

CURIOUS CASES FROM A DOCTOR'S DIARY

Narratives of Certain Peculiar Episodes in the Practice of a Famous Physician-Surgeon

By L. T. MEADE and DOCTOR CLIFFORD HALIFAX

MY FIRST PATIENT

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Y A STRANGE coincidence I was busily engaged in studying a chapter on neurole poisons in Taylor's "Practice of Medical Jurisprudence" when a knock came to my door and my land-

lady's daughter entered and handed me a note. "The messenger is waiting, sir," she said. "He has just come from the hospital, and he wants to know if there is any answer."

I had just completed my year as house physician at one of the largest hospitals in New York, and was now occupying lodgings not two minutes from the scene of my former labors. I opened the note hastily. It contained but a few words:

"My Dear Halifax: Come over at once, if you can. You will find me in it ward. I have just heard of something which I think will suit you exactly. Yours, JOHN RAY."

"Tell the messenger I will attend to this immediately," I said to the girl. She withdrew, and putting the note into my pocket I donned my overcoat, and ran across to the hospital. Ray was the resident surgeon; we had always been special friends, and he greeted me with a hearty handshake.

"You have not yet made up your mind as to your future?" he queried. "Not quite," I replied. "I may buy a practice, or try to work my way up as a specialist—I have a leaning toward the latter course; but there is no great hurry, anyway."

He was able to respond so quickly. Mrs. Ogilvie is very ill indeed; it is a strange seizure. She is a young woman, and up to the present has always been healthy. She is suffering from embolism. It is an unusual disease to attack the brain of a youthful person. Well, I must return to her; I will send the servant to attend to you and get you some refreshment.

"Good heavens!" I said to myself. "I must have had a sleep. Has not that man returned yet from his ride?" As though in answer to my query a hasty footstep echoed in the corridor, the door opened, and Dr. Roper, pale and agitated, entered.

"I beg your pardon for this seeming neglect," Dr. Halifax, he said. "It is partly my mistake, as I told the servants that you preferred to wait in the consulting room until their master returned, and the fools evidently took what I said literally. Of course I expected that Ogilvie would have made his appearance long ago, but he has not done so, and I am at a loss to account for his absence. In the meantime, I wish you would come with me to my patient. Mrs. Ogilvie's condition is so unsatisfactory that I should like you to see her."

"I shall be glad to assist you in any way," I responded, and followed the old physician to the sick chamber. On beginning the usual examination I found the skin of the patient warm and bathed in perspiration; the breathing was low and had a stertorous sound. The pulse was very low. I raised the lids of the eyes and peered into them. The pupils, as I expected, were considerably contracted. I took up a candle and passed it backwards and forwards before the pale face.

"I heartily wish her husband were at home," said Dr. Roper, anxiously, as I turned from the bedside. "I have done all that is possible to arouse her, in vain. Each hour, each moment, the heavy stupor in which she is lying increases; in short, I have every reason to apprehend the worst consequences."

an she will certainly die, and if she dies in my presence I shall deem it my duty to see that some investigations take place. It will then rest with the post-mortem examination to prove the truth of my diagnosis or not.

"Very well, since you insist," murmured the old physician, gloomily. "I will fetch what you require, Dr. Halifax, and join you in the sickroom in a moment."

He ran downstairs, and I quickly returned to the patient. I felt convinced that something horrible had been done in this room, and I wondered greatly whether the strong restoratives which I meant to employ would be in time to be of the least use.

Dr. Roper entered the room and we began our task. The first thing was to remove what portion of the poison still remained unassimilated. The electric battery was then brought into force and artificial respiration resorted to. For a long time we worked without any apparent result.

One glance at the final evidence had caused Dr. Roper to turn so white that I thought he would have to be helped out of the room, but he speedily recovered himself and assisted me with a will and determination which showed that his opinion now fully coincided with my own.

"A search should be made for him at once," I said. "You, of course, know two or three men who will help you in an emergency of this kind. By the way, is there not snow on the ground?"

"Yes," replied the man; "there is a light sprinkling. The snow has been falling for an hour or so and is now resting."

"The snow will help you," I said. When I re-entered the sickroom and looked at my patient my heart gave a thankful bound. Whatever had happened, whatever dark cloud was hanging over the house, her young life was saved. The natural look of returning health was reviving on her face.

"Is my husband in the house?" she asked. "No," I replied, using that latitude with regard to truth which I considered in her case absolutely necessary. "He has been called out suddenly."

"I wonder he did not come to see me first," she answered, gently. "He had not a moment—the case was urgent. It will be nice for him to find you so much better."

of the maid servants came up and spoke to me. "There's a woman downstairs," she said, "asking for Dr. Ogilvie. She says she is one of his patients and won't believe me when I tell her that he's not in and not likely to be. I showed her into the consulting room, and I thought perhaps you'd come down and see her."

"All right," I said, "I will be down immediately." Having made a hasty toilet I sought the consulting room and saw the persistent visitor. She was standing in the middle of the apartment; a tall, elderly woman with a florid face. She had a defiant sort of appearance, and when she saw me she gave her head a toss. She did not look like an invalid, and my heart gave a fresh beat of alarm as though I knew, even before she spoke, that a new leaf in the Book of Tragedy was about to be turned.

"Sit down," I said. "I am sorry that Dr. Ogilvie is out."

"Oh," she replied, "as if I'm likely to believe that little game! He don't want to see me; but you tell him that Flora mother's is here and will stay here till he comes to her."

