

THE DOCTOR'S REWARD.

From New York Weekly.

BY D. J. FINLEY.

"Only a shadow of the past is all that is now left for me."

These sorrowful words were spoken by a young man, well-attired, and who had the appearance of a gentleman of leisure.

But now, as he sits alone, having no other companion than the picture which he holds in his hand, his heart speaks of the past in tones of bitter regret, and the future looms up before him like an ugly specter.

The photograph which he is looking at with all the earnestness of a passionate nature, is that of a young woman, evidently about his own age—a face so exquisitely beautiful that one would wonder if flesh and blood could ever look so lovely.

"Only a shadow," again the young man repeats, "hut, ah, how life-like! How clearly it brings the past before my eyes—the happy days that we spent together, and the mutual exchange of love tokens, which bade fair at one time to bind our hearts forever in peace and happiness."

The bitter experience of this young man is by no means uncommon. He had loved and his affections gained an encouraging response; but, like many others, he felt too confident, and was too reckless in his treatment of the young lady upon whom his heart's affections were centered. Gay and thoughtless; he indulged in what he deemed a "harmless" flirtation with another, and the result was a lover's quarrel, separation, and, consequently, unhappiness to both parties.

Doctor Summerfield would now give all the riches he possessed, if, by so doing, he could undo the past and be once more the betrothed husband of Lillie Fairfax. But no such sacrifice would suffice, for he was painfully aware that Lillie was lost to him forever.

At the time of the rupture, Summerfield was vain enough to think that a woman's heart was made to yield—and instead of manfully confessing his folly to the woman he loved, and begging her forgiveness, he went away for six months without even telling her where he was going.

In the meantime Lillie's parents removed to a distant state, where, perhaps, she might soon form other ties, and forget the lover whose fidelity she had strong reason to doubt.

It is at this point we find the young doctor brooding over his misfortune, with the likeness of his darling Lillie in his hand, and her letter of dismissal lying open before him. He is almost frantic with hopeless fear lest he shall never be able to find her, for he has already used every effort to discover some trace of the Fairfax family, but the search has been fruitless.

"Shall I ever find her?" was the question now uppermost in his mind, as he wondered restlessly from place to place, vainly endeavoring to get a clue to his lost treasure.

Again he would say that Providence had been unkind to him, by thus allowing a cruel fate to deprive him of all earthly comfort, forgetting that he himself had been the cause of his own troubles.

While thus repining, the doctor was aroused to a sense of what was going on in the world around him by the awful news from the South, detailing the ravages which the yellow fever was making in various cities, and the call for help, which was being responded to by so many noble men and women throughout the North.

"I will go at once and offer my services," he said, partly moved by a sense of duty and partly on account of his own mental sufferings, which made him crave the excitement and danger such a sacrifice would entail.

When Dr. Summerfield reached New Orleans the city was in a deplorable state, many suffering from dread disease, some of them actually dying from lack of attention or medical skill. He went at once to the board of health, and showed his credentials, offering himself for immediate service as a physician.

"You are just the sort of man we need," said one of the leading doctors, "and I can at once give you a patient that will require your skill and patience, for I fear it is a dangerous case."

A guide was soon found to conduct the young physician to the house of the unfortunate victim, and to carry the necessary medicines.

Noiselessly the door of an elegant mansion was opened to admit the aid that had evidently been expected.

As the doctor ascended the stairs a feeling of awful responsibility thrilled through every nerve, and made him pray to the Almighty for wisdom to aid the poor sufferer.

In all the annals of romance there is nothing more thrilling than the sight which met the astonished eyes of the young physician as he entered that sick chamber! There, a young and most beautiful woman lay in a death-like stupor, and that woman was his long-lost Lillie Fairfax!

Imagination alone can portray the feelings of the lover, and the almost fatal shock his heart received as he beheld that well-beloved form wrapped, as it were, in the folds of death!

But doctor Summerfield was a strong man, and a merciful Providence gave him nerve to bear this great trial.

For a time he had not much hope, but, with Lillie's strong constitution, together with his almost superhuman efforts to save her life, she at length began to show signs of recovery.

The stimulus which she received during the first moments of consciousness, also aided the poor sufferer to resist the horrible disease that had taken possession of her; and, perhaps, to this very cause we may attribute her ultimate recovery.

No pen can describe the joy that filled the hearts of the lovers, when Lillie had so far recovered as to be able to thank her preserver, and to hear from his lips the story of his adventures in searching for her.

"Never again will a shadow of doubt cross my mind," she said, "concerning the sincerity of your affection."

Most persons might suppose that, under the circumstances, Doctor Summerfield would be justified in leaving the remainder of the yellow fever sufferers to be taken care of by other hands, and, in company with his rescued treasure, flee to a

place of safety; but his manly nature would not allow him to desert his duty in this way, and he worked on with willing hands.

When Lillie had so far recovered as to be able to leave the house, and, leaning upon the doctor's strong arm, walk for a short time in the open air, it seemed to her as if her cup of happiness was indeed full, and her thanks went up to heaven for her preservation, and also for the return of her lover, without whom, even death, itself, would have been a relief.

But poor Lillie did not long enjoy her newly found happiness. Another victim was added to the list, and fate had this time chosen Lillie's lover!

Alas! poor thing, what mortal anguish she suffered, when the telegram announcing this fact reached her, no tongue can tell, for she saw in his illness the downfall of all her earthly happiness. Even this, however, did not deprive her of the presence of mind necessary for her guidance in the hour of her lover's peril, for she went at once to his aid, prepared to minister to his wants with the magnetic touch of loving hands.

The doctors who attended Summerfield told Lillie to prepare for the worst, for his case, they declared was hopeless!

"I cannot believe it—I will not believe it," she cried, in hopeful trust that Heaven would still be merciful, and spare the life so dear to her. She prayed to God that if her lover was about to die, so might she also be permitted to die and go with him to eternal rest.

At last a gleam of hope appeared in the doctor's case, and the men who so recently told Lillie that her lover's death was almost a certainty, now gladdened her heart with the joyful intelligence that the patient had fought the disease successfully, and would in all probability recover.

Three weeks of careful nursing brought Doctor Summerfield to a state of convalescence, and the lovers were once more united by new ties of devotion to each other, which made life seem more like heaven to them than it had ever been before.

There is little more to add, for the reader will readily guess the sequel.

The old wounds are all healed, the doctor has his reward, and Lillie is now Mrs. Summerfield.

[THE END]

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AN ENGLISH COMMENTARY.

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You are likely to be one of the victims! How do we know? Because it is the exception to find a man or woman of adult age in perfect health. Nervous Disorders are spreading with fearful rapidity. Among the symptoms, are—Backache, Biliousness, Cold Hands and Feet, Dizziness, Hot Flashes, Fluttering Sensation, Fainting, Headache, Hysteria, Irritability of the Heart, Melancholy, Failing Memory, Palpitation, Rheumatism, Short Breath, Sleeplessness, Nervous Dyspepsia, Sexual Debility, Fits, etc.

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