

The Doctor's Dilemma

By Hesba Stretton

CHAPTER V.

"Martin Dobree" ejaculated both in and out of breath.

"Yes, madamemoiselle," said, unrolling the tress of hair as it was a serpent and going forward to greet them; are you surprised to see me?"

"Surprised!" echoed the elder. "No, we are amazed—petrified! However did you get here? When did you come?"

"Quite easily," I replied. "I came on Sunday, and I have found you in my own home. If the weather had permitted I should have paid you a call; but you know what it has been."

"To be sure," answered Emma; "and how is dear Julia? She will be very anxious about you."

"She was on the verge of a nervous attack when I left her," I said; "that will tend to increase her anxiety."

"Poor, dear girl!" she replied sympathetically. "But, Martin, is this young man here so very ill? We have heard of the doctor's case, but she had a dangerous fall. To think of your being in Sark ever since Sunday, and we never heard a word of it!"

"Is that the young woman's hair?"

"Yes," I replied; "it was necessary to cut it off. She is dangerously ill with fever."

"Both of them shrank a little towards the door. A sudden temptation assailed me, and took me so much by surprise that I had yielded before I was even struck. It was that striking movement that did it. My answer was almost as automatic and involuntary as their retreat.

"You see it would not be wise for any of us to go about," I said. "A fever breaking out in the island, especially now, you have no resident doctor, would be very serious."

Thus I secured isolation for myself and my patient. But why had I been eager to do so? I could not answer that question to myself, and I did not prefer over it many minutes. I was impatient, yet strangely reluctant, to look at the sick girl again, after the loss of her beautiful hair. The change in her appearance struck me as singular. Her face before had a look of suffering and trouble, making it almost sick, charming as it was; now she had the aspect of quite a young girl, scarcely touching upon womanhood.

We sat up again together that night, Tardif and I. He would not smoke, lest the scent of the tobacco should get in through the crevices of the door, and lessen the girl's chance of sleep; but he held his pipe between his teeth, taking an imaginary puff now and then, that he might keep himself wide awake. We talked to one another in whispers.

"Tell me all you know about madamemoiselle," I said. He had been chary of his knowledge before, but his heart seemed open at this moment. Most hearts are more open at midnight than at any other hour.

"There's not much to tell, doctor," he answered. "Her name is Olivier, as I said to you; but she does not think she is any kin to the Oliviers of Guernsey. She is poor, though she does not look as if she had been born poor, does she?"

"Not in the least degree," I said. "If she is not a lady by birth, she is one of the first specimens of Nature's gentleness I have ever come across. Has she written to any one since she came here?"

"Not to a soul," he answered eagerly. "She told me she had no friends nearer than Australia. That is a great way off."

"And she has had no letters?" I asked.

"Not one," he replied. "She has neither written nor received a single letter."

"But how did you come across her?" I inquired.

"She did not fall from the skies, I suppose. How was it she came to live in this out-of-the-world place with you?"

"I'll tell you all about it, Doctor Martin," he said, and he related how he had met the young lady in London.

"Tardif," I said, when he had concluded the relation, "I did not know what a good fellow you were, though I ought to have learned it by this time."

"No," he answered, "it is not in me; it's something in you. Do you feel something of it yourself, doctor, or how could you stay in a poor little house like this, thinking of nothing but her, and not caring about the weather keeping you away from home? There was a curious thing, she had not any luggage with her, not a box nor a bag of any kind. She never fancied that I knew, for that would have troubled her. It is my belief that she has run away."

"But who can she have run away from, Tardif?" I asked.

"Heaven knows," he answered, "but the girl has suffered; you can see that by her face. Whoever or whatever she has run away from, her cheeks are white from it, and her heart is sorrowful. I know nothing of her secret; but this I do know: she is as good, and true, and sweet a little soul as my poor little wife was. If she should die, it will be a great grief of heart to me. If I could offer my life to God in place of hers, I'd do it willingly."