"I don't understand you," I said. "Dr. Ogilvie has been absent all night; we are terribly anxious about him. We fear that his horse has thrown him, as it came back riderless this morning. If you will go away now and come later I may have some tidings for you."

There was a vague hope in my mind that the woman might be a lunatic; the best thing was to get her quietly out of the house and warn the bearers retired, and he turned to me. "Come in here with me, Halifax," he said.

He pointed to a little conservatory which opened out of the dining room, and I followed him at once. "We found him," he began, slowly, "several miles from home. The mare's hoof-prints were visible in the snow, and we had little difficulty in tracing them to the spot on the borders of a wood where the deed was committed."

"He killed himself, then?" I whispered. "Yes. I found him myself, Halifax; he was quite cold. The bottle that had contained the poison he swallowed was tightly clutched in his right hand. Poor Ogilvie!"

"Can you account for it?" I asked. He took a letter out of his pocket and thrust it into my hand. "Read that," he said in a voice that shook with emotion, "and you will understand all. I found it in his breast pocket, addressed to me."

Dr. Roper turned to leave the conservatory and I opened the letter. It ran as follows: "My Dear Roper: When you receive this letter I shall have died by my own hand. Life has become intolerable to me; I will tell you why. Two days ago the storm broke which has wrecked the lives of my poor wife Letty and me. I often told you that I had spent the early years of my medical career in Australia. But I never mentioned either to you or Letty that I was married when there. I married a handsome girl who turned out to be a virago, one of the most heartless, wickedest women who ever polluted God's earth."



THE ONLOOKER WILBUR D. NESBIT. HINKELMEDUNK, OHIO.

My Uncle John he visits us, An' ever time I make a fuss An' ma an' pa they scold me, why, He just tells them an' sends 'em away, An' says: "You ought to come with me To just the place you ought to be— In Hinkelmedunk, Ohio."

He says the stores never ever' day Give all their candy all away, An' children there talk lots—they do— An' folks waits till they get through! My Uncle John says: "Anyway, I know that you would like to stay In Hinkelmedunk, Ohio."

He says boys never hafta crawl Upstairs to bed at 8 at all, Nor hafta sit real nice an' still When comp'nys come—yes, an' they will Get whipped if they're on time for meals! "How fine," he says, "a fellow feels In Hinkelmedunk, Ohio."

But I can't find it on the map, An' so I climb up on his lap, An' just his eye on where it is. Nen he just smiles that smile of his An' say: "You take the road that goes From 'What's-it's-name to Goodness' knows, For Hinkelmedunk, Ohio."

Righteous Wrath. The congressman, having been quietly invited to come to the room of the manufacturer of great wealth, presents himself at the appointed hour.

Woman. A woman's an angel, the men folks declare Until they consider her bargain-day hair. Her faults and her follies, her fickleness, too, For she's the delusion the men folks pursue.



"For God's sake, Halifax, come at once!" he gasped

Roper, glancing at me. "Thank heaven! Whatever detained him can now be explained. Those were his horse's hoofs which you heard just now clattering up to the door."

"And Mrs. Ogilvie is better," I said. "I have every hope that she will do well now. I dare not leave her for a little while, but you might go down and acquaint Dr. Ogilvie with what has occurred during his absence."

"With what we found—?" began Dr. Roper. "No, no, he is an old friend of mine; that must be another man's task."

"Stay with her," I whispered to the old doctor. "You have but to administer restoratives at short intervals; I will see Dr. Ogilvie myself and return quickly."

I left the room expecting to see my host mounting the stairs and hurrying to his wife's sickroom. Instead of that there was commotion and alarm. Alarm on the faces of some maid servants, who, with hot haste, were bustling around. Voices raised to a shrill pitch of terror and distress sounded from the hall.

Spider an Ague Cure. In some parts of England the spider was formerly believed to be an efficient cure for ague. Writing to an old number of "Notes and Queries," a Somersetshire vicar remarks: "One of my parishioners suffering from ague was advised to catch a large spider and shut him up in a box. As he pines away the disease is supposed to wear itself out."

HISTORY OF THE PANTOMIME. Was First Introduced to the English Stage in 1702—Has Always Been Popular. The first pantomime introduced to the English stage was "Tavern Bilkers," and was by John Weaver. This was in the year 1702. It was produced at Drury Lane. The great instructor of pantomime in England was, however, John Rich, who devised this

form of entertainment in 1717. His first emphatic success was in 1724, when he produced "The Necromancer; or, History of Dr. Faustus." So successful was Rich with his pantomime that Garrick, Quinn and others became exasperated. Rich lived to see pantomime firmly established at Drury Lane and Covent Garden. He died in 1761.

mimes the most popular theme this year is, we are informed, "Cinderella," with "Babes in the Wood" second and "Dick Whittington" third. In the London and suburban pantomimes are taken alone "Cinderella" will again be first, while "Babes in the Wood" and "Aladdin" tie for second place. In London and the provinces "Cinderella" has been chosen 14 times, "Babes in the Wood" 12 times and "Dick Whittington" ten times.

subjects have been "Cinderella," "Aladdin," "Dick Whittington," "Robinson Crusoe," and "Babes in the Wood," in the order given.

Some Habits of the Fly. Concerning his experience while studying the life and habits of the house fly Henry Hill, the well known lecturer, states: "I wish I could explain why a fly never walks down but always up a clean window pane and why on the other hand it will walk down the slanting glass front of a picture. It is also a mystery to me why a fly always rests head downward on a wall. These are habits of the house fly which offer a field for interesting study."