

The Doctor's Dilemma

By Hesba Stretton

CHAPTER X.—(Continued.)

Without a light I went up to my own room, where the moon that had shone upon me in my last night's ride, was gleaming brightly through the window. I intended to reflect and deliberate, but I was woin out. I hung myself down on the bed, but could not have remained awake for a single moment. I fell into a deep sleep, which lasted till morning.

When I awoke my poor mother was sitting beside me, looking very ill and sorrowful. She had slipped a pillow under her head, and thrown a shawl across me. I got up with a gasp, and she could not clearly define.

"Captain Carey's man brought a letter 'Julia just now,' she said, taking it from her pocket; 'he said there was no news.'"

Her words were still red from weeping, at her voice faltered as if she caught by, but into sobbing any moment. As she spoke my mother was gone I opened Julia's letter. It began:

"My Dear Martin—I know all now. Johanna has told me. When you spoke to me so hurriedly and unexpectedly, this afternoon, I could not bear to hear another word. But now I am calm, and I can think it all over quite quietly."

"It is an infatuation, Martin. Johanna says so as well as I, and she is never wrong. It is a sheer impossibility that you, in your sober senses, should love a strange person whose very name you do not know. A Dolree could not make an adventuress his wife. Then you have seen so little of her. Three times, since the week you were there in March! What is that compared to the years we have spent together? It is impossible that in your heart of hearts you should love her more than me."

"I cannot give up the thought of our home, just finished and so pretty. It was so pleasant this afternoon, before you came in with your dreadful thunderbolt. I was thinking what a good wife I would be to you; and how, in my own house, I should never be tempted into those tiresome tempers you have seen in me sometimes. You could not know how much I love you, how my life is bound up in you, or how I have been proof against that person in Sark."

"I think it right to tell you all this now, though it is not in my nature to make professions and demonstrations of my love. Think of me, of yourself, of your poor mother. You were never selfish, and you can do noble things. I do not say it would be noble to marry me; but it would be a noble thing to conquer my ignoble love. How could Martin Dolree fall in love with an unknown adventuress?"

"I shall remain in the house all day to-morrow, and if you can come to see me, feeling that this has been a dream of folly from which you have awakened, I will not ask you to own it. That you come at all will be a sign to me that you wish it forgotten and blotted out between us, as if it had never been."

"With true, deep love for you, Martin, believe me still."

"Your affectionate
"JULIA."

I pondered over Julia's letter as I dressed. There was not a word of repentance in it. It was full of affectionate thought for us all. But what reason! I had not known Olivia so long as I had known her, therefore I could not love her as truly!

There was no longer any hesitation in my mind as to what I must do. Julia knew all now. I had told her distinctly of my love for Olivia, and she would not believe it. She appeared wishful to hold me to my engagement in spite of it: at any rate, so I interpreted her letter. I did not suppose that I should not live it down, this infatuation, as they chose to call it. I might hunger and thirst, and be on the point of perishing; then my nature would turn to other nutriment, and assimilate it to its contracted and stultified capacities.

I went mechanically through the routine of my morning's work, and it was late in the afternoon before I could get away to ride to the Vale. My mother knew where I was going, and gazed wistfully into my face, but without otherwise asking me any questions. At the last moment, as I touched Madam's bridle, I looked down at her standing on the doorstep. "Cheer up, mother!" I said, at most gaily, "it will all come right."

I found Julia standing by the fireplace, and leaning against it, as if she could not stand alone. When I went up to her and took her hand, she flung her arms around my neck, and clung to me, in a passion of tears. It was some minutes before she could recover her self-command. I had never seen her abandon herself to such a proxymus before.

"But you are going to persist in your infatuation," said Julia; "you can never deceive me. I know you too well. Oh, I see that you still think the same of her!"

"You know nothing about her," I replied. "And I shall take care I never do," she interrupted spitefully.

"So it is of no use to go on quarreling about her," I continued. "I made up my mind before I came here that I must see as little as possible of her for the future. You must understand, Julia, she has never given me a particle of reason to suppose she loves me."

"But you are still in love with her?" Martin, she continued, with flashing eyes, and a rising tone in her voice, which, like the first shrill moan of the wind, presaged a storm. "I will never marry you until you can say, on your word of honor, that you love that person as long, and are ready to promise to hold no further communication with her. Oh! I know what my poor aunt has had to endure, and I will not put up with it."