"No, she will not die. Look there, Tardif!" I said, pointing to the door of the inner room. A white card had been slipped under the door noiselessly, and I agreed upon between mother Renouf and me, to inform me that a patient had at last fallen into a profound slumber, which seemed likely to continue some hours.

The morning was more than half gone before mother Renouf opened the door and came out to us, her old face looking more haggard than ever, but her little eyes twinkling with satisfaction.

"All goes well," she said. "Your little madamemoiselle does not think of dying yet."

"I did not stay to watch how Tardif received this news, for I was impatient myself to see how she was going on. Thank heaven, the fever was gone, the delirium at an end. The dark gray eyes opening languidly as my fingers touched her wrist, were calm and intelligent. She was as weak as a kitten, but that did not trouble me much. I was sure her natural health was good, and she would soon recover her lost strength. I had to stoop down to hear what she was saying.

"Have I kept quiet, doctor?" she asked faintly.

"I must own that my eyes smarted, and my voice was not to be trusted. I had never felt so overjoyed in my life as at that moment. But what a singular wish to be obedient possessed this girl! What a wonderful power of submissive self-control!"

"I should like to see Tardif," murmured the girl to me that night, after she had awakened from a second long and peaceful sleep.

I called him and he came in barefoot, his broad, burly frame seeming to fill up all the little room. She could not raise

to receive it when the cutter returned. If she is in haste to secure a parcel of books before the cutter should start home again, with its courageous little knot of market people. I ran down to Barbet's. I looked through the library shelves until I hit upon two novels. Besides these, I bought a book for Sunday reading. Barbet brought half a sheet of an old Times to form the first cover of my parcel. The shop was crowded with market people, and as he was busy I undertook to pack them myself. I was about to fold the newspaper round them, when my eye was caught by an advertisement at the top of one of the columns. "Strayed from her home in London, on the 20th inst., a young lady with bright brown hair, grey eyes, and delicate features; age twenty-one. She is believed to have seen last. Was dressed in a blue silk dress and sea-blue jacket and hat. Fifty pounds reward is offered to any person giving such information as will lead to her restoration to her friends. Apply to Messrs. Scott and Brown, Gray's Inn Road, E. C."

I stood perfectly still for some seconds, staring blankly at the very simple advertisement under my eyes. There was not the slightest doubt in my mind that it had a direct reference to my pretty patient, Mrs. S. I had no time for deliberation there, and I tore off a large corner of the Times containing that and other advertisements, and thrust it unseen into my pocket.

In the afternoon I went down with Julia and my mother to the new house, I can imagine the importance, but there was nothing that was more delightful than the care with which a man prepares a home for his future wife. The very tint of the walls, and the way the light falls in through the windows, would become matters of grave importance, but there was not the slightest flavor of this sentiment in our furnishing of the new house. It was really more Julia's business than mine. I went about the place as if in some dream. The house commanded a splendid view of the whole group of the Channel Islands, and the rocky islets innumerable strewn about the sea. The afternoon sun was shining full upon Sark, and whenever I looked through the window I could see the cliffs of the

THE RICHEST AMERICAN CITIES.

Baltimore is Fourth, Following New York, Boston and San Francisco.

There is no way in which the diffusions of wealth among the inhabitants of American cities may be gauged with absolute precision, but the amount of personal property held in each furnishes one test, for it includes generally bonds, cash, money, furniture, jewelry, equipages, stocks and money invested in business.

It is a fact well known, of course, that the general taxation of all such personal property is impossible, that a considerable portion of it escapes taxation, and a considerable list of cities, too, is exempted by law, but the relation which personal property of one big city bears to that of another furnishes a fair guide to the wealth of each.

By this standard New York ranks first among American cities, but not very far in advance of the city of Boston, one of the oldest and most opulent of American municipalities, and one in which personal property bears the relation of one to four of real estate value; in New York it is only one to six.

