginia costume. The doctor's appearance as above described was not the desperate expedient of a frontier and transitory condition—not at all. It was a survival of two hundred years of a peculiar civilization; a civilization that had been wont to look inside the plantation fence for almost every necessary; a patriarchal dispensation whose simplicity was to a great extent the outcome of exclusiveness; a social organization wherein each man's place was so absolutely fixed, that personal apparel was a matter of almost no moment, and personal display, such as engages the well-to-do of other countries in mischievous rivalry, was hardly known.

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The general shabbiness of Virginia was not the temporary shabbiness of a pioneering generation—that condition everybody can understand—but the picturesque and almost defiant tatterdemalionism of quite an old and thoroughly self-satisfied community, unstimulated by contact with the outer world. It was a mellow, time-honored kind of shabbiness of which Virginians are almost proud, regarding it as a sort of mute protest, though an extreme one, against those modern innovations which their souls abhorred. The doctor had been a widower since the first year of the war. In accordance with local custom, he had buried his wife in the orchard. A simple marble shaft in that homely quarter spoke of her virtues and her worth to the colts and calves that bit the sweet May grass around her tomb, and to the inquiring swine that crunched the rotting apples as they fell in autumn from the untended trees. Neither had the doctor been blessed with sons or daughters. Who would he "ar (heir as a verb) his place to" was a common subject of discussion among the negroes on the property. The doctor's profession, no doubt, was his first care; but his heart was with his farms and his fox-hounds. The doctor had practised over, or, as we used to say there, "ridden" the south side of the country for nearly forty years. He had studied medicine with the intention only of saving the doctor's bill in his father's household of eighty negroes.

He had soon, however, dropped into a regular practice, and for the last five-and-twenty years, at any rate, no birth or death within a radius of ten miles would have been considered a well-conducted one without his good offices. The doctor's income, upon the well-thumbed scroll of hieroglyphics that he called his books, was nearly three thousand dollars a year. He collected probably about fifteen hundred. A considerable portion, too, of this fifteen hundred was received in kind payments, not conveniently convertible, such as bacon, Indian corn, hams, wheat flour, woollen yarns, sucking pigs, home-made brooms, eggs, butter, bricks, sweet-potato slips, sawn plank, tobacco-plants, shingles, chickens, baskets, sausage-meat, sole-leather, young fruit trees, rawhides, hoe-handles, old iron. To utilize these various commodities, it would have been necessary for the doctor to have had a farm, even supposing he had not already been the fortunate proprietor of two. Indeed, a farm to a Southern doctor is not only necessary as a receptacle for the agricultural curiosities that are forced upon him in lieu of payment, but for the actual labor of those many dusky patients who can give no other return for physic and attendance received. You could see a bevy of these Ethiopians almost any day upon the doctor's farm, wandering aimlessly about with hoes or brier-blades, chattering and cackling and doing everything but work.

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The doctor might have been called a successful physician. He had no rivals. There were two inferior performers in the district, it is true, who were by way of following the healing art—small farmers, who were reported to have studied medicine in their youth. One of these, however, had not credit sufficient to purchase drugs, and the other was generally drunk. So it was only their near relations, when not dangerously indisposed, who patronized them—or some patient of the doctor's now and again, perhaps, who took a fancy the latter was too "aristocratic," till he got badly sick, and returned with alacrity to his allegiance. There is no doubt, I fear, but that the doctor practised on the lines of thirty years ago. Tory to the backbone in every other department of life, it was hardly to be expected that he should have panted for light and leading in that branch of learning in which he had no rival within reach. Papers or magazines connected with the healing science I never remember to have seen inside the Patton homestead; and yet, after a great deal of experience of the good old man's professional care, I have a sort of feeling that I would as soon place my life in his hands as in the hands of Sir Omicron Pi!

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What time the doctor had to spare from physicking, I have said he devoted to farming and to fox-hunting. I should like to follow him for a bit on his long professional rounds, and listen to his cheery talk in homestead and cabin; to help him fill his long pipe, which he draws out of his top-boot when the patient has settled down to sleep or quiet; to hear him once again chat about tobacco and wheat, politics and foxes. I should like, too, to say something of the doctor's farming—heaven save the mark—on his two properties; the one "'ard" him by his father, and the other one, the quarter place near by, that "cum to him with his wife, ole Cunnel Pendleton's daughter."

I must only pause to remark, however, that the doctor farmed, as he did everything else, in the good old Virginia fashion—or in what is now irreverently known as the "rip and tar (tear) principle." He didn't care anything about acres or estimates; and as for farm books, his professional accounts pestered him quite enough. Of rotations, he neither knew nor wanted to know anything. His great idea was to plough and sow as much land as he could scuffle over with all the labor he could scrape together. Of manuring, clovering, or fertilizing, he took little account. If he "pitched" a big crop only, he was a proud and happy man. When each recurring harvest brought results more insignificant than the last, a temporary disgust with the whole business used to seize on my old friend, and he would swear that the wheat crops had been of no account since the war; that tobacco had gone to the devil, and that he'd quit fooling with a plantation for good and all. In the eyes of those who knew him, however, such tirades meant absolutely nothing. A Virginian of his description could no more have helped farming than he could have altered any other of the immutable laws of nature. A younger generation, and many indeed of the older one, have learned wisdom and prudence in the management of land since the abolition of slavery. The doctor, however, and the few left like him, will be land-killers of the genial good old sort till they lie under the once

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generous sod they have so ruthlessly treated.

The doctor's first care was of necessity his patients; but there is no doubt, I think, that his real affections were divided between his farm and his fox-hounds. That he did his duty by the former was amply testified to by the popularity he enjoyed. That he signally failed in the treatment of his lands was quite as evident. For while he healed the sores and the wounds of his patients, the sores, the wounds, the storm-rent gullies, the bare galls in his hillsides, grew worse and worse. The maize-stalks grew thinner, the tobacco lighter, the wheat-yield poorer, year by year. One has heard of famous painters, who perversely fancied themselves rather as musicians—of established authors who yearned rather to be praised as artists. So the doctor, who certainly had no local rival in his own profession, seemed to covet fame rather as the champion and exponent of a happily departing school of Southern agriculturists. In this case, the income derived from the profession just sufficed to make good the losses on the farm. So, though the doctor, in spite of his household expenses being almost *nil*, could never by any chance lay his hand on a five-dollar bill, he managed to keep upon the whole pretty free from debt. With a scattered practice, and an agricultural hobby extending over one thousand acres, including woods and old fields "turned out" to recover, it may be a matter of surprise that our old friend had leisure for a third indulgence, especially one like fox-hunting, which is connected in the British mind with such a large consumption of time. Nevertheless, the doctor, like most of his compeers, was passionately fond of the chase, and in spite of the war and altered times, had kept hounds round him almost without a break since he was a boy. It will be seen, however, that fox-hunting, as understood and followed by the doctor, was by no means incompatible with his more serious avocations.

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Now, if the fashion in which the doctor pursued the wily fox was not orthodox from a Leicestershire point of view, it was for all that none the less, perhaps indeed so much the more, genuine. Around New York and Philadelphia, it is true, the sport is pursued by fashionable bankers, brokers, and lawyers in a style the most approved. All the bravery and the glitter, ay, and much of the horsemanship of the British hunting-field, is there. But, like polo and coaching, it is there as a mere exotic, transplanted but yesterday, to the amazement and occasionally indignation of the Long Island rustics and the delight of the society papers. Everything is there—hounds, huntsmen, whips, red coats, tops, splendidly mounted hard-riding ladies and gentlemen, sherry-flasks, sandwich-boxes, etc., etc.,—everything, in short, but the fox. So far, however, as I can learn, such an omission is of no great importance under the modern conception of hunting. That wouldn't be the doctor's way of thinking at all, though; for I must here remark, that that worthy sportsman's love of hunting is entirely on hereditary principles and of native growth. Fox-hunting for two centuries has been the natural pastime of the Virginia gentry. They imported the chase of the fox and its customs from the mother country at a period when such things were conducted in a very different style from what they are now.

The hunting of the fox, as carried on in England early in the last century, let us say, offered, I take it, a very different spectacle from that seen in the elaborate and gorgeous cavalcades and the rushing fleet-footed hounds that race to-day over the trim, well-trained turf of the shires. No foxes were killed in those days in twenty-five minutes, I'll warrant. Men started their fox at daybreak and pottered along, absorbed in the performance of their slow hounds, over the rushy, sappy, heathy country, from wood to wood, for hours and hours. They were lucky then, no doubt, if Reynard succumbed in time to admit of their punctual appearance at that tremendous three o'clock orgie, which the poet Thomson has so graphically laid before us.

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Amid the glitter, the show, the dash, the swagger of modern fox-hunting, Englishmen who are not masters of hounds or huntsmen are apt to lose sight of the original ends and aims, the craft, and the science of the sport. It seems to me that fox-hunting nowadays, with the vast mass of its devotees, is simply steeplechasing over an unknown course. This is unquestionably a manly and a fine amusement, and far be it from me to breathe a word against it. I only wish to anticipate the sneers of your sporting stock-broker if he were to catch sight of the doctor and his hounds upon a hunting morning.

With the average Nimrod of modern days, I venture then to

assert that fox-hunting is only a modified form of steeplechasing. With the Virginian, who is simply a survival of other days, it is nothing of the kind. The doctor knew nothing of bullfinches or double ditches, of post and rails or five-barred gates, in a sporting sense; but what he did not know about a fox was not worth knowing at all. As for his hounds, he could tell the note of each at a distance when the music of a whole pack was scarcely audible to the ordinary ear.

As far as I remember, the doctor used generally to keep about five couple of hounds. It is needless to say he always swore they were the "best stock of fox-dogs in the State." Jim Pendleton, his cousin across the hill, and Judge Massey, on the north side of the county, who also kept hounds, were quite prepared to take an affidavit of the same kind with regard to their own respective packs. The doctor's hounds lived as members of the family. A kind of effort was spasmodically made to keep them from appropriating the parlor, and so long as the weather was mild, they were fairly content to lie in the front porch, or in one of the many passages which let the air circulate freely through the Patton homestead.

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If the weather was cold, however, and the doctor had a fire in the parlor, the older and more knowing dogs seldom failed eventually to gain a lodgment. By persistently coming in at one door, and when kicked out by the long-suffering M. F. H., slowly going round the house and slyly entering at the other, they invariably conquered in the long run, and established themselves on the warm bricks of the hearth before the great white-oak logs which blazed on the bright brass and irons.

Of course it was not often that the doctor and his hounds were all at home together on a winter's day. If the latter were not hunting with him, they were out upon their own account, for, be it noted, they were absolutely their own masters, as is the way with Virginia fox-hounds. If the doctor chose to accompany them and do a great deal of tooting and some hallooing, I have no doubt a certain amount of satisfaction animated the breasts of the pack. But it made no difference whatever to the sporting arrangements they had planned among themselves, or to their general programme. Whatever happened, they were bound to have their hunt. As the doctor's pride and joy was not in his own performance in the pigskin—for he never attempted any—but in the achievements of his dogs, this want of discipline and respect was no drawback whatever to his satisfaction.