"Very well, Julia," I answered, controlling myself as well as I could, "I have only one more word to say on this subject. I love Olivia, and as far as I know myself, I shall love her as long as I live. I did not come here to give you any reason for supposing my mind is changed as to her. If you consent to be my wife, I will do my best to be most true, most faithful to you. But my motive for coming now is to tell you some particulars about your property, which my father made known to me only last night."

It was a miserable task for me; but I told her simply the painful discovery I had made. She sat listening with a dark and sullen face, but betraying not a spark of resentment, so far as her loss of fortune was concerned.

"Yes," she said bitterly, when I had finished, "robbed by the father and jilted by the son."

"I would give my life to cancel the wrong," I said. "It is so easy to talk," she replied, with a deadly coldness of tone and manner. "I am ready to do whatever you choose," I urged. "It is true my father has robbed you; but it is not true that I have jilted you. I did not know my own heart till a word from Captain Carey revealed it to me; and I told you frankly, nearly leaving Johanna in a faint upon it, and partly because I believed it right to do so. If you demand it, I will even promise not to see Olivia again, or to hold direct communication with her. Surely that is all you ought to require from me."

"No," she replied vehemently; "do you suppose I could become your wife while you maintain that you love another woman better than me? You must have a very low opinion of me."

"Would you have me tell you a falsehood?" I rejoined, with vehemence equal to hers. "You had better leave me," she said, "before we hate one another. I tell you I have been robbed by the father and jilted by the son. Good-bye, Martin."

"Good-bye, Julia," I replied; but I still lingered, hoping she would speak to me again. I was anxious to hear what she would do against my father. She looked at me fully and angrily, and as I did not move, she swept out of the room, with a dignity which I had never seen in her before. I retreated towards the house door, but could not make good my escape without encountering Johanna.

"Well, Martin?" she said. "It is all wrong," I answered. "Julia persists in it that I am jilting her."

"All the world will think you have behaved very badly," she said. "I rode home again, Sark lying in full view before me; and, in spite of the darkness of my prospects, I felt intensely glad to be free to win my Olivia."

Four days passed without any sign from Julia. My father had gone off on a visit and my mother and I had the house to ourselves; and, in spite of her frettings, we enjoyed considerable pleasure during the temporary lull. There were, however, sundry warnings out of doors which foretold tempest. I met cold glances and sharp inquiries from old friends, among whom some rumors of our separation were floating. There was sufficient to justify suspicion—my father's absence, Julia's prolonged sojourn with the Careys, and the post-mortem of my voyage to England. I began to fancy that even the women servants flouted at me.

CHAPTER XI.
One morning we received word that my father was lying ill at a hotel in Jersey. Captain Carey at once went with me in response to the message. Julia, too, had been sent for, but she reached the hotel in a separate car.

The landlady received us with a portentous face. Dr. Collas had spoken very seriously indeed of his patient, and as for herself, she had not the smallest hope. I heard Julia sob, and saw her lift her handkerchief to her eyes behind her veil.

was I at the tone he had taken. But Julia began to sob again, and pressed just me, sitting down on the chair by his side and laying her hand upon one of his pillows.

"Julia, my love," he continued feebly, "you know how I have wronged you; but you are a true Christian. You will forgive your uncle when he is dead and gone. I should like to be buried in Guernsey with the other Dolrees."

Neither did Julia answer, save by sobs. I stepped towards the window to draw up the blinds, but he stopped me, speaking in a much stronger voice than before.

"Leave them alone," he said. "I have no wish to see the light of day. A dishonored man does not care to show his face. I have seen no one since I left Guernsey, except Collas."

"I think you are alarming yourself needlessly," said I. "You know you are fitly about your own health. Let me prescribe for you. Surely I know as much as Collas."

"No, no, let me die," he said plaintively; "then you can all be happy. I have robbed my only brother's only child, who was dear to me as my own daughter. I cannot hold up my head after that. I should die gladly if you two were but reconciled to one another."

By this time Julia's hand had reached his, and was resting in it fondly. I never knew a man gifted with such power over women and their susceptibilities as he had. My mother herself would appear to forget all her unhappiness, if he only smiled upon her.

"My poor, dear Julia!" he murmured; "my poor child!"

"Uncle," she said, checking her sobs by a great effort, "if you imagine I should tell any one—Johanna Carey even—what you have done, you wrong me. The name of Dolree is as dear to me as to Martin, and he was willing to marry a woman he detested in order to shield it. No, you are quite safe from disgrace as far as I am concerned."

