

The Doctor's Dilemma

By Hesba Stretton

CHAPTER XXV.

"I will send the child to a cab on Wednesday," the woman said, as I rose and made my way towards the hall; "you have not told me your address."

I paused for a moment. Dared I tell her my address? Yet my money was so small, and if I did not, I should lose both the refund I had bought with it. Besides, I should awaken suspicion and inquiry by silence. It was a fearful risk to run; yet it seemed safer than a precipitous retreat. I gave her my address, and saw her write it down on a slip of paper.

In the afternoon the little girl arrived quite alone, except that a man had been hired to carry a small box for her, and to deliver her into my charge. This was a great relief to me, and I gladly paid the shilling he demanded. The child was thinly and shabbily dressed for our long journey, and there was a forlorn loneliness about her position, left thus to a stranger, which touched me to the heart. We were alike poor, helpless, friendless.

"I'm so glad," she said with a deep-drawn sigh of relief; "I was afraid I should never go, and school is such a heavenly place!"

The words amused yet troubled me; they were so different from a child's ordinary opinion.

"It's such a hateful place at Mrs. Wilkinson's," she went on, "everybody calling me at once, and scolding me; and there are such a many people to run errands for."

"What is your name, my dear?" I asked, sitting down on my box and taking her on my lap. Such a thin, stunted little woman, precociously learned in trouble! Yet she nestled in my arms like a true child, and a tear or two rolled down her cheeks, as if from very contentment.

"Nobody has nursed me like this since mother died," she said. "I'm Mary; but father always called me Minima, because I was the least in the house. He kept a boys' school out of London, in Epping Forest, you know; and it was so heavenly! All the boys were good to me, and we used to call father Dominic. Then he died, and mother died just before him; and he said, 'Courage, Minima! God will take care of my little girl.' So the boys' fathers and mothers made a subscription for me, and they got a great deal of money, a hundred pounds, and somebody told them about this school, and where I can stay four years for a hundred pounds, and they all said that was the best thing they could do with me. But I've had to stay with Mrs. Wilkinson nearly two months, because she could not find a governess to go with me. I hate her; I detest her; I should like to spit at her!"

"Hush! hush!" I said, drawing her head down upon my shoulder again.

"Then there is Mr. Foster," she continued. "He torments me so. He likes to make fun of me, and tease me, till I can't bear to go into his room. You'd hate Mr. Foster, and Mrs. Foster, if you only knew them."

"Why?" I asked in a whisper. My voice sounded husky to me, and my throat felt parched. The child's impotent rage and hatred struck a slumbering chord within me.

"Oh! they are horrid in every way," she said; "they frighten me. He is fond of tormenting anything, because he's cruel. But they are very poor—poor as Job, Mrs. Wilkinson says, and I'm glad. Aren't you glad?"

The question jarred in my memory against a passionate craving for revenge, which had died away in the quiet and tranquillity of Sark. Ought I to do anything for him? Was there anything I could do to help him?

"He is ill, too," pursued the child; "I heard him say once to Mrs. Foster, he knew he should die like a dog."

"Ill! dead! My heart beat faster and faster as I pondered over these words. Then I should be free indeed; his death would release me from bondage, from fear, from poverty—those three evils which dogged my steps. I had never ventured to let my thoughts run that way, but this child's prattling had now forced them into it. Richard Foster ill—dying! that ought I to do?"

There was one thing only that I could do, only one little sacrifice I could make for him whom I had vowed, in childish ignorance, to love, honor and cherish in sickness and in health, until death parted us. A home was secured to me for twelve months. I had enough money still to last me until then. My diamond ring, which had been his own gift to me on our wedding day, would be valuable to him. Sixty pounds would be a help to him, and I set the child gently away from me, and wrote my last letter to my husband. Both the letter and the ring I enclosed in a little box.

A great thump against the door brought a host of fears upon me. But before I could stir, the insecure handle gave way, and no one more formidable appeared than the landlady of the house, carrying before her a tray on which was set out a sumptuous tea, consisting of buttered crumpets and shrimps. She put it down on my dressing table and stood surveying it and us with an expression of benign exultation.

"Those are as good as going parts," she said, "ought to get a good English meal afore they start. And this, my master says, is a testimonial to you."

I could hardly control my laughter, and I could not keep back the tears. It was a long time now since any one had shown me so much kindness and sympathy as this. The dull face of the good woman was brightened by her kind-hearted feeling, and instead of thanking her I put my lips to her cheek.