I have said the doctor could combine his favorite sport with the exercise of his profession. That is to say, if he were going out in any likely direction, he would manage to keep his hounds around him till he had despatched his lamplight breakfast, and they would all start together. The pack, moreover, was easily increased, for the doctor had only to step around to the back porch, which looked across the valley to Cousin Jim Pendleton's place, and to blow lustily on his tremendous cow-horn.

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A very little of this music was sufficient to bring the greater part of the rival pack scrambling in a half-guilty way over the garden fence. After a little growling and snarling and snapping, the strangers would settle down among the doctor's hounds as if they had been raised on the place.

See the doctor attired for the chase emerging with his hounds from that awful front gate of his, which is being held up and open by the combined efforts of two stalwart negroes. It is a mild and soft February morning, at about the hour when the sun would be seen mounting over the leafless woodlands to the east of the house, if it were not for the dark banks of clouds chasing one another in continuous succession from the southwest. The doctor is not quite such a scarecrow to-day. The weather is mild, and he has left the coils of straw behind, having his stout legs encased in grey homespun overalls, which he calls leggings. The long Bull's Run spur is on his left heel. The black cloak with the red lining is on his back. The slouch hat upon his head, and spectacles upon his nose. A high standup collar of antique build and a black stock give the finishing touch to a picture whose "old-timiness," as the Americans say, would have thrown a Boston novelist into convulsions of ecstasy.

The doctor this morning is combining business with pleasure. He has to visit the widow Gubbins, who fell down the cornhouse steps the week before, and broke her leg. But he has had word sent to him

that there is a red fox in the pine wood behind the parsonage, hard by the Gubbins domicile. I need not say the saddle-bags and the medicine bottles are there; but, besides these, there is a great big cow-horn which the doctor carries slung round him, and blows long blasts upon as he goes "titupping" down the muddy lane. These blasts are rather with a view of personal solace than for any definite aims. The doctor loves the horn for its associations, and goes toot-tooting down the soft red road, and waking the echoes of the woods and fields solely for his own personal benefit and refreshment. Hector and Rambler, Fairfax and Dainty, and the rest—little wiry, lean fellows of about two-and-twenty inches—hop over the big mudholes, or creep around the dry fence corners waiting for the first bit of unfenced woodland to trot over and commence the day's operations.

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The doctor, however, is determined, if possible, to keep them in hand till they reach the haunt of that aforesaid red fox which is said to be lurking in the parson's wood. He hopes to be able to exercise authority sufficient to keep these independent dogs of his from getting on the trail of a ringing, skulking grey fox in the first ivy thicket or open bit of forest they come to. It is no manner of use, however. The ruddy, sappy road, soon after it leaves the doctor's estate, straggles unfenced through half a mile of mazy woodland. Though it is a historic turnpike of old coaching fame—a road the memory of whose once bustling gaiety well-nigh brings tears to the eyes of the old inhabitants—it is scarcely visible to the rare wagoner or horseman in these degenerate times, from the wealth of autumn leaves that hide its rugged face. Into the wood plunge the eager and undisciplined hounds, the dry leaves crackling and rustling under their joyous feet as they scamper and race amid the tall oak and poplar trunks, and one by one disappear beyond the very limited horizon. The doctor toots and toots till not only the forest but the hills and valleys beyond echo to the appeals of the familiar cow-horn. Mighty little, however, care the dogs for such tooting. They look upon it as a harmless sign of encouragement, a pleasant accompaniment to the preliminaries until the more serious work begins. Nor do they care in the least when the doctor drops his horn and begins to halloo and shout and storm—not they. He might as well shout and storm at the wind. The doctor gets very mad. He doesn't swear—Virginians of his class and kind very seldom do—but he uses all the forms of violent exhortation that his conscience admits of, and that belongs to the local vernacular. He calls the whole pack "grand scoundrels and villains." In a voice grown husky with exertion, he inquires of their fast-fading forms if they know "what in thunder he feeds them for?" He roars out to little Blazer, the only one left within good speaking distance that he'll "whale the life out of him;" whereupon little Blazer disappears after the rest. So he finally confides to the sorrel mare, which is ambling along under him at the regulation five-mile-an-hour gait of the Southern roadster, that these dogs of Cousin Jeems' (the doctor says "Jeems," not because he doesn't know any better, but because it is a good old Virginia way of pronouncing the name) are the hardest-headed lot of fox-dogs south of the Potomac River.

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But hark! There is a boom from the pine wood, the deep green of whose fringe can be seen far away through the naked stems and leafless branches of the oaks. The doctor pulls up; he "concludes he'll wait awhile and see what it amounts to, any way." The scoundrels are probably fooling after a rabbit, or, at the best, have struck the trail of a grey fox (the most common native breed, that won't face the open or run straight). The doctor draws rein at the edge of the wood, where the straggling forest road once more becomes a highway, fenced in from fields of young wheat, pasture and red fallow. He thinks the widow Gubbins can wait a bit, and that old red fox at the parson's can lay over for another day.

"That's old Powhatan, cert'n and sure; and that's a fox of some sort, I'll sw'ar," remarks our old friend to the sorrel mare, which pricks up her ears as another deep note comes echoing from the valley below.

It is late in February; and though February in Virginia is practically the same dead, colorless, leafless, budless, harsh winter month it is with us, yet there are sometimes days before it closes that seem to breathe of a yet distant spring with more witching treachery than the greatest effort that period can make in our more methodical clime. And this is one of them. The soft and balmy air is laden, it is true, with no scent of blossoms or opening buds. The

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odor of smouldering heaps of burning brush and weeds, or of tardily burnt tobacco-plant beds, is all that as yet scents the breeze. But after a month of frost and rain and snow and clouds, the breath is the breath of spring, and the glow of the sun, now bursting through the clouds, seems no longer the sickly glare of winter. The soft Virginia landscape, swelling in gentle waves of forest, field, and fallow to the great mountains that lie piled up far away against the western sky, is naked still and bare, save for the splashes of green pine woods here and there upon the land. But there is a light in the sky and a feel in the air that seems almost to chide the earth for its slow response. The blood courses quicker through the veins of even easy-going Virginia farmers at the thoughts of seeding-time. The negro's head comes up from under his shoulders and his hands from his pockets, where they have each respectively spent most of the winter, and the air becomes laden with those peculiar dirges that mark the Ethiopian's contentment of mind at the prospect of warm weather and of his limbs once more becoming "souple." The soft breeze begins to coat the tops of the damp furrows with a thin, powdery crust that in a few days' time will be converted into that March dust so universally beloved of farmers. The young wheat, smitten and scorched and beaten almost out of recognition, lifts its head once again and spreads a carpet of tender green to the sun. The early lambs, beginning to think that after all they were not sent into the world to shiver behind strawstacks, frisk and gambol in the fields. The blacksmiths' shops at the cross roads and the courthouse villages are thronged with colored laborers and tenants, whose masters, now seeding-time is upon them, have suddenly remembered that every plow in the place is out of fix, and not a harrow has its full complement of teeth. The light breezes from the southwest moans softly in the pines; but among the deciduous trees not a withered shred of foliage is left for it to stir, and the silence is complete. The freshly awakened sunlight streams softly down between the leafless branches and the rugged trunks of oak and chestnut, hickory and poplar, and plays upon the golden carpet of wasted leaves that hides the earth beneath them.

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The doctor, as he stands at the edge of the forest, would ordinarily upon such a day be deep in agricultural reveries of a most sanguine nature. But he is now waiting for one more note of evidence that there is a prospect of what he would call "a chase"—hesitating as to the widow Gubbins.

Suddenly there is a great commotion in the wooded valley beneath, and in a few seconds you might be in Leicestershire spinny, so busy and joyful are the little pack with their tongues. "That's a fox, any way," says the doctor to the sorrel mare, "and, likely as not, a red." Two small farmers, jogging down the road, pull up their horses and yell with the peculiar shrill scream that is traditionally as much a part of Virginia fox-hunting as the familiar cries of the British hunting-field are with us. The doctor, though his voice is not what it was thirty years ago, catches the infection, and standing up in his wooden, leather-capped stirrups, halloos at his hounds in what he would call "real old Virginia fashion."

"By G—d! it's a red," says one of the small farmers, who had perched himself on the top of the fence, so as to look down over the sloping tree-tops on to the opposite hill.

"The dogs are out of the wood, and are streakin' it up the broom-sedge field yonder—dawg my skin if they ain't!"

This is too much for the doctor.

"Pull down the fence, gentlemen, for God's sake! and we'll push on up to the old Matthews graveyard on top of the hill. We shall see right smart of the chase from there. I know that old fox; he'll go straight to the pines on Squire Harrison's quarter place."

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The four or five top rails are tossed off the snake fence; but the doctor can't wait for the remaining six. The long spur is applied to the flank of the sorrel mare, the apple switch to her shoulder. Amid a crashing and scattering of rotten chestnut-rails, the doctor, cloak, and spectacles, saddle-bags, pills, medicine-bottles, and overalls, lands safely in the corn-stalk field upon the other side. The two farmers follow through the fearful breach he has made, and they may soon all be heard upon the opposite hill cheering and yelling to the hounds, which by this time are well out of reach of such encouraging sounds. Neither the country, nor the horse, nor the doctor is adapted for riding to hounds; nor, as I have before intimated, has the latter any idea of doing so. The good man wants

to hear as much as possible—of the chase; but when he neither sees nor hears a great deal—which, when a strong red fox goes straight away, is generally the case—he will still take much delight in collecting the details from other sources.

If his hounds eventually kill their fox half-way across the county, friends and neighbors, who became accidental witnesses of various stages of the chase, and each of whom did their share of hallooing and cheering, will send round word to the “old doctor,” or “call by” the next time they pass his house, and cheer his heart with praises of his dogs. The doctor will probably have bandaged Mrs. Gubbins’s leg, and be half-way home by the time the death-scene takes place, in some laurel thicket possibly miles and miles away from the corner where we left our friend bursting through the fence. Not more than half a dozen, probably, of the fourteen or fifteen hounds with which the doctor started, will assist at the finish. Two or three of the puppies will have dropped out early in the day, and come home hunting rabbits all the way. Three or four more are perhaps just over distemper, and will fall in their tracks, to come limping and crawling home at noon. Rambler and Fairfax, however, having assisted at the finish, and being perhaps the most knowing old dogs of the lot, will have trotted round to old Colonel Peyton’s close by. They are mighty hungry—for Virginia hounds won’t touch foxes’ flesh—and they succeed in slipping into the log kitchen in the yard, while Melindy, the cook, is outside collecting chips, and abstracting from the top of the stove an entire ham. The said ham was just prepared for the colonel’s supper; but in fox-hunting all is forgiven. So after a little burst of wrath he reckons they are the old doctor’s clogs, shuts them up in the granary, and gives them a cake of corn-bread apiece. The following day is Saturday, and the colonel’s son, home from school for a holiday, thinks it an opportunity for a rabbit-hunt in the pines behind the house not to be missed. So Rambler and Fairfax are introduced to the proposed scene of action in the morning. After condescending to an hour of this amusement, they hold a canine consultation, and start for home, where they finally arrive about sundown, to be made much of by the doctor, who has already heard of the finish from a negro who was splitting rails close by.