"Heaven bless you, my own Julia!" he ejaculated fervently. "I know your noble nature. But will you not be equally generous to Martin? Cannot you forgive him as you do me?"

"Uncle," she cried, "I could never, never marry a man who says he loves some one else more than me."

"I should think not, my girl!" he said, in a soothing tone; "but Martin will very soon repent. He is a fool just now, but he will be wise again presently. He has known you too long not to know your worth."

"Julia," I said, "I do know how good you are. You have always been generous, and you are so now. I owe you as much gratitude as my father does, and anything I can do to prove it I am ready to do this day."

"Will you marry her before we leave Jersey?" asked my father.

"Yes," I answered. The word slipped from me almost unawares, yet I did not wish to retract it. She was behaving so nobly and generously towards us both that I was willing to do anything to make her happy.

"Then, my love," he said, "you hear what Martin promises. All's well that ends well. Only make up your mind to put your proper pride away, and we shall all be as happy as we were before."

"Never!" she cried indignantly. "I would not marry Martin here, hurriedly and furtively; no, not if you were dying, uncle!"

HIS DEAR LITTLE GIRL

THAT was what Terence Dawney had always called her ever since they had met and loved each other. He was in Ireland now with his regiment, but he wrote very regularly to his dear little girl, and, though there was no question of any formal engagement between them, he had assured her that their understanding was as sacred a bond to him as any public betrothal, and of course she believed him, for she was young and she loved him.

She was thinking of him as she walked down the path to meet the postman. This was her letter day, and Irish letters always come by the midday mail to the Devonshire village where she lived within sight and sound of the morning sea.

It was late in June, and the summer wind tossed her pretty hair against the cheeks, which were soft and flushed like a peach. The postman was coming up the hill. A smile crossed his weather-beaten face as he caught sight of the waiting figure.

"Two letters, missy, this morning," he said, as he sorted them from his bundle. "That's all, miss."

Two letters! She went out on the cliff side with them. One was, of course, from Terence. How well she knew his dear, untidy writing! She smiled as she put it in her pocket. That must be kept home as a bonne bouche.

The other one was in quite strange handwriting, as she tore it open, looking at its contents with bewilderment. A blank sheet of paper inclosing a small newspaper cutting met her eyes. What could it mean? The color faded from her cheeks.

"We understand that an interesting engagement will be announced before the end of summer, and we may safely offer our good wishes to the beauty of the year, Miss Sargeant, at the same time congratulating the gallant fiancee on his luck. Mr. Dawney is well known in Dublin, where his regiment is at present quartered."

The little bit of paper fell to the ground. Of course it was not true. It could not be true. Some one was trying to make mischief between them. That was all. Why, he was hers—he had been hers from the very first day that they had met. The newspaper did not know what it was talking about. She eyed the envelope with disgust. Who had done this thing? And who was Miss Sargeant? Terence never mentioned her.

She pulled his letter out of her pocket and opened it, reading it with a sudden chill which quenched the happiness in her pretty eyes.

My Dear Little Girl—I have hardly a moment for a letter, so I am afraid this will be very short, but there is so much to be done here just now, what with polo and goodness knows what else besides, that I have enough to do to get everything done in the day. I'm going down to stay near Cork next week, with some people called Sargeant—Jolly house and no end of gaieties, of course. I wish I could have managed to run over to you, dear, but it is quite impossible. You see, there are maneuvers coming on, and I must be within easy reach of headquarters. I don't know that there is anything of interest to tell you. I have been thinking lately that it's a bit rough on you to be kept hanging on for such an interminable time—not that I've altered, you know that—but, you see, things are not looking very bright for us, are they? It's awfully late. I must stop. Good-night, dear little girl. Ever yours,

TERENCE.

The sun was hidden by a thick cloud, the sea moaned on the rocks below, and a light wind ruffled the waves. It looked like a change in the weather. But the girl did not notice the signs of change. Her eyes were fixed unseeing on the letter in her hand. She stooped and picked up the letter paper, which she had allowed to flutter to the ground unheeded. No need to read it again. It was imprinted on her memory for all time. She wondered what there was for her to do. Must it be renunciation? That was a question to be answered at once, and before she turned her steps homeward she had made her resolve.

"Our dance, Miss Sargeant." The girl looked up. "Is it? No; I don't want to dance. Do you mind if we sit it out?"

