



UNION Estab. July, 1897. GAZETTE Estab. Dec. 1868. Consolidated Feb., 1899.

The Doctor's Dilemma

By Hesba Stretton

CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

A little crooked path led round the rock and along the edge of the ravine. I chose it because from it I could see all the fantastic shore, bending in a semicircle towards the lake of Breckhou, with tiny, untrodden bays, covered at high tide with only glittering ripples, and with all the sea and tender shadows of the head-lands falling across them.

I was just giving my last look to them when the loose stones on the crumbling path gave way under my feet, and before I could recover my foothold I found myself slipping down the almost perpendicular face of the cliff, and vainly clutching at every bramble and tuft of grass growing in its clefts.

I landed with a shock far below, and for some time lay insensible. As nearly as I could make out, it would be high water in about two hours. Tardif had set off at low water, but before starting he had said something about returning at high tide, and running up his boat on the beach of our little bay. If he did that he must pass close by me. It was Saturday morning, and he was in the habit of returning early on Saturdays, that he might prepare for the services of the next day.

At last—whether years or hours only had gone by, I could not then have told you—I heard the regular and careful beat of oars upon the water, and presently the grating of a boat's keel upon the shingle. I could not turn round or raise my head, but I was sure it was Tardif.

"Tardif!" I cried, attempting to shout, but my voice sounded very weak in my own ears, and the other sounds about me seemed very loud.

He passed then, and stood quite still, listening. I ran the fingers of my right hand through the loose pebbles about me, and his ear caught the slight noise. In a moment I heard his strong feet coming across them towards me.

"Mam'zelle," he exclaimed, "what has happened you?"

I tried to smile as his honest, brown face bent over me, full of alarm, and was so great a relief to see a face like his after that long, weary agony.

"I've fallen down the cliff," I said feebly, "and I am hurt."

The strong man shook, and his hand trembled as he stooped down and laid it under my head to lift it up a little. His agitation touched me to the heart.

"Tardif," I whispered, "it is not very much, and I might have been killed. I think my foot is hurt, and I am quite sure my arm is broken."

He lifted me in his arms as easily and tenderly as a mother lifts up her child, and carried me gently up the steep slope which led homeward. It seemed a long time before we reached the farmhouse gate, and he shouted, with a tremendous voice, to his mother to come and open it. Never, never shall I forget that night. I could not sleep; but I suppose my mind wandered a little. Hundreds of times I felt myself down on the shore, and faintless. Then I was back again in my own home in Adelaide, on my father's sheep farm, and he was still alive, and with no thought but how to make everything bright and glad for me; and hundreds of times I saw the woman who was afterwards to be my stepmother, gazing up to the door and trying to get in to him and me.

Twice Tardif brought me a cup of tea, freshly made. He was very glad when the first gleam of daylight shone into my room. It seemed to bring clearness to my brain.

"Mam'zelle," said Tardif, coming to my side, "I am going to fetch a doctor."

"But it is Sunday," I answered faintly. I knew that no boatman put out to sea willingly on a Sunday from Sark; and the last fatal accident, being on a Sunday, had deepened their reluctance.

"It will be right, mam'zelle," he answered, with glowing eyes. "I have no fear."

"Do not be long away, Tardif," I said, sobbing.

"Not one moment longer than I can help," he replied.

see but a very old friend of mine, Tardif, of the Havre Gosselin. His handsome but weather-beaten face betrayed great anxiety. My father looked chagrined and irresolute.

"Here's a pretty piece of work, Martin," he said; "Tardif wants one of us to go back with him to Sark, to see a woman who has fallen from the cliffs and broken her arm, confound it!"

"Dr. Martin," cried Tardif excitedly, "I beg of you to come this instant even. She has been lying in agonies since mid-day yesterday—twenty-four hours now, sir. I started at dawn this morning, but both wind and tide were against me, and I have been waiting here some time. Be quick, doctor! If she should be dead!"

The poor fellow's voice faltered, and his eyes met mine imploringly. He and I had been fast friends in my boyhood, and our friendship was still firm and true. I shook his hand heartily—a grip which he returned with his fingers of iron till my own tingled again.