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The doctor’s satisfaction is quite as great as if he had cut down a whole Leicestershire field in the fastest thing of the season. His heart warms towards those undersized, harsh-coated, slab-sided little friends of his as he stands watching the negro woman breaking up their supper of hot corn-bread with buttermilk as a treat, on the back porch. They have all come in by this time, and scuffle and growl and snap around the board as the food is thrown to them.

The knowing ones take advantage of such an evening as this to assert, with more than usual assurance, their right of entry to the house. The doctor has had his supper, and hopes that no ominous shout from the darkness will, for this night at any rate, call him to some distant sick-bed. He has drawn up his one-armed rocking-chair to the parlor fire, and by the kerosene lamp is poring over the last oration on free trade by that grand old Virginia gentleman and senator, Mr. Jefferson Randolph Beverly Page. Conscious, as it were, that some extra indulgence is deserved on this night, the dogs begin to crawl in. One by one, beginning with the oldest and wildest and ending with the timidest puppy, they steal into the room and become grouped in the order of their audacity from the glowing bricks of the hearth outward to the door.

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Nor to-night has the doctor kicks or cuffs or anathemas for the very worst of them.

The great oak logs blaze and crackle and roar in the wide chimney, and the light of the flames flickers over the quaint, low-ceilinged room with its whitewashed walls, black wainscoting, and homely decorations; over the antlers on the door, that recall some early exploit of the doctor’s in West Virginia wilds; over the odds and ends of old silver on the sideboard, that have been saved from the wreck of the Patton grandeur; over the big oil-painting of the famous jurist, and the dimmer, smokier visages of less distinguished but remoter ancestors, who believed in the divine right of kings and knew nothing of republics and universal suffrage. Here, however, surrounded by his dogs, we must take leave of the doctor. There are few like him left now in Virginia, and fewer still who have clung to the good and bad of a departed era with the same uncompromising tenacity as our old friend. They were a fine race—deny it who will—these old Virginia squires; provincial and prejudiced perhaps, but

full of originality and manly independence. Their ideas, it is true, are not those of the latter half of the nineteenth century, but the men themselves are passing rapidly away, and their ideas with them. Those who have known them can only regret that a strong, picturesque, and admirable type of Anglo-Saxon has disappeared forever from the ranks of our great family, unpainted by a single master-hand of contemporary date.

A. G. BRADLEY.

THE DOCTOR'S FRONT YARD.



ALL began with the tap of a gavel—an imposing white gavel adorned with a yellow bow and resounding like the crack of doom. Behind it, under a nodding purple ostrich feather, sat Mrs. Bunker; before it the eight awe-struck members of the Village Improvement Society; enveloping us all in its cold, judicial atmosphere was room No. 10 of the new town building, maintained as a meeting place in order to give dignity to our association, and its rent representing just so many entertainments and strawberry-festivals per annum.

Mrs. Bunker is the “progressive woman” of West Hedgeworth. She lives in that large, white house with the terraces and box borders and a fountain, just where you turn into Main street. She goes to Boston twice each season to get clothes and ideas upon which she feeds our little social circle through the medium of clubs and afternoon teas. The clothes are remarkable, the ideas equally up to date; we look upon her with reverence and obey her slightest mandate.

I believe I am the only one who now and then rebels inwardly. Why, for example, I should have been considered eligible for the V. I. S., a girl of twenty-three, with not the slightest pretensions to domestic talent or judgment, except that I have had to take care of father and the boys for the last few years, I couldn't see,—nor could any one else; but Mrs. Bunker had ordained that I should go into it, and I had no choice.

“You are a very clever girl, Irene,” she explained severely, as if this were a situation to be deprecated, but could be atoned for by penance of some sort, “and it would be extremely unfortunate for you to have no outlet for your talents. People should take up the work that best suits them.”

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I withdrew all objections, of course. If Mrs. Bunker pronounces one clever, no matter how wretched one may be under the verdict, there is never any appeal from it. But as the progressive woman is always ready to shoulder the responsibility of her friends' cleverness, I haven't found mine a very great burden. So far as the duties of membership in the Village Improvement Society are concerned, they only consist in doing as one is bid. The gavel roused me from a study of bonnets. Mrs. Suter, the wife of our good druggist, and Mrs. Pitman, the postmaster's lady, always faithfully advertise the village milliner in familiar black-lace-covered frames, the one adorned with aggressive bunches of buttercups, the other trailed over by a hairy-leaved poppy. Mrs. Cope, the Episcopal clergyman's wife, has the parish down upon her for appearing in unmistakable French headgear, simple, but beyond imitation; it does not justify her in their eyes that the hats come from a rich relative, and the poor soul is credited with proud and haughty aspirations, of which she is as innocent as a babe. Miss Maria Withers' strong point is not fashion; so the little parched, limp, black bonnet which she has found satisfactory for eight years, still perches above her gray curls. I was absorbed in working out a series of arguments on the effect of dress upon character, when the white gavel descended and the Society came to order with a start.

We are nothing if not parliamentary. The latest manual lies at Mrs. Bunker's right hand. Miss Scrapson, of the academy, makes an excellent secretary, and her minutes are comprehensive. Miss Withers, as treasurer, is somewhat rambling and uncertain. Her reports are subject to pauses, silent mental calculations and ejaculations of “Dear me,—no, that wasn't it—just wait a minute,” and excursions into a little black bag which she carries, after missing items on stray scraps of paper. Mrs. Bunker bears this with self-control, as Miss Maria has valuable qualities. Miss Scrapson and Mrs. Cope play into her hands most cleverly in a discussion over a motion or a point of order. We manage to have a little unfinished business on the carpet, usually, to give style to the meeting, and altogether maintain an air of importance which is quite remarkable for a small village club. But on this particular day, a May morning, I

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saw in our president's eye that there was something new and exciting to be taken up.

"Ladies," she announced at last, "our spring campaign is opening with opportunities of no mean order. The village of West Hedgeworth is menaced with a disgrace which so far outdoes in horror even the peanut shells on the post-office floor and the loose papers on the common that words almost fail me as I mention it. Give me your close attention, please."

Ever since the meeting when Mrs. Bunker took Mrs. Pitman to task for the condition of her ash barrels, we have been subject to a weak-kneed and guilty sensation when she gives us an introduction of this sort.

"You probably know," she continued in more colloquial style, "the small house with pointed gables and a piazza, fronting the common next the old Benjamin place. You are aware how neatly it has always been kept by former occupants. That house is just rented by a doctor who has come here with his wife, I am told, from New York. They moved in a week ago, and in that short space of time,—*one week*, ladies,—they have made the premises a blot upon the scutcheon of our lovely village. Their packing-cases were unloaded on the piazza in a high wind, and bits of paper, excelsior and what not are scattered from end to end of the yard; boxes, planks, tin cans and other refuse are piled at one side; the whole appearance of the establishment is enough to make one *of us*,"—impressively—"avert her head in passing it. And still the scandal goes on, unabated, from day to day. It is a moment for immediate action, a moment to be seized by patriotic and public-spirited women, and the disturbers of our peace of mind made to feel the necessity of taking immediate steps towards reform. I lay the case before you, ladies, for suggestions as to prompt aggression."

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There was a suitable pause. Then Miss Withers' gentle voice piped up. "This is really a dreadful state of things," she began mildly. "I hadn't noticed it myself, I suppose because"—

"Hadn't noticed it!" ejaculated the president, in tones of thunder.

"I was going to say," fluttered Miss Maria hurriedly, "because I haven't passed there in two weeks. If I had, no doubt I should have been very much annoyed about it."

"*Annoyed!*" exclaimed Mrs. Bunker again, savagely. "Annoyance is altogether too personal a term. It arouses all *my* loyalty to the society; that's the way it impresses *me*."

Of course this brought forth many protestations of the same sentiment from the rest of us. Then Mrs. Pitman ventured to ask if Mrs. Bunker didn't think it would be well to send a committee to the doctor and ask him to "clear up a little."

"The chair has no thoughts, Mrs. Pitman," answered that body loftily. "I await a motion."

I always second everybody else's motion, but have never made one yet, in the meetings. Miss Scrapson, however, came to the fore, and it was presently decided that the president should appoint a committee to visit the doctor and his lady and reprove them.

"If that is really the pleasure of the Association," said Mrs. Bunker, with a wave of her purple ostrich plume, "I will appoint Miss Allison" (that is my name), "a committee of one to call at the doctor's house for this purpose. As you are one of the young ladies of the place, Irene, it would be in the way of your social duty at any rate. You can mingle business with pleasure."

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"Yes,—but Mrs. Bunker, I never *could* mingle things! Don't ask me to go," I implored. "I'm sure I shall make a failure of it. I don't want to offend them, you know,—they may be nice people."

"*Nice people!*" Mrs. Bunker compressed her lips into that peculiar stiff smile which means scorn, and closed her eyes slowly with her head tilted back.

"They certainly must be lax," murmured Miss Scrapson,—"*very* lax." Nobody, however, came to my rescue. I was evidently doomed to be the unhappy instrument of the Society's revenge. I gave in and took my instructions as meekly as I could.

"The wife has an extremely youthful and inexperienced air," said my mentor, "and undoubtedly needs a little judicious instruction. It will alarm her less to be confronted by a person of her own age. Our work is largely educational, you know, so do not antagonize her. Simply say to her something of this kind in gentle but firm tones: 'My dear madam, do you not appreciate the beauty of this peaceful

little village, and will you not bear your part henceforward in the maintenance of its order and symmetry?' Such a method of speech would be better than to alarm her. And yet don't fail to impress upon her that disorder simply *cannot be*."

I acquiesced, with a slightly strangling sound, which the president did not notice, fortunately. It resulted from physical distress of a kind which is sometimes on these occasions, beyond control. It was with me yet, in a milder form, as I ascended the doctor's steps that afternoon, card-case in hand, which last appendage seemed the most despicable mockery.

The house was a neat, smart little affair in its way, inartistic, but not aggressively ugly, and well arranged for professional purposes. The sign, *Dr. M. H. Richmond*, was tacked up beside the door. There certainly were evidences of an upheaval, however, in plain sight. The front yard was, as Mrs. Bunker had described it, littered with papers and excelsior, the piazza floor as bad. At the side of the house was a pile of tin cans, boxes, broken china and other unsightly abominations. Somehow one could not help feeling that a woman's eye and touch were wanting, and I found myself stiffening against the wife who could allow such a state of affairs to go on. My primmest expression was ready, as the door flew open, swung hospitably wide by a big young man with a short brown beard and gray eyes. The moment I saw him it occurred to me to wonder what he would take me for—patient, caller, or perhaps an agent! Horrible thought, that last,—I found a certain timidity threatening my assurance.

"Might I," I began, putting myself into the latter category at once by my mode of address, "might I see the lady of the house, please?"

"Walk in, won't you?" said the doctor affably, ushering me into what happened to be his office. Ah,—one knew now a little better where one was. Whatever its exterior shortcomings, this must be the home of thoroughly cultivated people. Their furniture was solid, their pictures were fine, and their few decorations faultless.

As to their books, filling all available space, no library critic could find the selection wanting in true literary discrimination. I felt the courage of my mission diminishing as I slid into a leather covered arm chair opposite the easy, amused looking doctor.

"I'm so very sorry," he observed, "that she isn't at home. She went away by the early train this morning; but perhaps you could leave a message with me if it's a matter of importance."

