

The Doctor's Dilemma

By Hesba Stretton

CHAPTER XXVI.

December came in with intense severity. Icicles a yard long hung to the eaves, and the snow lay unmelting for days together on the roofs. More often than not we were without wood for our fire, and when we had it, it was green and unseasoned, and only smoldered away with a smoke that stung and irritated our eyes. Our insufficient and unwholesome food supplied us with no inward warmth. At times the pangs of hunger grew too strong for us both, and forced me to spend a little of the money I was nursing so carefully. As soon as I could make myself understood, I went out occasionally after dark to buy bread and milk.

I found that I had no duties to perform as a teacher, for none of the three French pupils desired to learn English. English girls, who had been decoyed into the same snare by the same false photograph and prospectus which had entrapped me, were all of families too poor to be able to forfeit the money which had been paid in advance for their French education. Two of them, however, completed their term at Christmas and returned home weak and ill; the third was to leave in the spring.

Very fast melted away my money. I could not see the child pining with hunger, though every son I spent made our return to England more difficult. Madame Perrier put no hindrance in my way, for the more food we purchased for ourselves, the less we ate at her table. The bitter cold and the coarse food told upon Minima's delicate little frame. Yet what could I do? I dared not write to Mrs. Wilkinson, and I very much doubted if there would be any benefit to be hoped for if I ran the risk. Minima did not know the address of any one of the persons who had subscribed for her education and board. She was as friendless as I was in the world.

So far away were Dr. Martin Dobree and Tardif that I dared not count them as friends who could have any power to help me. Better for Dr. Martin Dobree if he could altogether forget me, and return to his cousin Julia. Perhaps he had done so already.

Towards the middle of February Madame Perrier's coarse face was always overcast, and monsieur seemed gloomy, too gloomy to retain even French politeness of manner towards any of us. The household was under a cloud, but I could not discover why. What little discipline and work there had been in the school was quite at an end. Every one was left to do as she chose.

Early one morning, long before the day-break, I was startled out of my sleep by a hurried knock at my door. It proved to be Madame Morel. I opened the door for her, and she appeared in her bonnet and walking dress, carrying a lamp in her hand, which lit up her weary tear-stained face. She took a seat at the foot of my bed and buried her face in her handkerchief.

"Mademoiselle," she said, "here is a grand misfortune, a misfortune without parallel. Monsieur and madame are gone."

"Gone!" I repeated; "where are they gone?"

"I do not know, mademoiselle," she answered; "I know nothing at all. They are gone away. The poor good people were in debt, and their creditors are as hard as stone. They are gone, and I have no means to carry on the establishment. The school is finished."

"But I am to stay here twelve months," I cried, in dismay, "and Minima was to stay four years. The money has been paid to them for it. What is to become of us?"

"I cannot say, mademoiselle; I am desolated myself," she replied, with a fresh burst of tears; "all is finished here. If you have not money enough to take you back to England, you must write to Bordeaux. I detest Normandy; it is so cold and triste."

"But what is to be done with the other pupils?" I inquired.

"The English pupil goes with me to Paris," she answered; "she has her friends there. The French demoiselles are not far from their own homes, and they return to-day by the omnibus to Granville. It is a misfortune without parallel, mademoiselle—a misfortune without a parallel."

To crown all, she was going to start immediately by the omnibus to Falaise, and on by rail to Paris, not waiting for the storm to burst. She kissed me on both cheeks, bade me adieu, and was gone, leaving me in utter darkness, before I fairly comprehended the rapid French in which she conveyed her intention. I had seen my last of Monsieur and Madame Perrier, and of Madame Morel.

All I had to do was to see to myself and Minima. I carried our breakfast back with me, when I returned to Minima.

"I wish I'd been born a boy," she said plaintively; "they can get their own living sooner than girls, and better. How soon do you think I could get my own living? I could be a little nursemaid now, you know, and I'd eat very little."

"What makes you talk about getting your living?" I asked.

"How pale you look!" she answered, nodding her little head; "why, I heard something of what mademoiselle said. You're very poor, aren't you, Aunt Nelly?"

"Very poor!" I repeated, hiding my face on her pillow, whilst hot tears forced themselves through my eyelids.