"I knew you'd come," he gasped.

"Ah, I'll go, Tardif," I said; "only I must get a snatch of something to eat while Dr. Dobree puts up what I shall have need of. I'll be ready in half an hour."

The tide was with us, and carried us over buoyantly. We anchored at the fisherman's landing place below the cliff face of the Havre Gosselin, and I climbed readily up the rough ladder which leads to the path. Tardif made his boat secure, and followed me; he passed me, and strode on up the steep track to the summit of the cliff, as if impatient to reach his home. It was then that I

gave my first serious thought to the woman who had met with the accident.

"Tardif, who is this person that is hurt?" I asked, "and whereabout did she fall?"

"She fell down yonder," he answered, with an odd quaver in his voice, as he pointed to a rough and rather high portion of the cliff running inland; "the stones rolled from under her feet so," he added, crushing down a quantity of the loose gravel with his foot, "and she slipped. She lay on the shingle underneath for two hours before I found her—two hours, Dr. Martin!"

Tardif's mother came to us as we entered the house. She beckoned me to follow her into an inner room. It was small, with a ceiling so low, it seemed to rest upon the four posts of the bedstead. There were of course none of the little dainty luxuries about it, with which I was familiar in my mother's bedroom. A long low window opposite the head of the bed threw a strong light upon it. There were check curtains drawn round it, and a patchwork quilt, and rough, home-spun linen. Everything was clean, but coarse and frugal, such as I expected to find about my Sark patient, in the home of a fisherman.

But when my eye fell upon the face resting on the rough pillow I paused involuntarily, only just controlling an exclamation of surprise. There was absolutely nothing in the surroundings to mark her as a lady, yet I felt in a moment that she was one. There lay a delicate refined face, white as the linen, with beautiful lips almost as white; and a mass of light, shining silky hair tossed about the pillow; and large dark gray eyes gazing at me beseechingly, with an expression that made my heart leap as it had never leapt before.

"That was what I saw, and could not believe seeing it, I tried to close my eyes about the pillow; and came from it, however; but it was altogether in vain. If I had seen her before, or if I had been prepared to see any one like her, I might have succeeded; but was completely thrown off my guard. There the charming face lay; the eyes gleaming, the white forehead tinted, and the delicate mouth contracting with pain; the bright silky curls tossed about in confusion. I see it now, just as I saw it then."

CHAPTER IV.

I suppose I did not stand still more than five seconds, yet during that pause a host of questions had flashed through my brain. Who was this beautiful creature? Where had she come from? How did it happen that she was in Tardif's house? and so on. But I recalled myself sharply to my senses; I was here as a physician, and common sense and duty bade me try to keep my head clear. I advanced to her side and took the small, blue-velvet hand into mine, and felt her pulse with my fingers.

"You are in very great pain, I fear," I said, lowering my voice.

"Yes," her white lips answered, and she tried to smile a patient though a dreary smile, as she looked up into my face; "my arm is broken. Are you a doctor?"

"I am Dr. Martin Dobree," I said, passing my hand softly down her arm. The fracture was above the elbow, and was of a kind to make the setting of it give her sharp, acute pain. I could see she was scarcely fit to bear any further suffering just then; but what was to be

done? She was not likely to get much rest till the bone was set. "Did you ever take chloroform?" I asked.

"No; I never needed it," she answered. "Should you object to taking it?" "Anything," she replied passively. "I will do anything you wish."

I went back into the kitchen and opened the portmanteau my father had put up for me. Splints and bandages were there in abundance, enough to set half the arms in the island, but neither chloroform nor anything in the shape of an opiate could I find. I might almost as well have come to Sark altogether unprepared for my case.

I stood for a few minutes, deep in thought. The daylight was going, and it was useless to waste time; yet I found myself shrinking oddly from the duty before me. Tardif could not help but see my chagrin and hesitation.

"Doctor," he cried, "she is not going to die?"

"No, no," I answered, calling back my wandering thoughts and energies; "there is not the smallest danger of that. I must go and set her arm at once, and then she will sleep."

I returned to the room and raised her as gently and painlessly as I could. She moaned, though very softly, and she tried to smile again as her eyes met mine looking anxiously at her. That smile made me feel like a child. If she did it again I knew my hands would be unsteady, and her pain be tenfold greater.