There was a short but awkward pause. No help for it,—I might as well make the plunge. The more Bunkerish I could be, the better, if any stern message was to be sent to the wife by this good-natured personage.

"I wanted to see Mrs. Richmond," I explained stiffly, "on a little matter of business connected with the work of the Village Improvement Society. It was reported at our last meeting that the condition of your front yard is very bad."

"My front yard! I see." The doctor looked quizzical but serene, and glanced out over his shoulder to the lawn.

"Our Association," I continued bravely, "aims to incite the pride of householders in the appearance of the village as well as in their own homes; and your place here is conspicuous, facing the common as it does. We thought that might not have occurred to you."

"It really hadn't," smiled my host. "This is very kind of you, however. Do I understand that your Society orders me, through you, to clear up the yard? In that case, do they provide cleaners and so forth,—or will they perhaps come and take charge of it themselves?"

"Not at all," I exclaimed angrily. "You are expected to attend to it."

"What should you do," he inquired suavely, "if I left it in disorder? I ask from curiosity, naturally, as I should never have the temerity to defy so august a body. Would the law be obliged to take its course?"

"You are probably aware that we have no law whatever behind us," I said with all the dignity I could assume, "though the selectmen are very good about backing us up in flagrant cases. But I should imagine a doctor just settling in a town would be sufficiently alive to his own interests to see the propriety of making a good impression by the appearance of his house and grounds."

"Ah!" He nodded slowly, smiling in a way which maddened me. "Now I see. This is a special kindness on your part. How grateful I

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am to you. Your suggestion may really result in my winning the hearts of the West Hedgeworth people; and I shall begin at once. The propriety of making a good impression by the appearance of my house and grounds!—it is a noble sentiment. My colored boy who is my only servant, shall attend to the matter, and the Village Improvement Society shall see a change indeed. Are there any other little touches,—extra touches, you know,—that occur to you?”

I glanced at the big, low table with its littering of attractive books and magazines, a great ivory club of a paper knife lying across an uncut review. I was as much at home among those things as he. Why had I been forced into the attitude of an impertinent village miss, to be laughed over with his wife again in the way he was laughing now? The idea was distressing; but I had no defence.

“I think you are quite capable of arranging your own yard,” I said curtly. “You will very soon find out what the village people like. All that our Association requires is cleanliness and good order;”—with which I moved towards the door, murmuring a regret that I had not seen Mrs. Richmond.

“This is so good of you”—and now the doctor actually showed a shade of embarrassment himself,—“that I am really overwhelmed with shame to be obliged to disappoint you about my wife. It would be so pleasant for her to know you ladies and to”—he coughed slightly—“to come under your helpful influence. But the fact is, she isn’t—she doesn’t—there never has—in short, there isn’t any Mrs. Richmond. My sister came with me to help me settle things. She is a college girl somewhat younger than I and with no experience whatever. I hope you will be willing to welcome her when she comes back in July,—that is, of course, if we are tidy enough to be recognized by the villagers.” Still the blandest expression about his mouth, but a twinkle in the gray eyes which made me grind my teeth. And he had calmly sat there, letting me call on *him!*

I attempted to “sweep” across the piazza with dignity, but only swept up little bits of excelsior on the hem of my gown. But I did make him feel the arrows of a dignified wrath, I think;—not that he evinced any such sensation at the time. To Mrs. Bunker, who had asked for a prompt report, I flew. She took the affair with unsympathetic calmness.

“You did your duty, Irene,” was her gracious commendation, “and it was not your fault that the girl—who certainly was there, for I *saw* her—should be his sister and not his wife. You said precisely the right thing, and I trust he will profit by it and earn the respect of the village. I am glad he is a young man of taste.”

He got on, whether possessed of taste or not. It annoyed me to see the way he made friends with everybody who crossed his path, man, woman or child. They were rather slow to consult him professionally; but Doctor Bell, the old physician who had all the practice round here, lives at Hedgeworth Centre, three miles away, so when Miss Phoebe Withers, Miss Maria’s older sister, had an attack of heart failure one day, they sent for Doctor Richmond, and took a tremendous fancy to him. I kept out of his way; to my mind he was the most thoroughly disagreeable man I ever met.

The front yard, meanwhile, had been cleared up. Nick, the black imp who drove, cooked and gardened for the doctor, was known to be mysteriously occupied behind the house for hours at a time, after the rubbish was removed. Mrs. Benjamin saw it all from her back windows, and reported it at the sewing society. He spent hours pottering among paint-cans, starting seeds and what not; and shortly after, the front fence appeared painted grass green, the gate picked out with white cross-bars, and the lamp-post similarly decorated, bearing a brand-new reflector. Then clam-shell borders to the gravel-walk cropped out, and two round clam-edged beds of geraniums stared from the lawn, while a “rockery” of red and blue boulders, with ferns, reared itself where the piles of tin cans had been.

“Do you like *that* sort of thing, I want to know?” I inquired wrathfully of Mrs. Bunker at our next Village Improvement meeting.

“Well, it looks perfectly neat,” she answered, “and it is in the style of most of the best kept yards here. I can’t say that *I* should not prefer quieter colors; but he is a young man yet, you know.”

I was silenced. What right had I, any way, to feel as if there were a sort of practical joke on me, personally, in all this? The day after, a new ornament appeared;—a pair of andirons, painted scarlet, and a hollowed out log across them filled with yellow nasturtiums. Mrs.

Pitman pointed it out to me delightedly.

"Just like a real fire!" she said. "Do you see, Irene? The doctor is quite a landscape gardener, isn't he?" I made no reply.

Another decoration was set forth next, on the opposite side of the yard;—this time a crane, also of scarlet hue, and a swinging pot, with money-wort bubbling in it and dribbling down the sides. By ill luck I was passing at the moment when Nick put it there, turning round with a grin for the approval of his master, who stood in the window.

"Very good, indeed, Nick," I heard the doctor call out. "You're a regular Village Improvement Society in yourself, boy." I wondered if it were possible, by Delsartian methods, to throw scorn into the expression of one's back. The attempt ended weakly in one of those little conscious adjustments of drapery to which one resorts involuntarily at such junctures. Somehow I felt that those gray eyes were upon me. I had occasionally caught the expression of them before, always with the inevitable twinkle, when we met in public.

He grew into the habit of dropping in at the Bunkers', to my disgust, as it spoiled my own intimacy there. Mr. B., a shadowy figure in the background of the family stage, had been cured, or imagined he had, of rheumatism by the new physician, and took a great fancy to him. Emily, the daughter, who is so fearfully quiet that most people never make any attempt to rouse her, was actually known to chat with him quite naturally and easily; and our beloved president submitted to cruel thrusts from him with a good grace.

"Mrs. Bunker," he said one evening as we were all sitting on the piazza in a June twilight, "you've never told me yet how you liked the arrangement of my front yard. Have you seen the new garden seat I had put out this week? It's one of the latest fads in outdoor decoration, made of the head-board and frame of an antique bedstead—a very choice thing. I got the idea from a farmhouse up on the north road."

"I haven't noticed it," she answered somewhat cautiously, "but I observe, doctor, that you have an idea of falling in with the taste of the people."

"My dear madam," he clasped his hand round one knee and looked off dreamily into space,— "a doctor just settling down in a town should be sufficiently alive to his own interests to see the propriety of making a good impression by the appearance of his house and grounds."

How dared he mock me to my very face in this fashion? I was thankful for the little back gate leading out of the Bunkers' grounds, by which I could get a short cut home, leaving my good-byes with Emily Bunker. When we met accidentally at the post-office next morning, I turned my back on him to stamp some letters, and never looked up till he was gone, after telling Alice Cobb, one of the village belles, who stood there, that he was going away in the afternoon to his sister's Commencement and would bring her back with him.

The week seemed very peaceful, and I enjoyed going about without the dread of further shafts of ridicule. I was always planning some way to give his impertinence a decided snub, but never found the chance. The afternoon of his return, I was sitting with my work in Mrs. Benjamin's parlor as the buggy drove up, Nick having been left to walk home from the station. When he helped the sister out,— a manifestly high bred, charming little blonde,—I couldn't help watching for the effect upon her of those painted monstrosities. She wouldn't tolerate them a moment, I felt sure. But oh, stab after stab! She gave one glance at them and turned to her brother with an expression of such utter merriment that I knew at once the thing was a joke already understood between the two. I decided that Amy Richmond would *not* become a friend of mine. Yet curiously enough she actually sought me out, at an academy reception the next night. Emily Bunker introduced her, and she began at once: "I've been so anxious to meet you, Miss Allison. Morris tells me so much about you, and he's sure we shall be congenial."

I stiffened. Another back-handed thrust, probably, lay underneath this.

"He thinks I shall learn an immense amount from you, too," she pursued,— "don't you Morris?"—to the doctor, who was unexpectedly standing behind me.

"I've told my sister," he answered, "that she must persuade you to give her some hints about household matters. She hasn't had

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even as much experience yet as Nick and I."

I tried to be very ungracious, as dark suspicions flew through my mind; but Miss Richmond looked absolutely guileless, and furthermore she wouldn't let me alone; there was no use trying to avoid her. And it *did* seem good to have a friend of her sort. The West Hedgeworth girls are bright and pretty, and some of them intellectual, but we had all been village comrades too long to get up much enthusiasm over one another's society. Doctor Richmond's brotherly devotion caused him to lend his sister the buggy and spirited little horse for her own use now and then, besides the drives she took with him; so we two enjoyed long excursions through the country roads, steeped in July sunshine and finding our mutual interest deeper with every day. Once I went to tea with them, and on that occasion the doctor seemed quite like other people, except just as I was leaving under the escort of my younger brother, which I had purposely arranged, the temptation to give me a parting thrust was too strong for him, and he remarked as we descended the front steps: "Miss Allison, I am so glad to have had you get a glimpse of our clam-shells in the moonlight."

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Amy went off to the seashore a day or two later, and I felt really sorry for him, but it was much the easiest way to avoid him altogether, and I never asked him to come to our house, nor crossed his path if I could help it. As for the nasturtiums and geraniums, scorching on his lawn in the midsummer heat, I wanted no sight of them. By and by I went away myself, and came back in September to a taste of the unpleasantnesses of life. My two brothers left home, one to a business position in Boston, the other to college. Father, meanwhile, who for eight years since mother's death had been lost in melancholy and required my constant offices as consoler, divulged the fact that a buxom widow in Hedgeworth Centre had succeeded in resurrecting his buried affections; an individual as utterly unlike—well, there was a sting about it all that made things look pretty black for awhile, and since they desired the engagement "kept quiet," I locked up my woes and could only wonder now and then whether anybody felt any sympathy, while parrying the usual village questions about father's frequent drives to the Centre. The Bunkers went abroad for the winter, thank Heaven!—and the V. I. S. was suspended for the time being. Mercifully I had a chance to do something for somebody else. Aunt Abby, my mother's sister, who had lived alone with her servants in a big house fronting the common, a rather morose and unmanageable old maiden lady, was breaking down. My other aunt, who lives in California, could not come east at once, so I was the only member of the family to nurse her, and with father and the boys provided for I had time to go to her whenever she needed me.