"Oh! this will never do," said the childish voice; "we mustn't cry, you know. The boys always said it was like a luby to cry; and father used to say, 'Courage, Minima! Perhaps, when all our money is gone, we shall find a great big purse full of gold; or else a beautiful French prince will see you and fall in love with you, and take us both to his palace, and make you his princess; and we shall all grow up till we die.'"

I laughed at the oddity of this childish climax, in spite of the heaviness of my heart and the springing of my tears. Minima's fresh young fancies were too

droll to resist, especially in combination with her shrewd, old-womanish knowledge of many things of which I was ignorant.

It was now that across the darkness of my prospects flashed a thought that seemed like an angel of light. Why should I not try to make my way to Mrs. Dobree, Martin's mother, to whom I could tell my whole history, and on whose friendship and protection I could rely implicitly? By this time Kate Daltrey would have quitted the Channel Islands, satisfied that I had eluded her pursuit.

The route was neither long nor difficult; at Granville a vessel sailed direct for Jersey, and we were not more than thirty miles from Granville. It was a distance that we could almost walk. If Mrs. Dobree could not help me, Tardif would take Minima into his house for a time, and the child could not have a happier home. I could count upon my good Tardif doing that. These plans were taking shape in my brain, when I heard a voice calling softly under the window. I opened the casement, and leaning out, saw the welcome face of Rosalie, the milk woman.

"Will you permit me to come in?" she inquired.

"Yes, yes, come in," I said eagerly.

She entered, and saluted us both with much ceremony.

"So my little Emile and his spouse are gone, mademoiselle," she said, in a mysterious whisper. "I have been saying to myself, 'What will my little English lady do?' That is why I am here. Behold me."

"I do not know what to do," I answered.

"If mademoiselle is not difficult," she said, "she and the little one could rest with me for a day or two. My bed is clean and soft—bah! ten times softer than these pillboxes. I would ask only a franc a night for it. That is much less than at the hotels, where they charge for light and attendance. Mademoiselle could write to her friends, if she has not enough money to carry her and the little one back to their own country."

"I have no friends," I said despondingly.

"No friends! no relations!" she exclaimed.

"Not one," I replied.

I was only too glad to get a shelter for Minima and myself for another night. Mademoiselle Rosalie explained to me the French system of borrowing money upon articles. But upon packing up our few possessions, I remembered that only a few days before Madame Perrier had borrowed from me my sealskin mantle, the one valuable thing I had remaining. I had lent it reluctantly, and in spite of myself, and it had never been returned. Minima's wardrobe was still poorer than my own. All the money we could raise was less than two napoleons; and with this we had to make our way to Granville, and from thence to Guernsey. We could not travel luxuriously.

The next morning we left Noireau on foot, and strolled on as if we were walking on air, and could feel no fatigue. Every step which carried us nearer to Granville brought new hope to me. The face of Martin's mother came often to my mind, looking at me, as she had done in Sark, with a mournful yet tender smile—a smile behind which lay many tears.

"Courage!" I said to myself; "every hour brings you nearer to her!"

I had full directions as to our route, and I carried a letter from Rosalie to a cousin of hers, who lived in a convent about twelve miles from Noireau. If we reached the convent before six o'clock we should find the doors open, and should gain admission. But in the afternoon the sky changed. The wind changed a point or two from the south, and a breath from the east blew, with a chilly touch, over the wide open plain we were now crossing. The road was very desolate. It brought us after a while to the edge of a common, stretching before us, drear and brown, as far as my eye could reach.

"Are you very tired, my Minima?" I asked.

"It will be no use to go to bed, when we reach the convent," she said, looking up with a smile. "I can't imagine why the prince has not come yet!"

"Perhaps he is coming all the time," I answered, "and he'll find us when we want him worst."

We plodded on after that, looking for the convent, or for any dwelling where we could stay till morning. But none came in sight, or any person from whom we could learn where we were wandering. I was growing frightened, dismayed. What would be one of us both, if we could find no shelter from the cold of a February night?

CHAPTER XXVII.

There were unshed tears in my eyes—for I would not let Minima know my fears—when I saw dimly, through the mist, a high cross standing in the midst of a small grove of yews and cypresses, planted formally about it. The rain was beating against it, and the wind sobbing in the trees surrounding it. It seemed so and, so forsaken, that it drew us to it. Without speaking the child and I crept to the shelter at its foot, and sat down to rest there, as if we were companions to it in its loneliness.