"I would rather you cried out or shouted," I said. "Don't try to control yourself when I hurt you. You need not be afraid of seeming impatient, and a loud scream or two would do you good."

I felt the ends of the broken bone grating together as I drew them into their right places, and the sensation went through and through me. I had set scores of broken limbs before with no feeling like this, which was so near-nerving me. All the time the girl's white face and firmly set lips lay under my gaze, with the wide open, unflinching eyes looking straight at me; a mournful, silent, appealing face, which betrayed the pain I made her suffer ten times more than any cries or shrieks could have done. I smoothed the coarse pillows for her to lie more comfortably upon them.

I spread my cambric handkerchief in a double fold between her cheek and the rough linen—too rough for a soft cheek like hers.

"Lie quite still," I said. "Do not stir, but go to sleep as fast as you can."

Then I went out to Tardif.

"The arm is set," I said, "and now she must get some sleep. There is not the least danger, only we will keep the house as quiet as possible."

"I must go and bring in the boat," he replied, bestirring himself as if some spell was upon him. "There will be a storm to-night, and I should sleep the sounder if she was safe ashore."

The feeble light entering by the door, which I left open, showed me the old woman comfortably asleep in her chair, set not so the girl. I had told her when I laid her down that she must be quite still, and she was obeying me implicitly. Her cheek still rested upon my handkerchief, and the broken arm remained undisturbed upon the pillow which I had placed under it. But her eyes were wide open and shining in the dimness, and I fancied I could see her lips moving incessantly, though soundlessly.

The gale that Tardif had foretold came with great violence about the middle of the night. The wind howled up the narrow ravine like a pack of wolves; mighty storms of hail and rain beat in torrents against the windows, and the sea lifted up its voice with unmistakable energy. Now and again a stronger gust than the others appeared to threaten to carry off the thatched roof bodily, and leave us exposed to the tempest with only the thick stone walls about us; and the latch of the outer door rattled as if some one was striving to enter.

The westerly gale, rising every few hours into a squall, gave me no chance of leaving Sark the next day, nor for some days afterwards; but I was not at all put out by my captivity. Alway my interests—my whole being in fact—was absorbed in the care of this girl, stranger as she was. I thought and moved, lived and breathed, only to fight step by step against delirium and death.

There seemed to me to be no possibility of aid. The stormy waters which beat against that little rock in the sea came swelling and rolling in from the vast plain of the Atlantic and broke in tempestuous surf against the island. Tardif himself was kept a prisoner in the house, except when he went to look after his live stock. No doubt it would have been practicable for me to go as far as the hotel, but to what good? It would be quite deserted, for there were no visitors to Sark at this season. I was entirely engrossed in my patient, and I learned for the first time what their task is who hour after hour watch the progress of disease in the person of one dear to them.

On the Tuesday afternoon, in a temporary lull of the hail and wind, I started off on a walk across the island. The wind was still blowing from the southwest, and filling all the narrow sea between us and Gosselin with its boiling surge. Very angry looked the masses of foam whirling about the sunken reefs, and very ominous the low-lying, hard blocks of clouds all along the horizon. I strolled as far as the Coupee, that giddy pathway between Great and Little Sark, where one can see the setting of the waves at the feet of the cliffs on both sides three hundred feet below one. Something like a panic seized me. My nerves

were too far unstrung for me to venture across the long, narrow isthmus. I turned abruptly again, and hurried as fast as my legs would carry me back to Tardif's cottage.

I had been away less than an hour, but an advantage had been taken of my absence. I found Tardif seated at the table, with a tangle of silky, shining hair lying before him. A tear or two had fallen upon it from his eyes. I understood at a glance what it meant. Mother Renouf, whom he had secured as a nurse, had cut off my patient's pretty curls as soon as I was out of the house. Tardif's great hair creased them tenderly, and I drew out one long, glossy tress and wound it about my fingers, with a heavy heart.

"It is like the pretty feathers of a bird that has been wounded," said Tardif sorrowfully.