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Dr. Bell fell ill and Dr. Richmond was called. His appearance in the sick-room seemed likely to destroy the only comfort I had there; but, strange to say, I laid down my weapons before three visits were over. His management of her was absolutely perfect; thoughtful, gentle, cheery, and so patient with her whims and imaginings, poor old soul, that his coming grew to be the one bright spot in her life, and I fancied she would give herself up to complete invalidism for the sake of them. But he looked grave one day over her, and informed me she must have a nurse.

"Do you think me incapable?" I asked rather sharply.

"No, but you couldn't hold out to do all there is to be done. Your aunt is going to be worse, Miss Allison, and I doubt if we can pull her through. You'll want somebody for night work."

Mrs. Smith, the village nurse, is the dreariest of her kind, and brings an atmosphere of melancholy with her. My services were needed as cheerer-up from this time on, for poor Aunt Abby grew visibly weaker, and finally one stormy night the end seemed near, so I did not go home. Dr. Richmond came in about nine o'clock and found me in the cold, lofty parlor with its straight backed furniture and grim family portraits.

"See here," he remarked as he returned from the sick-room, "mightn't you be a little more comfortable somehow? You can't sit up all night on the edge of a slippery sofa like that. Why don't you doze, and let the nurse call if she wants you?"

I had unconsciously taken the attitude of my childhood's years, when sent to call on Aunt Abby and charged not to let my feet touch the furniture, my hands crossed in my lap, and spine rigid. But I couldn't have slept at any rate, I told him, and should manage all

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right.

He opened the front door to depart, then came back. A West Indian tornado was tearing at the house and lashing the trees with howls of fury, the chimneys moaning and blinds rattling. He looked at me irresolutely, I sitting motionless. What did a mere storm matter,—a tumult of nature which would be over by morning? *He* might object to it, with nothing worse to worry about; it made no difference to me.

"I must be on hand every hour, anyway," he said slowly, "to watch your aunt's pulse. Neither you nor the nurse would understand it. If you don't mind, I'll stay here, instead of coming back and forth across the common in such a gale as this. And meanwhile let me show you a better way to rest."

Poor Aunt Abby! It was fortunate that she could not see her plush sofa moved around cornerwise and its end filled with pillows, nor the logs which the doctor brought from the cellar piled across her beautifully polished, unused andirons. Had I any business to sink back luxuriously and enjoy the sparkle and warmth of a fire, with that unconscious figure in the next room? I sprang up again and tiptoed in to ask the nurse if I might not take her place.

"No," said Mrs. Smith dolorously but firmly, "you ain't experienced enough to watch out her last hours. Miss Abby's been good to me in ways I sha'n't say nothin' about, and I'm a-goin' to see her through. All I want you for is to call if I need you, and so long as I ain't all alone I shall stay up till the last."

I crept back, feeling incompetent and useless, and with some of the diminished nerve which results from the nearness and certainty of death—that hour we are never ready for.

"Lie against the cushions, please," commanded the doctor quietly. "Now I'm going to be here and watch every symptom. You won't have to keep anything on your mind,—and your aunt may rally, remember, perhaps even return to consciousness again. Just put the responsibility entirely on Mrs. Smith and me, and try to rest as much as you can."

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There was no resisting this; he should not see, however, that my eyes grew moist under the unwonted sensation of being looked out for. I turned my head away to pull my forces together, but he had gone back to Aunt Abby's bedside. When he came out, in about five minutes, he told me that all was going well, and then sitting down began to speak of everyday matters. Before very long a better footing was established between us than ever before, and for a couple of hours we talked, only interrupted by visits to the sick-room. I forgot my secret smart at having been ridiculed, in hearing Morris Richmond tell delightful bits of his own experiences and life interest. Not being enough of a woman of the world to resist the delicate flattery which such a recital implies, I didn't suspect him either of adroitness enough to use his autobiography for that purpose. But about twelve o'clock he looked at his watch, then at me, and frowned.

"You're horribly tired," he said, "and I've no business to keep you up when it isn't necessary. Please go upstairs to bed, and sleep till four o'clock. I shall be here till then, and there will be absolutely nothing for you to do. If your aunt is improving, you needn't be called till seven, for you can take Mrs. Smith's place to-morrow, and Mrs. Benjamin will come over to help you if you need her."

Evidently he himself was tired of talking so long. I didn't give him credit for any especially disinterested motives in sending me off, but went with some resentment, since he so plainly wished me to go. I didn't sleep, however. The mirror on the wall of the barren guest room moved from some hidden draught or jar, the old willow whipped its twigs against the window panes, and I lay watching them with a strange tumult in my heart, a whirlwind of whys and conjectures, a creeping nervousness as to the outcome of the next few hours, a lonely dread of the after months when Aunt Abby should be gone and my home life changed,—and yet, through it all, an odd new satisfaction which I tried to push away, and a tendency to go over word for word the talk of that evening and the looks on Morris Richmond's face. There was a faint dawn in the room before I knew it, and then it occurred to me that the doctor ought to have a little breakfast after his long vigil. The servants were asleep, but the kitchen fire had been left "in," and I knew where everything was kept. I freshened myself up and stole down the back stairs to cook coffee and eggs and hot toast. In the midst of it the door opened

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behind me, and I started guiltily.

"What are you doing *now*?" he demanded.

"How did you know?" I faltered.

"The smell of that coffee going all through the house is enough to wake anybody. So this is the way you obey orders! Miss West is better, and I am just going. You might perfectly well have slept on."

"But I couldn't," I insisted, "and you will stay and drink the coffee now that I have cooked it."

He consented if I would have some too, and we ate our impromptu meal in the dark dining-room, warming up over it and chatting most familiarly. It was growing light when the doctor took his hat in the hall.

"Thank you for being so good to me," he said. "I appreciate it. Now please don't overdo. I sha'n't be in again probably until noon, unless you send for me;"—and he opened the door, where we both stood looking out. We were just opposite his house. The storm was abating, but the havoc it had made was visible everywhere. A big elm had been uprooted on the common, and lay prone, with hundreds of scattered twigs about it. And the doctor's front yard? Alas! Mrs. Benjamin's old buttonwood tree, which had been dying all summer, was crashed over, burying in its prostrate branches the crane, the andirons, the gay beds and all. Nature itself had swept away the last barriers now, I reflected triumphantly, to what might be a good satisfactory friendship. Better days were coming. But—

"Whew!" said my companion lightly. "Look over there. Dear me—I must hurry home and set Nick at work. It will take us a whole week to get square with the Village Improvement Society!"

Aunt Abby lived nearly a month longer. Her sister came on from California and took charge in the sick-room with an energy which left very little for others to do. After the funeral she went away again. The property had been left to her, the house to me, with just enough income to live, economically, in it. Father and his affianced bride were well satisfied with this arrangement, and made preparations to be married at Thanksgiving, at which time I was to move into my new abode. I felt it to be following indeed in Aunt Abby's footsteps, and could see myself in imagination going on year after year with my one servant, growing older and grimmer, brooding over past days, finally slipping out of life without a friend in the world. It was rather a new thing for me to take this morbid view, but one always finds a fresh idea interesting, and I hugged it for a time with all the vehemence of my nature. The doctor I had seen now and then, and we had managed to remain pretty well on our new basis of easy and even confidential acquaintanceship. But I could not forget the old grudge; he would not keep up that spirit of mockery which cropped out so often unless he regarded me still as a village nonentity. Yet why need I care?

One November afternoon I started out to walk off the blues. It was gray and windy, but with occasional gleams of sunshine,—a good day for a hilltop. I went by the Bunkers' shut up mansion, waved to Miss Maria at her little corner sitting-room window, shook my head to resist Mrs. Benjamin's beckoning hand as I passed her door, and glanced at the doctor's yard. It was in order again indeed. The mutilated crane and andirons had been removed, and the beds emptied and raked over; but a new horror had been perpetrated in the shape of two brilliant globular lawn-reflectors on pedestals, one blue-gray, the other yellow, which gave a miniature distorted panorama of all passing objects and showed me a waddling image of myself, with flattened, wrathful countenance. It was the last straw, and I walked fiercely away, resolved that if my future dwelling must be opposite this man's, its front blinds should be lowered forever.

As that walk registered just about the lowest point my mental and spiritual barometer has ever reached, I can hardly forget it. I climbed over Hart's hill, and from its summit looked off westward over level fields, bounded by a horizon of tossing gray clouds and slits of pale, yellow light. The old graveyard lay to the right, smooth bare maple boughs tossed above me. The road ran straight ahead, and I stood undecided whether to go on down or not. If it had been in a story, I reflected bitterly, the man I hated yet longed to see would appear then and there; in real life such things never happen at the right juncture. I should simply go back, give father his tea, and see him depart as usual for the evening, then sit alone.

But, after all, this is a story, or I shouldn't be telling it. A buggy turned out of the farm-yard half way down the hill, and came toward

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me. I knew the horse and occupant, and turned my feet resolutely homeward, with a confusion in my brain which I thought was anger. A rapid trot sounded behind me, and then the doctor's "Whoa!" I did not look up till I heard him say: "Miss Allison, would you please let me drive you home?"

"I came out for a walk," I answered.

"Yes, but you've had the walk. And besides that, you are more by yourself nowadays than is good for you." What business was it of his?—"Then, best of all, I have a letter from Amy to read you."

"Oh, I don't suppose it matters," said I, climbing wearily in beside him, "only please have the goodness *not* to drive me past your house. The prospect of looking at it morning, noon and night hereafter is bad enough since this latest infliction."

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"Infliction! do you really think so?" he asked, with the old merriment in his voice. "But I had to put something there, you know, to brighten it up a little. You certainly would have me sufficiently alive to my own interests as a physician, wouldn't you, to see the propriety—"

"Stop!" I burst out, my cheeks one flame and the hot tears of tired-out nerves and pent-up anger springing to my eyes. "Be kind enough to understand that for your interests as a physician I don't care one straw!"

The Doctor turned and laid his hand gently on mine, looking down at me with a smile which levelled all my fortifications.

"Of course you don't," he said. "But as a man—you surely must have seen by this time how badly I need a wife! Won't you come home and take command of my front yard?"

RUTH HUNTINGTON SESSIONS.

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A GENTLE MANIAC.

A STUDY IN LOVE AND INSANITY.

CHARACTERS.

MR. VALDINGAM.
HENRY VAN HYDE, M. D.
SUSAN VALDINGAM.
ROSE.
RICHARD, a servant.

TIME: Present.

PLACE: Mr. Valdingam's country place near New York.

SCENE: *Library in Mr. Valdingam's house. At the right of the stage, there is a large window opening upon a veranda and garden; moonlight effect. At the left there is an exit to other parts of the house.*

MR. VALDINGAM (*who is pacing the room restlessly*):

Dr. Van Hyde is extremely inconsiderate—extremely inconsiderate. He promised to be here at six-thirty sharp. A physician should keep his word at all hazards. (*He goes to his desk at right and rings a bell.*)

(*Enter RICHARD from LEFT.*)

RICHARD: You rang, sir?

MR. VALDINGAM (*testily*): When does the next train leave for New York?

RICHARD: In a half hour, sir.

MR. VALDINGAM: Good. If Dr. Van Hyde does not arrive within that time, you will take the train and fetch him. Do you understand?

RICHARD: Yes, sir.