It was too dark now to see far along the road, but as we waited and watched there came into sight a rude sort of covered carriage, like a market cart, drawn by a horse with a blue sheep-skin hanging round his neck. The pace at which he was going was not above a jog-trot, and he came almost to a standstill opposite the cross, as if it was customary to pause there. This was the instant to appeal for aid. I darted forward and stretched out my hands to the driver.

"Help us," I cried; "we have lost our way, and the night is come." I could see now that the driver was a burly, red-faced, clean-shaven Norman peasant. He crossed himself hurriedly, and glanced at the grove of dark, solemn trees from which we had come. But by his side sat a priest, in his cassock and broad-brimmed hat fastened up at the sides, who alighted almost before I had finished

speaking, and stood before us bare-headed, and bowing profoundly.

"Madame," he said, in a bland tone, "to what town are you going?"

"We are going to Granville," I answered; "but I am afraid I have lost the way. We are very tired, this little child and I. We can walk no more, monsieur. Take care of us, I pray you."

I spoke brokenly, for in an extremely like this it was difficult to put my request into French. The priest appeared perplexed, but he went back and held a short, earnest conversation with the driver, in a subdued voice.

"Madame," he said, returning to me, "I am Francis Laurente, the cure of Ville-ebois. It is quite a small village about a league from here, and we are on the road to it; but the route to Granville is two leagues behind us, and it is still farther to the nearest village. There is not time to return with you this evening. Will you, then, go with us to Ville-ebois?—and to-morrow we will send you on to Granville."

He spoke very slowly and distinctly, with a clear, cordial voice, which filled me with confidence. I could hardly distinguish his features, but his hair was silvery white, and shone in the gloom, as he pulled stool bare-headed before me, though the rain was falling fast.

"Take care of us, monsieur," I replied, putting my hand in his; "we will go with you."

"Make haste, then, my children," he said cheerfully; "the rain will hurt you. Let me lift the mignonse! Bah! How little she is. Now, madame, permit me."

There was a seat in the back, which we reached by climbing over the front bench, assisted by the driver. There we were well sheltered from the driving wind and rain, with our feet resting upon a sack of potatoes, and the two strange figures of the Norman peasant in his blouse and white cotton cap, and the cure in his hat and cassock, filling up the front of the car before us.

"They are not here," Frenchwomen, Monsieur le Cure," observed the driver, after a short pause.

"No, no, my good Jean," was the cure's answer; "but by their tongue I should say they are English. Englishwomen are extremely intrepid, and voyage about all the world quite alone, like this. It is only a marvel to me that we have never encountered one of them before to-day."

"Monsieur," I interrupted, feeling almost guilty in having listened so far, "I understand French very well, though I speak it badly."

"Pardon, madame!" he replied, "I hope you will not be grieved by the foolish words we have been speaking one to the other."

After that all was still again for some time, except the tinkling of the bells, and the pad-pad of the horse's feet upon the steep and rugged road. By and by a village clock striking echoed faintly down the valley; and the cure turned round and addressed me again.

"There is my village, madame," he said, stretching forth his hand to point it out; "it is very small, and my parish contains but four hundred and twenty-two souls, some of them very little ones. They all know me, and regard me as a father. They love me, though I have some rebel sons."

We entered a narrow and roughly paved village street. The houses, as I saw afterwards, were all huddled together, with a small church at the point farthest from the entrance; and the road ended at its porch, as if there were no other place in the world beyond it.

We drove at last into a square court yard, paved with pebbles. Almost before the horse could stop I saw a stream of light shining from an open door across a causeway, and the voice of a woman, whom I could not see, spoke eagerly as soon as the horse's hoofs had ceased to scrape upon the pebbles.

(To be continued.)

A Warning to Preachers.