The following New York and Boston, which are at the head of the list of the richest American cities, comes San Francisco, with \$120,000,000 of taxed personal property, a condition of affluence due to the vast property which has come from the Pacific coast mines, the chief owners of which, or their descendants, have an actual or, at least, a legal residence in the Golden Gate city.

Following San Francisco is Baltimore, one of the most substantial municipalities of the United States, with a larger amount of personal property taxed than San Francisco, but with a much larger population as well.

Following Baltimore comes Chicago and then Detroit, St. Louis, Providence, one of the wealthiest of American cities; New Orleans and Indianapolis.—New York Sun.

HIS GUESTS ALL "SKUN."

Johanne invited the "gang" to his Birthday Party.

A 10-year-old boy, whom it will not harm to call Johanne Joy, living in Herkimer street, Brooklyn, on his last birthday had a party. It was a party that stands out fresh and sharp in the memories of the entire family. Johanne's sister had had birthday parties, where all the girls and boys governed themselves strictly according to the rules of decorum. Johanne's party was made up entirely of boys living in the immediate neighborhood.

"I just want the 'gang' I play with," said he to his mother, according to the New York Tribune, and the "gang" it was that awkwardly surrounded the table in the basement dining room and looked with gleaming eyes on the bountiful supply of goodies. Noticing their restraint, Johanne's mother tactfully withdrew, after noting that there was plenty for every one to eat. She had scarcely reached the floor above before her nerves were thrilled by a terrible commotion below. There was a sound of breaking crockery and glassware, and the jingle of spoons and knives striking a hard substance. There were excited exclamations and a scurrying of feet outside the basement door. Then suddenly all became silent as the grave. Wonderfully, the mother of Johanne returned to the dining room, where three minutes before were 12 hungry little boys. The tablecloth and dishes were on the floor in a heap. Johanne's head was buried in his arms, and the scalding tears were trickling down his nose.

"Why, Johanne, dear, where are your friends?" asked the mother.

"They—they—sw—swiped all—the—they wuz on—the—the table an'—an' skun!" said Johanne, breaking forth into a fresh torrent of tears.

So Sweet Her.

Mrs. Chatterleigh—Fancy, dear, at the Browns' last night they were all saying how glad they were to hear you were at last engaged! Of course I didn't believe the report, dear, and said I wondered how any one could be so stupid as to imagine anything so absurd.—Punch.

Krupp's Fortune.

The German papers state that old man Krupp is worth \$5,000,000.

"Who is old man Krupp?"

"He is the maker of the Krupp guns."

"Well, say, \$5,000,000 isn't much for a cannonmaker when you consider all the startling reports."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A Continuous Strike.

"Your cousin, Cholier, isn't a youth of striking appearance?"

"He isn't? Well, I never saw him yet when he didn't appear to be striking matches to light his cigarettes."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Sentiment and Discretion.

Billy—Did she accept you?

Jack—Well, she said she'd make a memorandum of my proposal and consider it when the weather gets favorable for mental effort.

Easy All Around.

"Birthdays go off all right at our boarding house?"

"How's that?"

"We don't allow but sixteen candles to anybody's birthday cake."

An Invention.

"Dot was a perfect fit," said Moses Cohenstein, the clothier, as he plucked up the customer's coat in the back.

"It seems to be loose," said the customer doubtfully.

"Vell," said Mr. Cohenstein enthusiastically, "but see how much extra goods you get for de same munny?"

Wh! He Did It.

"Merciful heavens!" she exclaimed on her first visit to the dairy. "Why do you crowd the cows so close together in the stalls?"

"Them's th' condensed milk cows, mumm," replied the accommodating chambermaid.—Denver Times.

LET US ALL LAUGH.

JOKES FROM THE PENS OF VARIOUS HUMORISTS.

Plausible Incidents Occurring the World Over—Sayings that are Cheerful to Old or Young—Funny Selections that You Will Enjoy.