MR. VALDINGAM: Meanwhile, tell my sister that I want to speak with her. (*Exit RICHARD, L.*) Now I'll surprise that excellent woman; excellent, that is to say, if she possessed an ounce of brains. If *she* could have her way, Rose would soon be in a lunatic asylum.

(*Enter SUSAN, L.*)

SUSAN (*curtly*): You have something to say to me?

MR. VALDINGAM (*sharply*): Get ready a supper for two—for *two*—do you hear?

SUSAN: For two?

MR. VALDINGAM: And you can serve it in this room.

SUSAN: You are expecting a friend?

MR. VALDINGAM: Yes, a friend; or, rather a physician—a physician ... for Rose.

SUSAN (*aside*): The same old delusion (*To MR. VALDINGAM.*) But, brother, Rose is quite well.

MR. VALDINGAM: Well! You say *well!*... It's none of your business, however. Do as I bid.

SUSAN (*aside*): It's useless to argue with him. (*To MR. VALDINGAM.*) When do you expect your—friend?

MR. VALDINGAM: By the train that was due several minutes ago. Late, as usual.

(*Enter RICHARD, L.*)

RICHARD: The doctor has just arrived, sir.

MR. VALDINGAM: Good. Bring the lamps, and then show the doctor in.

SUSAN (*aside*): That doctor may be useful, after all.

(*Exeunt RICHARD and SUSAN.*)

MR. VALDINGAM (*exultingly*): Ha! I've gained my point, in spite of them. Rose shall be saved.

(*Enter, L., RICHARD, with two lighted lamps. After placing them, he retires, leaving DR. VAN HYDE in the background.*)

DR. VAN HYDE: This is Mr. Valdingam?

MR. VALDINGAM: And this Dr. Van Hyde? How delighted I am to meet you at last! But it is disgraceful that you should have been so long delayed. I shall see to it that the officers of the road are severely censured.

DR. VAN HYDE: Pray do not worry over such a trifle.

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MR. VALDINGAM: That is very nicely said, sir.... As I informed you by letter, the case which you are about to treat is a very serious one—a very complicated one. It may even baffle you.... But before I add anything, permit me to see my sister for an instant. She is preparing a little supper for us, and, if you don't object, we shall eat it here, *tête-à-tête*.

DR. VAN HYDE: With the greatest pleasure, Mr. Valdingam.

MR. VALDINGAM: Then kindly make yourself at home. The house is yours while you are in it. (*Exit* MR. VALDINGAM, L.)

DR. VAN HYDE (*throwing himself into an easychair*): A comfortable place, certainly. That fellow, Valdingam, however, is an odd chap. Restless and excitable, I take it; but very agreeable, otherwise. I wonder what sort of a little creature the patient is, by the way. A stupid thing, I suppose.... (*After a moment of reflection.*) Strange!—I wonder if I am losing my own mind. For three days I've been in a state which is positively abnormal. I am haunted by a face, and I can't rid my memory of it. And what a face! Who could forget it after having once looked upon it? I am in love with it. I am still more in love with its owner. That smile, like a glimpse of paradise! That mouth, like a dissected strawberry! That blush, like the stolen red of a rose! Oh, shall I ever see her again?

(*Enter* MR. VALDINGAM, L.)

MR. VALDINGAM: You must be hungry, Dr. Van Hyde, and I fear that I can offer you little to appease a healthy appetite—a bowl of broth, a tender bit of broiled chicken, and some of the finest Burgundy in the world to wash it down. We homely folk of the country stick to the ancient fashions, you know,—a noonday lunch, and all that.

DR. VAN HYDE: I like your ancient fashions, as you call them, Mr. Valdingam. (*Enter* RICHARD, *who sets a small table for two and serves supper.*)

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MR. VALDINGAM: Then let us sit down without ceremony.

DR. VAN HYDE: Your Burgundy is indeed delicious, Mr. Valdingam.

MR. VALDINGAM: I flatter myself that it is. It dissolves the cobwebs from one's brains, so to speak. It is the elixir of happiness; and alas! I am not a happy man, Dr. Van Hyde.... (*To* RICHARD.) Leave us alone, Richard. (*Exit* RICHARD.)

DR. VAN HYDE: Perhaps you exaggerate your misfortunes, my dear sir.

MR. VALDINGAM: Far from it—far from it.... Imagine a father, a doting father, like myself, whose only child is on the verge of insanity.

DR. VAN HYDE: It is a pitiful case, truly.

MR. VALDINGAM: It is pitiful, and it is strange; strange because my daughter Rose is, to all outward appearances, as sane as you or I.

DR. VAN HYDE: But there are symptoms—

MR. VALDINGAM: Symptoms which my keen sight discovered long ago. (*Mysteriously.*) My daughter is morally irresponsible in her social relations with men.

DR. VAN HYDE: You astonish me!

MR. VALDINGAM: Prepare yourself for still greater astonishment. Accustomed though you are to dealings with the insane, I venture to say that Rose will deceive you at first as she has deceived others.... However, you are now on your guard. If you will permit me to do so, I will indicate to you the line of inquiry which you may adopt in your preliminary examination of my daughter.

(*As this conversation progresses the door at L. is opened slightly, and SUSAN is seen to be listening. Later she closes the door softly and disappears.*)

DR. VAN HYDE: With pleasure, sir.

MR. VALDINGAM: Here is the point, then. My daughter appears to fall in love with every young man that strikes her fancy.

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DR. VAN HYDE: Really—

MR. VALDINGAM: She may even fall in love with you.

DR. VAN HYDE: Extraordinary!

MR. VALDINGAM: Your course, therefore, will be to draw from her

some decisive manifestation of this abnormal amateness. You will not be slow to discover how deep-rooted the disease is.... By the way, would you object to meeting my daughter this evening? I shall not allow you to return to New York to-night, you know.

DR. VAN HYDE: I am wholly at your service.

MR. VALDINGAM (*ringing for RICHARD*): So much the better. (*Enter RICHARD, who removes the dining table.*) Now, if you will join me in a cigar and a stroll in the garden, we can talk more at our ease on this painful subject. (*They light their cigars and pass out into the garden. Enter from L. at the same time SUSAN, followed by ROSE.*)

SUSAN: Well, what do you think of that?

ROSE (*laughingly*): I am very sorry for poor Dr. Van Hyde. Suppose I should be attacked with a tender passion for him, after all.

SUSAN: Don't be ridiculous, Rose. Between you and me, however, it seems to me that this mad-doctor here, who is said to be so very clever, might be turned to some good purpose. I begin to think that your father needs looking after.

ROSE: Oh, papa is harmless. At any rate, wait awhile. At present, you must remember, I am Dr. Van Hyde's patient.

SUSAN: Nonsense!

ROSE: I intend that he shall practise on me, certainly, especially if, as you assert, he is young and handsome. Or, let us say, I will experiment on him.

SUSAN: You are out of your senses.

ROSE: Not a bit. Has not Dr. Van Hyde come all the way up here to see *me*, to examine *me*? Shall I disappoint this luminary of the medical profession?... Never!... Now, Aunt Susan, you must let me have my own way this time. No harm shall come of it, I promise you. And who knows? Perhaps I may be able to give Dr. Van Hyde points for his next clinic.

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SUSAN: Well, do as you please. But I fear the worst. More than one sane creature has been clapped into a lunatic asylum by some fool of a doctor.

ROSE: Tell me something more about this Dr. Van Hyde.

SUSAN: I've told you all I know ... young, handsome, and, I doubt not, a gentleman; very pleasant mannered, so far as I could see.

ROSE (*musingly*): Young, handsome, pleasant mannered. Not the traditional doctor, evidently; just such a doctor as I might naturally fall in love with.

SUSAN: Rose, you amaze me!

ROSE: But I am not going to fall in love with him.... (*After a pause, and mischievously.*) Indeed, I have some one else in my thought at this moment.

SUSAN: What do you mean?

ROSE: Don't blame me if I am a little human. Have you never met a man, Aunt Susan, who pleased you as no other man had ever pleased you before?

SUSAN: Perhaps I have; but it was mighty long ago.

ROSE: Call me foolish if you will; I, too, have met such a man.

SUSAN: You! Where?

ROSE: You won't be cross if I confide in you? Besides, it's not likely that I shall meet my Romeo again?—for he was a Romeo, Aunt Susan.

SUSAN: There are no Romeos nowadays.

ROSE: Oh, yes, there are—in trousers. Now, let me tell you my experience with him. It was not a bit romantic. Last Monday, as you remember, I was shopping in New York. To-day is Friday. (*With mock gravity.*) An eternity from then till now.... Well, as I was rushing through a quiet side street, in haste to catch a car, suddenly I slipped and fell. My parasol went in one direction, my fan in another, my purse in still another, and three parcels I was carrying in three others. To make matters worse, I had sprained my ankle slightly, and was ready to cry with pain and mortification. Imagine the situation, Aunt Susan. There I sat in a heap on the pavement, surrounded by my possessions.

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SUSAN (*grimly*): I hope you didn't sit there long?

ROSE: How unsympathetic you are!... No, I did not sit there long. For a second I was paralyzed. Afterward, as I prepared to rise with proper dignity, I heard a man's voice—a particularly agreeable

man's voice—close at my side. It said: "Permit me to assist you, madam." Before I could reply, the owner of the voice lifted me to my feet. Oh, he did his part gallantly! I was, of course, too confused to thank him at once. But he did not stop for thanks. He simply picked up my purse, my parasol, and my parcels, and after placing them in my hands, and inquiring very gently whether I was hurt, lifted his hat courteously and passed on. Only for a single—a single instant, Aunt Susan, our eyes met.

SUSAN: What then, pray?

ROSE: Nothing. I limped to the car. That's all.

SUSAN: And this stranger is your Romeo! Rose, you are a goose. Put him out of your head.

ROSE: How can I put him out when he persists in staying in? There, now you have my story.

SUSAN (*starting at the sound of footsteps*): Hush! I think your father and the doctor are coming back.

(*Susan busies herself with one of the lamps at L., and Rose takes up a book and pretends to read. Her face is turned away from the RIGHT entrance. Enter MR. VALDINGAM and DR. VAN HYDE.*)

MR. VALDINGAM: Doctor, I rely upon you now with the utmost confidence. What a knowledge is yours! How vast, how intricate a subject is this of insanity! I marvel that you should have learned so much in so few years. I'll wager that you have not passed your thirty-fifth birthday.

DR. VAN HYDE: You have made a nearly correct guess, Mr. Mr. Valdingam. I am in my thirty-sixth year. But I have enjoyed unusual experience.

(*At the sound of DR. VAN HYDE'S voice, Rose half-rises, then hides her face with her book.*)

ROSE (*aside*): Good gracious! I have heard that voice before. (*She glances over the edge of the book toward the two men.*) It is he. (*She slips out of her chair, and joins Susan. The backs of the two women are turned to the men, who are conversing sotto voce.*) Aunt Susan!

SUSAN (*starting*): What's the matter?

ROSE: It is he.

SUSAN: He? Who's he?

ROSE: The same.

SUSAN: Who's the same?

ROSE: The doctor.

SUSAN: What of the doctor?

ROSE: The doctor is—Romeo!

SUSAN (*dropping the book which ROSE had passed to her*): Lord!

(*At the sound of the book falling, MR. VALDINGAM turns and perceives the two women. Then he catches DR. VAN HYDE by the arm.*)

MR. VALDINGAM (*to the doctor*): She is here. Prepare yourself.