The next morning found us in France. From Honfleur to Falaise went, gentle sunshine filled the air. The slowly moving train carried us through woods where the autumn seemed but a few days old. We passed through miles upon miles of orchards, beneath which lay huge prairies of apples. Truck-loads of them passed every station. The air was scented by them. Children were peering another with them. It was almost like going into a new world, and I breathed more freely the farther we traveled down into the interior. At Falaise we exchanged the train for a small omnibus, which bore the name "Noireau" conspicuously on its door. At length we started off on the last stage of our journey.

Finally our omnibus was jolting and rumbled down some steep and narrow streets, lighted by all lamps swung across them. Only at the inn where we stopped was there anything like life. I woke up Minima from her deep and heavy sleep.

"We are here at Noireau!" I said. "We have reached our home at last!"

The door was opened before the child was fairly awake. A small cluster of bystanders gathered round us as we

alighted, and watched our luggage put down from the roof. Minima was leaning against me, half asleep. A narrow vista of tall houses lay to the right and left, lost in impenetrable darkness. The strip of sky overhead was black with midnight.

"Noireau?" I asked in a tone of interrogation.

"Yes, madame," responded a chorus of voices.

"Carry me to the house of Monsieur Emile Perrier, the avocat," I said, speaking slowly and distinctly.

The words, simple as they were, seemed to awaken considerable excitement. The landlady threw up her hands, with an expression of astonishment. Was it possible that I could have made a mistake in so short and easy a sentence? I said it over again to myself, and felt sure I was right. With renewed confidence I repeated it aloud, with a slight variation.

"I wish to go to the house of Monsieur Emile Perrier, the avocat," I said. "But whilst they still clustered round Minima and me, giving no sign of compliance with my request, two persons thrust themselves through the circle. The one was a man, in a threadbare brown or would several times about his neck; and the other a woman, in an equally shabby dress, who spoke to me in broken English.

"Mees, I am Madame Perrier, and this is my husband," she said; "come on. The letter was here only an hour ago; but all is ready. Come on, come on."

She put her hand through my arm, and took hold of Minima's hand, as if claiming both of us. A dead silence had fallen

upon the little crowd, as if they were trying to catch the meaning of the English words. But as she pushed on, leading both, a sifter for the first time ran from lip to lip. I glanced back, and saw Monsieur Perrier, the avocat, hurriedly putting our luggage on a wheelbarrow, and preparing to follow us with it along the dark street.

I was too bewildered yet to feel any astonishment. We were in France, in a remote part of France, and I did not know what Frenchmen would or would not do. We stopped at last opposite the large, handsome house, which stood in the front, in the photograph I had seen in London.

"It is midnight nearly," said Madame Perrier, as we came to a standstill and waited for her husband, the avocat.

He passed through the garden gate and disappeared round the corner of the house, walking softly, as if careful not to disturb the household. At last he reappeared round the corner, carrying a candle, which flickered in the wind. Not a word was spoken by him or his wife as the latter conducted us towards him. We were to enter by the back door, that was evident. She led us into a dimly lighted room, where I could just make out what appeared to be a carpenter's bench, with a heap of wood shavings lying under it.

"It is a lecture cabinet work of my husband," said Madame Perrier, "our chamber above, and the chamber for you and little mees is there also. But the school is not there. Come on, mees."

We went down the broad gravel walk, with the pretty garden at the side of us, where a fountain was tinkling and spilling busily in the quiet night. But we passed the front of the house behind it without stopping at the door. Madame led us through a cart shed into a low, long, vaulted passage, with doors opening on each side; a black, villainous-looking place, with the feeble, flickering light of the candle throwing on to the damp walls a sinister gleam. Minima pressed very close to me, and I felt a strange quiver of apprehension; but the thought that there was no escape from it, and no help at hand, served me to follow quietly to the end.

The end brought us out into a mean, poor street, narrow even where the best streets were narrow. A small house stood before us, and Madame unlocked the door. We were conducted into a small kitchen. There was an oil lamp here. Madame's face was illuminated by it. There was not a trace of refinement or culture about her, not even the proverbial taste of a Frenchwoman in dress. The kitchen was a picture of squalid dirt and neglect. The few cooking utensils were scattered about in disorder. The stove before which we sat was rusty. Could I be dreaming of this filthy dwelling and this slovenly woman? No; it was all too real for me to doubt their existence for an instant.

She was pouring out some cold tea into two little cups, when Monsieur Perrier made his appearance, his face begrimed and his shaggy hair uncombed. He stood in the doorway, rubbing his hands, and gazing at us unflinchingly with the hard stare of a Norman peasant, whilst he spoke in rapid, uncouth tones to his wife.

I turned away my head, and shut my eyes to this unwelcome sight.

"Eat, mees," said the woman, bringing us our food. "There is tea. We give our pupils and instructresses tea for supper at six o'clock; after that there is no more to eat."