"I thought it would be easy enough to convert the lay people of the town, but realized, of course, that the ministers would be a harder task. I remember one of the first sermons I preached with that idea before me. It was a hot summer day, and a gentleman very much under the influence of liquor slid into the rear part of the church and went to sleep. It was somewhat disquieting at first, but I soon warmed up to the subject and forgot him. What happened has always been a warning to me against very loud preaching—I waked him up. My vehemence so disturbed him that he arose, walked unsteadily up the aisle, and stopped in front of the pulpit. I was dreadfully embarrassed. I remember, but I retained sufficient presence of mind to take what I thought was an efficient and brilliant means of bridging over the gap, for, of course, I had stopped preaching when he stood still and looked at me. Leaning over the pulpit I remarked snarlingly: "I perceive that my good brother is ill. Will some—"

"Before any one could move, however, he lifted his head, and, fixing his blinking eyes upon me, remarked in perfectly distinct tones heard throughout the church: "I sh'd think such preachin' 'ud make everybody ill!"—Cyrus Townsend Brady, in New Lippincott.

Chance for a Castle.

The following advertisement appears in a London paper: "A rock built crenelated castle, buffered by the Atlantic surge, at one of the most romantic and dreared points of our iron-bound coast, in full view of the death stone; shipwrecks frequent, corpses common; three reception and seven bedrooms; every modern convenience; 10 gs. a week.—Address, etc."

Persons in need of a castle and who are fond of shipwrecks and corpses should not overlook this opportunity.—Pittsburg Commercial Gazette.

The Chief Cost.

Askit—And so you have given up your summer trip to Wetapot-by-the-sea? Tell us—Yes, I had to. I had money enough for expenses, but not enough for tips.—Baltimore American.

Tuberculosis in Paris.

Of the 46,988 deaths which occurred in Paris in 1899, as many as 12,314 are attributed to tuberculosis, or more than one-fourth.

A WOMAN AND A MAN.

INCIDENT THAT OCCURRED ON A STREET CAR.

She Lectured Him Because He Did Not Rise and Give Her His Seat—Might Have Felt Ashamed, but Didn't Seem To.

She was of an intermediate age— which means about 50 and some odd— very sharp-featured and distinctly potent looking. She looked as if she might bestow the bulk of her affection upon a couple of aged cats and parrots.

She boarded an uptown 14th street car at 15th street and New York avenue the other afternoon. There wasn't a vacant seat in sight. They were all, except one, occupied by women, who, strangely enough, were actually pressed quite close together, contrary to the usual feminine scheme of spreading out skirts and bundles so as to take up sufficient room for two or three sisters. The one man seated in the car was a sturdy, smooth-faced individual, dressed in black. His seat was near the door.

The sharp-featured woman gazed fixedly at him as she reached for a strap. However, he appeared to be interested in the view through the opposite window, and he didn't notice her fixed stare.

"Huh!" said the woman with the sharp features, as the car started ahead. And as she said it she gazed at the man in black as if he belonged to a hitherto uncatalogued species of fuzzy caterpillar.

However, the sturdy man in black didn't see her at all, nor did he appear to hear her. He pulled an evening paper from his coat pocket, spread it out and began to read.

"The manners of some folks!" ejaculated the sharp-featured woman, glaring square at the man in black; who, however, was obviously quite enraptured with the news of the day.

"Huh! Big lummoxes that sprawl around in seats and let ladies stand up!" muttered the woman who didn't believe her petulant looks.

The solitary male passenger smiled at a joke that caught his eye at the bottom of the newspaper page, and assuredly did not see her.

"It's mighty little raisin' some people 've had!" went on the sharp-featured woman, as if addressing all hands in the car—and most of the women in the car were snickering by this time. "I never seen the like, so I didn't!"

The man in black turned over to the Schley case in his newspaper and yawned slightly.

"Much some ill-mannered creatures care, so long as they can spraddle their lady, good-fr-nothin' bones around in comfort," went on the sharp-featured woman as the car rounded Thomas circle.

"Some folks are so deaf and dumb that they can't never take a hint," she continued, after a pause.

The man in black yawned cavernously over the court of inquiry testimony, as well he might, yet he didn't seem to be in anywise aware of the contiguity of the petulant woman.

At length, as the car was passing R street she couldn't stand his callous indifference any longer. She leaned over the man in black, and as she did so he looked at her for the first time, with a surprised expression.

"Did you ever see a man give his seat to a lady where you came from, wherever that is?" she asked the sturdy-looking man in black.

The man reddened and rose from his seat with great difficulty, supporting himself heavily on a cane.