DR. VAN HYDE (*glancing at the backs of the women*): Your daughter?

MR. VALDINGAM: Yes, my daughter. A splendid opportunity for you, doctor. I will see to it that you are left alone with her. Talk to her. Watch her closely. Discover all you can. But first, I will introduce you to her. (*He goes over to L., while DR. VAN HYDE stays quietly at R. He approaches his daughter.*) Rose!

ROSE (*turning toward MR. VALDINGAM*): Yes, papa.

MR. VALDINGAM: May I introduce to you a dear, a very old friend of mine.

ROSE (*aside*): A very old friend! (*To MR. VALDINGAM.*) Certainly, papa.

(*She advances toward center of stage. SUSAN glares at MR. VALDINGAM, but does not come forward.*)

MR. VALDINGAM (*to DR. VAN HYDE*): Doctor!

DR. VAN HYDE (*advancing toward Rose*): At your service, Mr. Valdingam.

MR. VALDINGAM: May I introduce—

(*At this instant, DR. VAN HYDE obtains a full view of ROSE, who regards him demurely. He stumbles back in amazement.*)

DR. VAN HYDE: This—this—is your daughter?

MR. VALDINGAM: You appear surprised? (*Aside.*) I knew it. I knew it.

DR. VAN HYDE: Not surprised—but—

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MR. VALDINGAM: I understand thoroughly. (*Aside to the doctor.*) Didn't I tell you so? (*To ROSE.*) Rose, this is my friend, Dr. Van Hyde. For certain reasons, my child, he is anxious to have a little chat with you.

ROSE (*innocently*): With me, papa?

MR. VALDINGAM: That is to say.... Well, no matter, I will explain later. (*Turning to SUSAN.*) Susan! (*SUSAN advances toward center very stiffly.*) Dr. Van Hyde, this is my sister, Miss Valdingam.

(*DR. VAN HYDE bows to SUSAN in an embarrassed manner.*)

SUSAN: Glad to know you, sir.

(*She retires to L., accompanied by ROSE. MR. VALDINGAM rejoins DR. VAN HYDE at R.*)

MR. VALDINGAM (*to DR. VAN HYDE*): Did I not manage that skilfully?

DR. VAN HYDE (*dryly*): Most skilfully.

MR. VALDINGAM: The rest is simple enough. Remain where you are, and I will retire with Susan. Then you will have the field to yourself. Do you agree with me?

DR. VAN HYDE: Perfectly.

(*MR. VALDINGAM goes over to L., consults in an undertone with SUSAN, and then exeunt MR. VALDINGAM and SUSAN at L. DR. VAN HYDE and ROSE are thus left alone. Their backs are turned to each other.*)

ROSE (*aside*): He recognized me.

DR. VAN HYDE (*aside*): I wonder if she recognized me.

ROSE (*aside*): What shall I do—play the mad woman?

DR. VAN HYDE (*aside*): This, then, is the end of my dream. I have fallen in love with a lunatic.

ROSE (*aside*): I suppose, to carry out papa's wishes, that I ought to make love to him.

DR. VAN HYDE (*aside*): How did she come to be alone in the city last Monday? She must have escaped somehow. She is guarded with too little caution.

ROSE (*aside*): Why doesn't he speak?

DR. VAN HYDE (*aside*): She is more enchanting than ever. How can so sweet a creature be condemned to such misery? (*He turns and confronts ROSE.*) Miss Valdingam!

ROSE (*without moving*): Yes?

DR. VAN HYDE (*more softly*): Miss Valdingam!

ROSE (*turning slowly, and half looking at him*): Dr. Van Hyde!

DR. VAN HYDE: Will you not sit down?

ROSE: Thank you, I will. (*She seats herself at L.*)

DR. VAN HYDE (*still standing, and speaking gravely*): Now—

ROSE (*carelessly*): Oh, you may as well take a chair yourself.

DR. VAN HYDE (*seating himself at L.*): With your permission.

ROSE: Well?

DR. VAN HYDE: I was saying—

ROSE: Were you? I didn't hear it.

DR. VAN HYDE: I was, rather, about to say—

ROSE (*laughing*): This is very odd, is it not?

DR. VAN HYDE: What, may I ask, is odd?

ROSE: This *tête-à-tête*.

DR. VAN HYDE: Professionally speaking—

ROSE: As a rule, you know, it takes two old friends to make a *tête-à-tête*. Now, it must be admitted that we are not old friends, are we?

DR. VAN HYDE: I trust that we shall be very good friends soon.

ROSE: Oh, my father has recommended you, and I may accept you on that basis. Are you from New York?

DR. VAN HYDE: Yes.

ROSE: And you are a physician?

DR. VAN HYDE: I practice a little.

ROSE: I suppose papa is to be one of your patients. He has not been strong. How is he, doctor?

DR. VAN HYDE (*aside*): She is very insistent.

ROSE: Why don't you answer me? Is there some serious complication?

DR. VAN HYDE (*hurriedly*): Nothing serious, I assure you.... In fact, I have had no conversation with Mr. Valdingam about his health.

ROSE: Then what about?... Oh, I forgot. You are very old friends.

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DR. VAN HYDE: Very old friends. (*Aside.*) There is a strange gleam in her eyes. Poor thing! Poor thing!

ROSE: It is singular that he had never spoken of you before to-night.... (*After a pause of reflection.*) Do you know, I feel that you called to see *me*, as well as papa. Am I right?

DR. VAN HYDE: Partly right, Miss Valdingam.... And I am *very* glad to have met you at last. I have heard so much about you.

ROSE: Still, you had never *seen* me until this evening?

DR. VAN HYDE (*taken by surprise*): Oh, I had.... (*Aside.*) What a silly business I am making of this! She looks so perfectly sane and charming that I am tempted to forget my mission. (*To ROSE.*) It seemed to me almost, I mean, that I had met you—I don't know where.

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ROSE (*aside*): This is delicious. I must punish him. (*Advancing toward him with an air of anger.*) Sir, I perceive that you wish to mislead me. Your presence here has a professional object. Do not deny it.

DR. VAN HYDE: I—I—do not deny it.

ROSE (*tragically*): Connected with myself?

DR. VAN HYDE (*aside*): Suspicious of a stranger! Restless under medical observation! These are symptoms!... I must try to divert her thoughts.

ROSE: I repeat, sir—connected with myself?

DR. VAN HYDE: Pray, Miss Valdingam, do not excite yourself.

ROSE: Conceal nothing! I am wretched, annoyed, persecuted. I am under a wicked surveillance. Do you imagine that I'm blind? I understand their plot. (*Pointing to door at L.*) And you, too, are in the plot. But I shall prove to you—at once, *at once*—that I am as rational as they, as you. (*In a quieter tone.*) Now, have you any questions to ask me?

DR. VAN HYDE (*somewhat confused*): Do not take the matter so seriously, Miss Valdingam. Even a rational person—not excepting myself—may have theories, hallucinations, dreams—

ROSE (*wildly*): Dreams! I have astonishing dreams, doctor. They come to me when I am awake, when I *seem* to be awake. Strange noises then rattle in my brain, and I grow dizzy. In any other person, these dreams might be *ideas*.... At other times, the world of my fancy is crowded with men, myriads of men.

DR. VAN HYDE (*aside*): Her father was not mistaken.

ROSE: Yes, young men; graceful men; men who flatter and adore me!... Totally unlike the men I see when I escape to New York.

DR. VAN HYDE: Ah, she escapes!

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ROSE: Then, too, I have visions of matrimony. I feel a wild desire to propose to every man I meet. Have you ever proposed, doctor?

DR. VAN HYDE: Never.

ROSE: Why don't you? You can not have lacked opportunity.

DR. VAN HYDE: I fear that I have.

ROSE: You are young, rich, good-looking, and successful.

DR. VAN HYDE (*aside*): Heavens!

ROSE: You should marry.

DR. VAN HYDE: I have not the time—

ROSE: There is no time like the present.... We are alone.

DR. VAN HYDE (*nervously*): Alone?

ROSE: Yes; papa and Aunt Susan were discreet enough to retire. Do not be afraid.

DR. VAN HYDE: Afraid of what?

ROSE: Of proposing to me. If you are, I will propose to you.

DR. VAN HYDE (*aside*): I must humor her. But it is distressing to do so. (*To ROSE.*) You would marry me?

ROSE: Oh, yes!

DR. VAN HYDE: You like me well enough for that?

ROSE: I liked you at first sight.

DR. VAN HYDE: But you have barely an acquaintance with me.

ROSE: So much the better. If my acquaintance with you were more intimate, I might not be willing to marry you.

DR. VAN HYDE: You can't love me, however; and what is marriage without love?

ROSE: Why can't I love you?

DR. VAN HYDE: Love, my dear child, love is the tenderest passion of our nature. It is the flower of life. It is the affinity of souls. It is—

ROSE (*passionately*): It is—it is.

DR. VAN HYDE (*aside*): If I could only believe that she might learn to love me—that she had not loved forty other men—that she was not a monster in the guise of a siren! Yet I will do my duty, cruel as it is to me. (*To ROSE.*) But your father?

ROSE: Papa has never objected to my loving anybody.

DR. VAN HYDE: Then you have loved somebody else?

ROSE: Yes, indeed. Eighteen.

DR. VAN HYDE: Eighteen!

ROSE: Eighteen lost opportunities. You are the nineteenth. If you refuse to take me, I shall have to look out for my twentieth. Perhaps you can introduce me to one of your friends.

DR. VAN HYDE: Suppose—suppose—I consent to marry you; that is to say, suppose you consent to marry me. How can I be sure that you won't fall in love with your twentieth—as you call him—to-morrow.

ROSE: You can't be sure. Love has wings like a bird. Its natural action is flight. How can one help loving?

DR. VAN HYDE (*tenderly*): I should not wish to share your love with another man.

ROSE: I don't understand you.

DR. VAN HYDE (*aside*): This is the most remarkable case in my experience. The girl is clean daft on one subject. And yet, somehow, I am half inclined to take her at her word. I might succeed in curing her of her mania; I might transform her, create a new woman in this unhappy spirit; I can not abandon her to a wretched fate. (*To ROSE.*) You say you do not understand me?

ROSE: I can't understand why I should not be allowed to love whomever I please.

DR. VAN HYDE: The law declares that you must love but one husband.

ROSE: As I could only have one husband at a time, I might still love some one who was not my husband.

DR. VAN HYDE (*crossing to R. and seating himself next to ROSE*): Don't you think you could love one man, whose devotion to you would be tireless, whose life would be your life, whose thought would be always for your welfare and happiness; don't you think you could love this man, and this man alone?

ROSE (*moving away from him*): I never thought of that.

DR. VAN HYDE (*moving toward her again*): Try, try, my dear child, to see things with my eyes.

ROSE: I have a pair of my own, thank you.

Dr. Van Hyde (*losing himself in his passion*): Listen to me. I do love you, and I want you to love me—but not as you love other men. I am anxious to be your friend, your very best friend. I want you to look to me as you would look to no one else. I want—

ROSE (*changing her manner and laughing*): You play your part admirably, Dr. Van Hyde.

DR. VAN HYDE (*in astonishment*): Play my part!

ROSE: You have just asked me to love you?