Just then there came a knock at the door and a sharp click of the latch, loud enough to penetrate dame Tardif's deaf ears, or to arouse our patient, if she had been sleeping. Before either of us could move the door was thrust open and two young ladies appeared upon the door sill.

They were—it flashed across me in an instant—old school fellows and friends of Julia's. I declare to you honestly I had scarcely had one thought of Julia since my mother had washed her, to take her place by this poor girl's side, but Julia had hardly crossed my mind. Why, in heaven's name, should the appearance of these friends of hers be so distasteful to me just now? I had known them all my life, and they had well as any girls I knew; but at this moment the very sight of them was annoying.

They stood in the doorway, as much astonished and thunderstricken as I was, glaring at me, so I looked to me, with that soft, bright brown lock of hair curling and clinging round my finger. Never had I felt so foolish or guilty.

(To be continued.)

American Coal the Best.

"Ever since I was a boy I have been reminded of the old story about 'carry all coals' Newcastle," whenever I performed unnecessary tasks," said Richard Harter of Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, in the lobby of the Shoreham last night. "To carry coals to Newcastle was supposed to be as futile a task as trying to sweep back the waves on the seashore. I have lived to see coals carried to Newcastle, however, and, being an Englishman, it grieves me to say that the coals in question came all the way from America."

"Within the last few years an enormous amount of coal has been shipped from Norfolk, Va., to various parts of England. Some of it went to Portsmouth, to the naval station there, and many tons were sent to Newcastle. We have better facilities for handling coal there than any other place in the United Kingdom. For many years it has been the center of the coal mining industry of our country and consequently the arrangements and appliances for shipping fuel to various parts of the country are away ahead of those of other countries."

"The coal that comes from the western portion of the State of Virginia—soft coal, I mean—is the finest fuel for steamships that is mined anywhere in the world. The coal seems to produce more steam from a small quantity than any I have seen. It is now used extensively on the vessels of the British navy and from what I saw a week ago in Norfolk and Newport News I should judge that the shipment must amount to millions of tons per year."—Washington Times.

A German Picture of the Future.

Scene—A schoolroom of the twentieth century.

Teacher (to a new scholar)—"Jack, are you inoculated against croup?"

Pupil—"Yes, sir."

"Have you been inoculated with the cholera bacillus?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you a written certificate that you are immune as to whooping cough, measles and scarlatina?"

"Yes, sir, I have."

"Have you your own drinking cup?"

"Yes, sir."



FARMS AND FARMERS

Marketing Garden Products.

Many fruit and vegetable growers in the South and North make a mistake in watching the market reports and shipping goods when the quoted prices are high and holding them back when they are low. As a result, when the goods reach the market they find that too many others have done the same thing, and when the goods are received conditions have changed, and the market is again glutted, and prices are down.

This system may do well for the gardener who is so near to the market that he can have prices telephoned out to him at night and have his produce on hand before daylight, or get them at the opening of the morning market and deliver his produce at eight o'clock. But the man whose products must be two or three days on the road would do better to ship his goods when prices were low with the chance of a rise before his consignments come to hand.

One truck farmer near Norfolk, Va., who is said to have retired with nearly a million dollars made in the business, used to have one good commission agent in each of the several cities, to whom he shipped goods, notifying them by wire of amount and date of shipments, and they were then prepared to receive orders for them or to sell them for cash on arrival, and he bedeviled his shipments by any system it was to keep each one well supplied with good produce, and accept the average price. The dealers, knowing they had all of his goods in the city, could obtain the highest price of the day for them.—Massachusetts Ploughman.

Soil Renovators.

The opinion seems to be general among farmers that the only crops which can be used to improve the soil are the legumes which gather carbon-nitrogen from the air and retain it, so that when plowed under the nitrogen is given to the soil. Another use these legumes have is that they supply humus to the soil, which often is much needed.