"It was always my custom, madam, to surrender my seat in cars for ladies until I met with an accident which has rendered me permanently infirm," he said, signaling to the conductor to stop the car. The sharp-faced woman plumped herself into his seat and then the man in black walked painfully to the rear platform. One of his legs was of cork. The other women, perceiving this, looked sympathetically toward him as he was helped off the car by the conductor and then scowled at the sharp-faced woman. But she didn't appear to be bothered, says the Washington Star, and returned scowl for scowl.

SEVEN DAYS FULL OF DANGER.

Queer Statistics that Show an Evil Week in Every Month.

An ancient soothsayer said to imperial Caesar: "Beware the Ides of March."

But if the theory of Dr. Granville Macleod, of South Chicago, is correct the modern advisor can say: "Beware the 20th to the 26th of every month."

Dr. Macleod's assertion seems to be verified by statistics taken from the records of railroad companies, iron works, grain elevators, boiler works, hospitals, and many establishments employing large forces of men, as well as the books of the coroner's office.

Reference to the records of the Cook County Hospital for each month for the past five years shows an average of ninety-five cases of injuries by accident a month. Out of this total sixty-five occurred during the "fatal" period.

The coroner's office shows a more startling confirmation of the doctor's theory. About 65 per cent, or nearly two-thirds of the deaths by accidents and other causes requiring official investigation occur between the 20th and the 26th of each month.

Of the days of the week occurring in this "fatal" period Saturdays and Mondays appear to come particularly under the malign influence. This may be partially explained from the fact that a

great many of the laboring class are paid on Saturday, and many accidents result from intemperance. As an old newspaper man said, "Saturday means pay day, pay day means booze, booze means trouble, and trouble means news."

Professor R. A. McQueen, now of Kansas City, but for many years a resident of India, and a close student of the Brahmin religion, theology, and occult sciences, says that the priests in the Brahmin temples have had the theory for years that at this particular period of the month the serpent made his appearance in the garden of Eden and tempted Eve, with the result that man fell from the favor of God, and ever since then this particular time has been regarded as an especially unlucky.

LONDON'S DOCTOR FOR BIRDS.

Makes a Specialty of It and Is Busy All the Time.

Birds are subject to disease quite as much as human beings. Pithitis carries off many a parrot, and pet canaries are very subject to enteric. Treating these ailments and performing minor surgical operations upon feathered patients keeps at least one London bird doctor busy most of the time. The methods by which he operates are given in the Strand Magazine.

One of the refractory patients treated was a parrot suffering from a horny growth over one of its nostrils. Its struggles were absolutely terrific, and in the end it had to be wrapped in twine to prevent wing flapping.

Canaries, being naturally fragile and nearly always delicate in the climate of Great Britain, are a class of patients to which the bird doctor gives special study and attention. They form, as a rule, the larger portion of his clientele, for, as drawing-room pets, they are by far the greatest favorites of the winged world. The treatment accorded them has to be of the most delicate description, while the handling of their bodies for various ailments is in itself an operation demanding the utmost care, as an inadvertent squeeze might cause their death. The affection showered by owners of canaries upon their little pets is often quite touching, many ladies making it a stipulation that they are present while any necessary operation is being carried out. Tears are shed freely on such occasions, and joy becomes manifest as soon as the poor little birdies are pronounced "out of danger."

TRUCKMAN AND MOTORMAN.

The Former's Politeness Was Too Much for the Policeman.

In the old days, before the cable and electric cars, and when horse cars ran on Broadway, truckmen practically ruled the street, and did not pay the slightest heed to remarks from the car drivers requesting them more or less (rather more) emphatically to get out of the way, until they decided that they were ready to do so. When the cable and finally the electric cars came in the truckmen became a little more careful, for a very few encounters with the cars showed them that their trucks could be knocked into kindling wood in a few minutes. Nowadays they get out of the way fairly expeditiously if grudgingly, but such an exchange of amenities as was heard the other day between truckman and motorman is a record, says the New York Mail and Express.

It was on Duane street, and a heavy truck was keeping back a car. The motorman clanged his bell loudly, and the driver of the truck turned around and said:

"If you will wait until we reach the next corner I shall be very glad to get out of your way."

"The duke," said the European gentleman, "belongs to one of the most eminent and influential families of our time." "Indeed!" responded the American millionaire, with interest; "who is his father-in-law?"—Washington Star.