Nebb—You must like to hear that dreadful grand organ, since you pay the man to play under your window every day.

Nobb—No, I don't like it any more than that girl over the way who is taking vocal lessons.—Boston Post.

Answer.

All Alike.

Farmer Dunk—How's your new hired man, Ezy?

Farmer Hornbeak—Just like all the rest of 'em 'I've ever had—so laxy that he gets tired restin'.—Puck.

Easily Discouraged.

"Binglebang says he isn't going to do any more courting." He claims he can't see any fun in it.

"What's the matter with Bingley?"

"He's so short he can't turn down the gas."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Willfully Misunderstood.

"Some of my latest photographs," said the camera fiend, "I took fifty feet under water."

"Why did you go to the trouble of taking them there?" remarked Peppery.

"It would have been easier to just tie a stone to them and throw them in."—Philadelphia Press.

THE ACCOMMODATING WAITER.

"Can I offer you another chair?"—Fliegende Blaetter.

In Haste and at Leisure.

"You seem to be in something of a hurry," said the divorce lawyer. "It hasn't been more than six weeks since you were married, has it?"

"—No, sir," faltered the fair young client, "but it—it was a St. Joe marriage."

"I see. And this is a Chicago repentance."—Chicago Tribune.

Thirteen Stories.

O'Hoolihan—Plawat wud yez do if yez wur 't fall of this rufe?

O'Marrity—Faith o'd make up me mind goin' down.—Ohio State Journal.

Superfluons.

Summer Boarder—You didn't mention having so many mosquitoes.

Uncle Ezra—No, I knowed it wuzn't no use, cuz y'd find them out soon as y' got 'ere.—Ohio State Journal.

Must Run the Risk.

"Do you approve of women taking an active part in politics?" asked the idle person.

"Certainly," answered Mr. Meekton. "Let them go ahead. If they want to stay away from home and take the chances on a man's walking right in on the best carpet with his muddy boots, that's their lookout, not ours."—Washington Star.

Has Everything Now.

Towne—Your wife has recovered from her nervous trouble, I hope.

Browne—Well, she was doing nicely, but now she's got a complication of diseases.

Towne—You don't say?

Browne—Yes, when she was convalescing Mrs. Fauxpas next door sent her a lot of medical almanacs to read.—Philadelphia Press.

Ant-Catching Thistles.

Many flowers have the power to form for themselves a contrivance which answers the same purpose as the fly papers which are sold in shops and by hawkers in the streets. Among these plants is the common thistle. Ants manage to climb the stem as they are eager to obtain the sweet juices in the flower, and they struggle their way through the close fibril of small leaves thickly set with thorns, which ants throw around the blossoms. The ants then find that they are caught in a trap. On each scale of the green cup in which the flower is set, there is a streak of gum. The moment the insects touch it they are fast prisoners. The more they struggle the more helpless their case becomes, for every movement causes them to get more entangled. In a little while the gum stops up the breathing holes in their sides, and then all is over. They are literally smothered to death. A score of dead or dying ants may be often seen on the head of a thistle growing just above their nest.

The value of a man's advice depends upon the success he has achieved in following it.

As You May Have Noticed.

"Look at the stuff that goes to waste in the grocery business," said the lounge in the store, "and think of the small margin on most of the goods. Where does the profit come in?"

"The profit," said the impatient man with the basket on his arm, "comes from having only one clerk to wait on thirty-six customers."—Chicago Tribune.

Art Bold Means.

Elaine—Did you notice the mean way that Smythe girl sneered at my new hat?

Gladys—Yes, but those sneers were only artificial means.—Ohio State Journal.

Wealth's Vexations.

Mrs. Newriche—Mrs. De Smythe told me last evening that she is troubled with ongwage.

Mr. Newriche—What's that?

Mrs. Newriche—Dear me! I don't know. I've looked all through the "O's" of three different dictionaries and can't find any such word.—Puck.

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