We had the same vaulted passage and cart shed to traverse on our way back to the other house. There we were ushered into a room containing only two beds and our two boxes. I helped Minima to

EDWARD'S CROWNING

ROBES TO BE WORN AT THE COMING CORONATION.

Rules Concerning Display at England's Great Ceremonial Do Not Please—Ladies Resent Queen's Request That No Imported Costumes Be Worn.

London aristocrats are feeling gloomy over the duke of Norfolk's supplement to the London Gazette, in which an earl marshal of England has given detailed regulations concerning robes and coronets to be worn by peers and peeresses at the approaching coronation. The disappointment is chiefly among the fair sex. They are not to be allowed all the furbelows and tinsel which, to feminine minds, form the "sine qua non" of such important ceremonies.

To begin with, Queen Alexandra's request that all coronation gowns should be made of English goods and by English couturiers has had anything but an enthusiastic reception. Heretofore the white satin dresses and ruby velvet robes have come from France and Dame Fashion stubbornly refuses to be satisfied with the home supply. It has just leaked out that the wives of three prominent diplomats have secretly passed in their orders to a Rue de la Paix firm, and it is more than probable that many other gowns signed by French houses will find their way into the royal cortege.

Another cause for pouting lips is the regulation that peeresses must wear their robes over the usual full court dress, instead of over the white satin toilets elaborately trimmed with gold laces and embroideries which were "de rigueur" in former days. One thing alone remains unchanged, and that is the robe. As in George IV's time it will be of ruby velvet, the cape furled with miniver blue and bordered with rows of ermine, the number of the latter varying according to rank. The duchesses may show four rows, the marchionesses three and a half, countesses three, viscountesses two and a half, while the baronesses will have to be content with two.

An innovation, this time in gentlemen's attire, which will detract not a little from the gorgeousness and pomp of the spectacle is the fact that peers are ordered to wear their robes over full court dress, uniforms or regimentals. At all previous coronations they were worn over white satin doublets and trunks and white silk hose. But what has caused the greatest discontent is the restriction regarding coronets. The clause stating that "no jewels or precious stones are to be set or used in the coronets, or counterfeited pearls instead of the silver balls" came like a thunderclap to many, especially to the dames who had already had their blazing diamond circlets prepared.

It is now definitely settled that only the king and queen and the duke and duchess of Cornwall will wear jeweled coronets. All other coronets are to be of silver gilt, caps of ruby velvet, with ermine lining and having a gold tassel on top. The baron's coronet will have six silver balls on the rim, the viscount's sixteen, the earl's eight, with gold strawberry leaves between the points; the marquises' four silver balls and four gold leaves alternately and the duke's eight gold strawberry leaves.

If peeresses cannot wear jewels on their heads they evidently plan to do so on their bodies, and all London jewelers are now busy making over and resetting heirlooms. Pearls, sapphires and emeralds are to be the favorite stones. Ropes of pearls are to be worn from the shoulders as though fastening the velvet ruby robes, somewhat the same way in which Queen Alexandra wore them at the opening of parliament.

Contrary to expectation no new crown will be made for the queen, King Edward's crown is to be slightly enlarged, but it will undergo no other modification. His majesty on this eventful day will appear before his subjects in the same elaborate robes worn by his granduncle, George IV. This costume consists of three parts. The most important is the "dalmatica" or imperial robe. It is a three-cornered mantle forming an inverted "Y" and fitting very closely about the shoulders. All over it are small embroidered crosses.

Beneath it is worn the "supertunica," a sort of short pelorine having sleeves of gold cloth embroidered with gold flowers. Above both dalmatica and supertunica is worn the "armilla," which is also of gold cloth, but has a deep ermine border. It is placed on the king's shoulders by the archbishop of Westminster, who exhorts his majesty to sit in this mantle "a pledge of divine grace enveloping him completely."

—Chicago Daily News.

DAKOTA'S WILD WIND CAVE.

Cavern 3,000 Feet Below Earth's Surface Acquired by Government.

Dakota's famous wind cave has lately been acquired by the government, and is to be made a show place. It well deserves its name, for the log cabin built over its mouth has had to be fastened to the ground by heavy timbers, and the logs mortised and planed to prevent the building from being raised by its foundations and hurled skyward by the immense force of the wind from within.

The first explorer of the cave discovered that when the mouth was closed by heavy timbers the motion of the wind ceased, and a person inside did not feel it except at a few particular points. It was for this reason that the cabin was built over the entrance, with an inner door fitting closely against the portals of the cave itself in such a way that the air was completely blocked.

A sightseer came to the door of the little hut and heard a roaring sound emanating from the earth, followed by such a slamming of door that the building shook. It was nothing but the opening of the inner door to allow of the exit of a guide, but it had a terrible sound.