He—I know I'm late, but I couldn't help it. You see, I was detained a couple of hours by an old friend who had just got back to town after a long absence. I had to tell him all I knew. She (unhappily)—I don't see why that should have kept you so long.

Hostess—Are you a musician, Mr. Whooper? Whooper, who is dying to give an exhibition of his powers—Well—yes, I think I can lay claim to some knowledge of music. Hostess—I'm delighted to hear it. My daughter is going to play, and I should be so glad if you would turn the music for her.

Patrick—It's poor advice you've been givin' me. Didn't ye say th' best time to ask a man a favor was after dinner? Birkins—I certainly did. "Well, O' what to old Buffers wld th' schmallest kind of a request, and he refused. It was after dinner, too." "Are you sure he had had his dinner?" "Faith it's little O' know about old Buffers' ings and outcomin'; but O' had mine!"—N. Y. Weekly.

Rallying Rapidly: Surgeon (after the operation)—I am glad to be able to assure you, Mrs. Tye Philst, that the danger is now over and your husband will recover. We have successfully removed the appendix veriformis, and it is of such a unique formation that I shall preserve it for use in my medical lectures. Mr. Tye Philst (opening his eyes)—You'll allow me something for it, I suppose, doctor?—Chicago Tribune.

"Children," said the teacher, while instructing the class in composition, "you should not attempt any flights of fancy, but simply be yourselves, and write what is in you. Do not imitate any other person's writing or draw inspirations from outside sources." As a result of this advice Johnny Wise turned in the following composition: "We should not attempt any flights of fancy, but rite what is in us. In me there is my stomach, lungs, har, liver, two apples, one piece of pie, one stick lemon candy, and my dinner."



Guest—What a splendid dinner! I don't often get as good a meal as this, Little Willie (son of the host)—We don't, either.—Ex.

Madge—Another of those swindling beggars. He said he was blind, and asked for a penny, beautiful lady, Rose—Well, I darsay he was blind.

Mrs. Jones—Charles has an unconquerable spirit. Mrs. Smith—Indeed? Mrs. Jones—Yes; he was two hours unlocking the front door early this morning.

To Begin at Once, Mamma—Never put off until to-morrow what you can do to-day. Johnnie—Well, then, I'll eat the rest of the pie now.—Baltimore World.

Colonel Bragg—I've fought and bled for my country, sir, I've— Alexander Smart—Yes, but did you ever help your wife hang pictures?—Ohio State Journal.

Mrs. Goldstein—Ikey, Ikey! Felix has swallowed a penny. Mr. Goldstein—Vot a great poy. Arelty he wants to start in peeviness as a penny-in-deckol machine.

"Miss Holler says she thinks she will have her voice tried." "Well, if she does, the verdict will be 'Guilty of murder in the first degree.'"—Philadelphia Bulletin.

"But surely," urged Barlow, "speeing is believing." "Not necessarily," responded Dohson; "for instance, I see you every day, but as to believing you"—Stray Stories.

Bilison—How was Jones yesterday? Glibson—He seemed to be laboring under a strange delusion. Bilison—Indeed! I thought he was playing golf. Glibson—So did Jones?—Town Topics.

"Any word from my poor husband to the other world?" asked the widow of the medium. "Nothing more," replied the medium, "than a request for some ice and a palmetto fan."—Atlanta Constitution.

Schoolmaster—New tell me, what were the thoughts that passed through Str Isaac Newton's mind when the apple fell on his head? Hopeful Pupil—'I expects he was awful glad it warn't a brick.—Tit-Bits.

"Men of genius seldom make any money," remarked the blattitudinous person. "Really!" answered the very modern man. "As if there were any showing you are a genius except making money!"—Washington Star.

Sizing Him Up, Shopman—What style of hat do you wish, sir? Cholly—Ah! I am not particular about the style; something to suit my head, don't ye know. Shopman—Step this way and look at our soft felts.—Tit-Bits.

Miss Touriste—You have some strong and rugged types of manhood out in this western country. Stage Driver—Yass, miss, we hev men out here that don't think it's nuthin' to hold up a railroad train.—Ohio State Journal.

Mr. Flushing (hospitably)—So you have joined our club. Mr. Elmhurst (wearily)—Yes. My wife has got the house so full of "cosy corners" there isn't any place where I can sit down and be comfortable.—Brooklyn Eagle.

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