DR. VAN HYDE: Yes.

ROSE: To accept you as my very best friend?

DR. VAN HYDE: Yes.

ROSE: Then I wish to tell you, sir, that you have been trifling with me. Your love-making is purely professional. It is a kind of medicine.

DR. VAN HYDE (*aside*): This is a hopeless case.

ROSE: Furthermore, I have convicted you of falsehood. You never met my father until to-night. You did meet *me* last Monday afternoon, in New York, at 2:25 p. m.

DR. VAN HYDE: Miss Valdingam!

ROSE (*courtesying to him*): Permit me to thank you, dear doctor, for your kindness in picking up my parcels, my parasol, my purse, and myself. I did not have a chance to thank you while you were performing that unpleasant duty.

DR. VAN HYDE: Then you remember?

ROSE: How could I forget so fascinating an adventure, although, to be sure, we crazy women are apt to have defective memories.

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DR. VAN HYDE (*aside*): Have I been a fool? (*To ROSE.*) I may as well confess that, when I saw you for the first time here to-night, I recognized you. But I did not suppose that you recognized me.

ROSE: Which proves that you are not so wise a doctor as you ought to be.

DR. VAN HYDE: Really, Miss Valdingam—

ROSE: Really, Dr. Van Hyde—

DR. VAN HYDE: I—I do not know what to say.

ROSE: I repeat—you have played your part admirably.

DR. VAN HYDE: How can you accuse me of playing a part?

ROSE: Sweet duplicity! Did you not come here to minister to my mind's disease?

DR. VAN HYDE: To meet you—to learn to know you.

ROSE: Of course. Meanwhile, by way of illustrating my mania, you made love to me.

DR. VAN HYDE: That is—

ROSE: That is—you played a part. And you were so successful that, a few minutes ago, you thought I had fallen in love with you.

DR. VAN HYDE: You embarrass me, Miss Valdingam.

ROSE: A doctor should never be embarrassed. He should keep a cool head. His nerves should be steady; his hand determined. Now, let us be entirely frank. You wanted to diagnose me—to analyze me—perhaps to hypnotize me. Have I been a good subject?

DR. VAN HYDE (*awkwardly*): An admirable subject.

ROSE: And, honestly, what do you think of my mania now?

DR. VAN HYDE (*still more bewildered*): It is a very gentle mania.

ROSE: A very gentle mania? Nothing worse than that?

DR. VAN HYDE: Nothing worse; I am convinced.

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ROSE: You reassure me. But let me tell you, in return, that I have reason to be grateful to you, Dr. Van Hyde. It may be that I am matrimonially mad. Many persons are. Nearly all girls are. But at least I feel certain that I shall never be confined in an asylum. You would not let them send me to an asylum, would you?

DR. VAN HYDE: No! No!

ROSE: Then we can afford to be good friends.

DR. VAN HYDE: The best of friends.

ROSE: We need not talk of love again?

DR. VAN HYDE (*hesitatingly*): No.

ROSE: Because, you see, though you are a man, you are also my doctor; and a patient could not fall in love with her doctor, could she?

DR. VAN HYDE: Well, it's not usual.

ROSE: Then, let me ask you a question. Do you think my malady—it is a terrible malady, I suppose—can be cured?

DR. VAN HYDE: I am sure it can be.

ROSE: Ah! you give me hope.

DR. VAN HYDE: But you must follow my instructions carefully. These I will explain to you later. In the first place, however, you should try to exercise a certain amount of will power. When you meet a person—that is, a man—

ROSE: I should hate and despise him.

DR. VAN HYDE: Oh, not so bad as that. You should avoid him.

ROSE: Avoid him, I see.

DR. VAN HYDE: Then you could hardly fall in love with him.

ROSE: Nor marry him.

DR. VAN HYDE: Of course you need amusement.

ROSE: Of course.

DR. VAN HYDE: Get as much of it as you can.

ROSE (*aside*): I'm getting it.

DR. VAN HYDE: Meanwhile, I will have a talk with your father.

ROSE: Papa will do anything for me.

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DR. VAN HYDE: Then we have little to fear.... Now (*he turns to upper L.*) I know you must be tired. This long talk has fatigued you. I will call Mr. Valdingam. (*He is about to open the door.*)

ROSE (*suddenly*): One moment, please.

DR. VAN HYDE (*turning to her*): Yes?

ROSE: Pardon me, I am not in the least fatigued. I have—

something more to say.

DR. VAN HYDE: Indeed?

ROSE: Before you see papa again.... Please sit down. (*He seats himself at R. She stands leaning against table at L.*) We have had quite an important little chat, after all, have we not?

DR. VAN HYDE (*gravely*): I think it has been important.

ROSE: For me?

DR. VAN HYDE: For you, I hope.

ROSE: And during this conversation, have I had—any lucid intervals?

DR. VAN HYDE: Well, candidly, and though I am what is called a specialist in brain diseases, I should regard your mind as perfectly normal and healthy, except—

ROSE: Except on the subject of matrimony.

DR. VAN HYDE: Ye-s.

ROSE: Now, suppose I should assure you that I am not in the least bit insane. Would that be characteristic of insanity?

DR. VAN HYDE: Few persons with a mania suspect their affliction.

ROSE: I understand. But suppose—suppose—you had been deceived?

DR. VAN HYDE (*jumping to his feet*): Is it possible?

ROSE: Physicians are deceived sometimes, are they not?

DR. VAN HYDE (*seating himself*): They are only human.

ROSE (*slyly*): And you are *very* human.

DR. VAN HYDE (*confusedly*): I confess it—to-night.

ROSE: That is why, then, you have been so easily deceived—to-night?

DR. VAN HYDE (*jumping to his feet again*): You mean?—

ROSE: That you have actually been deceived. I have no mania—not even a mania to wed all the young men I meet. (*Laughing merrily.*) But, of course, you won't believe me. My denial is only a symptom of my dementia.

DR. VAN HYDE: What can I think? Your father told me—

ROSE: Yes, poor papa told you a great many things. You took it for granted that what he said was said with reason.

DR. VAN HYDE (*moving toward her eagerly*): And I have been—

ROSE: As patient as a saint with the mad-cap teasing of a foolish girl, and gently considerate of an old man's whims.

DR. VAN HYDE (*joyfully*): Can it be true? Oh, Miss Valdingam, I begin to look upon myself as the most ridiculous as well as the happiest of men.

ROSE: But I could not resist teasing you. And still, in spite of this confession, I have *one* mania—only one.

DR. VAN HYDE: A gentle mania?

ROSE: Very gentle, as you have said. It is love—

DR. VAN HYDE (*advancing*): Love!

ROSE (*mischievously*): For my father.

DR. VAN HYDE (*disappointedly*): Oh!

ROSE: He is a good, kind father. Since my mother's death I have been his closest companion. Oh, doctor, I am so happy that you have come to our house. It is my father who needs your help, your sympathy. You will give both, I know.

DR. VAN HYDE: It is your father, then—

ROSE: Who is partially insane. He has been in this condition for years. His chief delusion is that I am insane.

DR. VAN HYDE: What a fool I have been!

ROSE: Do not blame yourself. Have I not done what I could to convince you that papa had told you the truth.... Can you forgive me?

DR. VAN HYDE: Forgive *you*! Can you forgive *me*?

ROSE: Let us forgive each other, then. (*Walking to the window at R. and looking out.*)

DR. VAN HYDE (*following her*): Miss Valdingam—I—

ROSE (*turning and regarding him archly*): Be careful, sir! Perhaps you are even now mistaken. Remember how cunning we maniacs are!

DR. VAN HYDE (*aside*): I am more than ever in love with her. How beautiful she is. Sane or insane, it would be a blessing to possess

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her. (*To ROSE, nervously.*) Miss Valdingam, may I ask you a question?

ROSE (*gently*): Yes.

DR. VAN HYDE: You remember that when—when—I thought you were not quite—

ROSE: Balanced.

DR. VAN HYDE: I had the hardihood—well—to speak to you of love.

ROSE: Certainly. You spoke professionally.

DR. VAN HYDE: I did *not* speak professionally.

ROSE (*looking out of the window*): Oh, indeed?

DR. VAN HYDE: I spoke with sincerity—from my heart.

ROSE (*with mock dignity*): Sir!

DR. VAN HYDE: I must tell you the truth. Since that day—

ROSE (*smiling*): Monday at 2:25 p. m.

DR. VAN HYDE: Don't laugh at me. I was in earnest a few moments ago—I am in earnest now.... I love you!

ROSE (*with agitation*): You love me!

DR. VAN HYDE: With all my soul. (*He seizes her hand and kisses it.*)

ROSE (*drawing her hand away quickly*): Hush! Some one is coming. [342]

MR. VALDINGAM (*from behind the door*): Can we come in, doctor?

ROSE (*in a whisper to the doctor*): Pretend that you do not know the truth, that you are able to cure me.

DR. VAN HYDE (*in a whisper*): That I have taken the case?

ROSE: Yes.

DR. VAN HYDE: For life?

ROSE: We shall see. But speak to him.

DR. VAN HYDE (*turning to L.*): Is that you, Mr. Valdingam? Please come in. (*Enter MR. VALDINGAM and SUSAN.*)

MR. VALDINGAM (*eagerly and secretly, to DR. VAN HYDE*): Well?

DR. VAN HYDE (*gravely*): I am glad to be able to assure you, Mr. Valdingam, that my preliminary examination of your daughter has been entirely satisfactory.

MR. VALDINGAM: Sir, I am overwhelmed with delight.

DR. VAN HYDE: While your daughter is, without doubt, suffering from certain delusions—

MR. VALDINGAM (*turning to SUSAN*): Do you hear that, sister?

DR. VAN HYDE: Her trouble is not far enough advanced to occasion anxiety.

MR. VALDINGAM: Heaven be praised!

DR. VAN HYDE: In fact, I promise you that within one month her mind will be as clear and vigorous as your own.

MR. VALDINGAM (*grasping the doctor's hands*): Sir, I regard you as our benefactor.

DR. VAN HYDE: But you must be very patient and kind; and, with your permission, I will take charge of her. My plan is to visit her, here at your house, twice, or perhaps three or four times a week. You will notice an improvement in her condition very soon.

MR. VALDINGAM: Have your way, doctor. So long as my child is saved to me, that is everything. (*Turning to ROSE.*) Rose, my pet, I hear that the doctor and you have become fast friends already. (*ROSE joins them at L. C., and MR. VALDINGAM kisses and fondles her.*) [343]

ROSE: Oh, yes, papa, Dr. Van Hyde and I are now very good friends.

MR. VALDINGAM: That's right—that's right. Put your trust in him, my child. He has your interest at heart.

(*MR. VALDINGAM turns gleefully to SUSAN, and the two converse.*)

DR. VAN HYDE (*to ROSE*): You hear? He places you in my care.

ROSE: I share his confidence.

DR. VAN HYDE: And—may I not hope to be—your nineteenth?

ROSE: There has not yet been—a first.

DR. VAN HYDE: Shall we unite then in a study of agreeable possibilities?

ROSE (*archly*): Won't you walk with me in the garden? See how bright and beautiful the night is!... Come. Perhaps I may find you—a rose.

(*ROSE and DR. VAN HYDE exeunt at L. as the curtain falls.*)

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