There is another class, of which rape is a member, which when plowed under has the power to absorb the phosphoric acid which lies inert when other plants are grown, and when such crops are plowed under they return this phosphoric acid to the soil for the use of the next plant placed thereon, for once being made active it does not again become inert. Corn-horn turnips are of this class, and recent experiments have proved their wonderful value as soil renovators. The long roots force themselves deep into the subsoil, forcing that soil to give up its plant food. Any crop which brings into play any of the plant foods that lie inert when other crops are grown will do a vast deal to add to the fertility of the soil. All farms will not grow crimson clover, but with cow peas, velvet bean and Canada field peas at hand one may readily obtain a legume that can be grown and thus get nitrogen cheaply, then if rape and other members of the turnip family will wake up the phosphoric acid in the soil and make it available, the question of soil fertility comes pretty near being solved.

Feature Lands.

When I came out West, more than a quarter of a century ago, writes a correspondent of the Prairie Farmer, it did not take many years to find out that it was more profitable to pasture the grass around me than to burn it in the fall. This pasturing of the grass was done so successfully that none was left to burn or to pasture. Finally I was compelled to break up the land and farm it. I raised large crops of small grain, but soon saw that it was a money-losing game and tried to seed my land back to grass. I found it very difficult to get tame pastures to stick, and if by accident I got a good stand of timothy or clover the latter would not last and the former after a good crop or two would get what I called soil bound and would not produce a load of hay to the acre. I know now why the timothy did no good after a year or two. It was because we pastured it to the roots, thinking it economical to let the stock eat the last sprouts of grass that showed up in the fall. Land having by that time advanced in price, I could not afford to own pastures of that kind, and so I overstocked it to make both ends meet. I made up my mind to own less and better stock, and this change in no time made a great improvement in my pastures. I soon saw that a growth of grass covered the pastures in dry weather when all the range in short pastures was burned.

The Value of Rainfall.

It is said that the rainfall brings down about four pounds of ammonia, or three and a third pounds of nitrogen per acre, which may be correct as a general statement, or an average amount, but where there are heaps of decomposing vegetable or animal matter from which ammonia is escaping in considerable amount the air contains more ammonia, and the rain or snow will absorb more of it. Unfortunately for careless farmers it does not drop back to the place from which it rises, but may be carried by the wind for miles before returning to earth, and the farmer who makes a compost heap and does not keep it so covered with earth or other absorbent as to prevent the escape of ammonia may be adding to the fertility of the garden of somebody in the next county whom he never saw,

COSTLY CHURCH VESTMENTS.

Those at St. Patrick's Cathedral Valued at Half a Million Dollars.

In St. Patrick's Cathedral there are vestments valued at half a million dollars. The collection is the finest in any cathedral in America, and compares very favorably with the vestments in many famous cathedrals in Europe, says the New York Sun.

Archbishop Corrigan presented to the cathedral the only complete set of Holy Thursday vestments in the world. Its value is \$20,000. In the set are thirteen chasubles, ten delmatics, nine tunics, two copes and lace albs, amices and other vestments to correspond to the Holy Thursday service alone.

These vestments are for the archiepiscopal set proper and are of the finest imported white satin, embroidered in gold 90 per cent duty. The principal ornaments are the passion flower, wheat sheaf and grapes, embroidered in silks and gold, emblematic of Holy Week. The body of the vestments is worked with sprays of fuchsia. The remainder of the vestments in the same set are made of the finest moire antique, embroidered in colored silk and gold to correspond. This magnificent set of vestments was made by the Dominican nuns at Westbury, N. Y.

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Just His Luck.

Jack—I'll tell you what's the matter, George. You don't praise your wife enough. Even if things don't go right, there's no use growling. Praise her efforts to please, whether they are successful or not. Women like praise, and lots of it.

George—All right, I'll remember it. George (at dinner, same day)—My dear, this pie is just lovely! It's delicious. Ever so much better than the one my mother used to make. She couldn't equal this pie if she tried a month.

George's Wife—Hub! You've made fun of every pie I ever made, and now—

George—But this is lovely.

George's Wife—That came from the confectioner's.

Widows' Flags.

In Sumatra, if a woman is left a widow, immediately after her husband's death she plants a flagstaff at her door, upon which a flag is raised. So long as the flag remains untopped by the wind the etiquette of Sumatra forbids her to marry, but at the first rain, however tiny, she can lay aside her weeds and accept the first offer she has.

A Mean Burglar.

The newest burglar on record has been at work in Montreal. He broke into a baker