Within the cabin the visitors saw nothing but a cupboard, from which the two guides provided them with candles

NEW TRIBE OF ESKIMOS FOUND.



Sent out to examine the native races of the North Pacific and Arctic coasts, the Jessup North Pacific expedition has just made a valuable anthropological report in the shape of a series of striking photographs of Eskimo tribes rarely, possibly never before, visited by whites.

A full set of illustrations and measurements were made of the inhabitants of two small villages. They show many peculiar characteristics possessed by these people which are totally different from those of neighboring tribes.

Three types which have almost been isolated from outside communication are here shown. The inhabitable area of these people is far inland in Arctic Alaska, east of the mouth of the Mackenzie river. They belong to two tribes, called the Kookpagan and Nunatagan. Their physical characteristics are so different that it almost warrants the supposition that they are the remnants of some lost tribe that originally emigrated from Asia.

in tin candle-sticks attached to strips of wood. The party then formed in line, as the inner door could be opened long enough to admit one person at a time. If it were kept open the wind would tear the building to pieces.

A guide went first. Seizing the bar fastening the door, he turned it slowly to near the end of the clamp that held it; then, giving it a quick wrench, darted through the door as the force within sent it open. As soon as he was inside he seized an iron ring, and, adding his strength to that of the guide, who had remained without, slammed the door.

With one man on the inside and one out, it was much easier for the guides to handle the door, and each member of the party ran through in turn as the door opened.

The cave itself is a wonderful place. The guides have explored 2,000 rooms, covering a lineal distance of ninety miles, but they say that the extent of the cave is not yet known.

Forty miles north of the entrance is another and almost equally beautiful cavern called Crystal cave. The guides believe that some day it will be found that one is a continuation of the other.

Some parts of the Wind cave are 3,000 feet below the surface of the earth. All kinds of weird and beautiful effects are gained by burning lights within one or another of the rooms. Stalactites cover walls and ceilings in many of the caverns, and the cave is full enough of terrors and delights to satisfy the most exacting cave hunter.

PATRONIZING.

When the Gods Please Him the Chinese Emperor Grants Them Promotion.

Like many other papers of European courts, the Pekin Gazette announces all acts of State and ceremonial proceedings of the national government; but in one particular it is unique among court circulars, for its habit is publicly to commend and compliment the State gods when the emperor is satisfied that they have done their full duty toward Chinamen. When some particular god distinguishes himself by an extraordinary service, his rank among the gods is raised by Imperial command.

Not long ago the department of the God of War was increased in importance by reason of the great armaments which the government undertook to support, so after he had shown his benevolence by allowing the Imperial troops to defeat a body of rebels, he was metaphorically patted on the back and raised to the same rank as Confucius, who had hitherto held the first place in the State Pantheon.

A few years ago the following announcement appeared in the Gazette: "The governor-general of the Yellow River requests that a tablet be put up to the River God. During the transmission of relief rice to Honan, when ever difficulties were encountered through shallow, wind and rain, the River God interposed in the most unmistakable manner, so that the transport of grain went on without hindrance.

"Order! Let the proper office prepare a tablet for the temple of the River God."

"A memorial tablet," says another Gazette, "is granted to two temples in honor of the God of the Locusts. On the last appearance of locusts, last summer, prayers were offered to this deity with marked success."

HOOR GLASSES IN DEMAND.

Many Purposes for Which They Are Superior to Watches.

"Most people think that hour glasses went out of style years ago," said a clerk in a Twenty-third street store, "along with perukes and knee breeches, but as a matter of fact we have more calls for them today than the last ten years. That this renewed popularity of the hour glass augurs its universal acceptance as a timepiece by the coming generation I am not prepared to say, but if such a renaissance were to become assured it would be no more surprising than some of the other recent fads based on a revival of lost customs. Anyway, a brief survey of the hour glass will do nobody harm. There are thousands in this generation who have not the slightest idea what an hour glass looks like, and it won't hurt them to broaden their education a little along certain lines.

"Of the three-minute glass sold at present the three-minute glass is in the lead. This glass is used almost exclusively to measure time in holling eggs, and its usefulness naturally places its safety a little in advance of the more sentimental varieties. Next come the five, ten and fifteen-minute and full-hour glasses, which are bought chiefly by musicians for piano practice, and by lodges and secret societies.

"The sand used in an hour glass is the very finest that the world affords. The western coast of Italy furnishes most of it, as it has done for ages past. The cost of hour glasses is regulated by the ornamentation of the frames. A glass set in a plain rosewood case can be bought for \$1, while a mahogany frame comes to \$1.50 or \$2. Of higher price comes the ivory and decorative. Swed lodges sometimes go to

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