"Do I mind?" repeated Dawney, with a look in his blue eyes which only amused the beautiful Miss Sargeant. She had seen that look so often that it made little or no impression on her. Had she not danced and flirted through some dozen seasons and received more than her share of attention? Of course, Terence was a nice, dear boy, but as to anything else—she laughed at the mere idea. She was striving for a higher destiny than that, in spite of all the society papers and their rumors.

Dawney looked at her as she lay back in a low chair waving a great feather fan to and fro. He believed in her thoroughly. He believed that here was the lady of his dreams.

"Have you any more dances to spare me?" he pleaded. "I know I was late, but that was not my fault."

smile. "Oh, I know all about her! Lord Carruthers—you know him?—told me he knew her people."

"I don't know what you mean," he said hotly. "There is but one woman in the world for me, and she—"

He broke off. A couple were passing their retreat, talking in light, laughing tones.

"Rhoda Sargeant? Oh, she will and by marrying Carruthers, of course. She is only playing her usual little game with that nice boy, Dawney. She might spare such a youngster. That sort of a woman has no mercy."

The voice trailed into silence.

"You heard that," said Dawney in hoarse accents. "But it is not true! It can't be true that you have been playing with me all these weeks!"

The woman looked at him for a moment. Some good angel, a rare enough visitor to her, urged her to tell the truth for once. She did so with a curious feeling of pity. The boy was in such earnest.

"It is quite true," Dawney staggered to his feet. "Then heaven help the man who loves you," he said, and turned and left her.

Terence Dawney sat in his quarters with his head buried in his arms. The cool dawn crept in through the windows on the motionless figure. For hours after his return from the ball he had not moved.

Presently he raised his head and looked about him with haggard eyes. He got up stiffly and drew a long breath.

His infatuation was dead. He had called it love in his youth's ignorance, but the bewildering light of truth had dispelled that idea forever. What a fool he had been! He stood for a moment looking out on the still, gray morning, and with a sudden flood of remorse remembered the letter to which there had been no answer—the letter which in a moment of his blind infatuation he had written to his dear little girl. He loved her—loved her, dear heaven, had he thrown away the substance only to find himself striving to grasp a shadow?

Why had she never written to him? Had she given him up without a word—without even a struggle?

The thought paralyzed him. "Truly he was to be sorely punished for his madness."

Then, with an exclamation, he seized a letter which was stuck up on the mantelshelf, possibly put there by his servant on the previous evening.

It was a letter from his dear little girl, after all! For a minute or two he hardly dared open it. Then he tore it open and read its short contents with eager eyes.

"I should have written to you before now, my dearest—for you are always that—only I have been very ill and am only now up on the sofa and can only write you these few lines to say that I love you, dear. I love you so much that I must do what seems to me the only thing for me to do, and that is to give you your freedom. I don't blame you, dear. I shall never think badly of you. Always believe that I love you better than anything on earth. I sign myself for the last time, Your Dear Little Girl."

"Twice he read the little heartbroken letter. A knock at his door awoke him from his miserable thoughts with a start.

RECENT LEGAL DECISIONS.
A finding that a railroad company is guilty of negligence for failing to keep its platform lighted for fifteen or twenty minutes to enable passengers to pass out safely, is held by the Supreme Court of Arkansas in the case of St. Louis, etc., Railway Company vs. Battle (65 S. W. Rep., 805), not to be unreasonable.

A structure connecting two buildings on opposite sides of a street, built so far above the street as not to interfere with traffic thereon, is held by the Court of Appeals of Maryland, in the case of Townsend vs. Epstein (49 Atl. Rep., 829), to be a nuisance as to adjacent property owners, whose light it obstructs.

The renewal by a new note of a usurious note, but excluding all the usury, is held by the Supreme Judicial Court of Maine in the case of Vermule vs. Vermule (49 Atl. Rep., 608), to render the new note valid and binding on the maker, as the parties themselves have done what a court of equity would require them to do.

Where mining stock is deposited under a binding escrow agreement that it shall pass to a certain person on the payment of a certain price within a certain time, and the price is paid by such time, the Supreme Court of Utah in the case of Clark vs. Campbell (65 Pac. Rep., 496), holds that dividends declared before the price is paid do not belong to the purchaser.

A fair association which maintained a race track on its fair grounds negligently made an opening in the fence surrounding the track, and through this opening a horse ran from the track among the people assembled on the main part of the fair ground, injuring one of the spectators. The court (Appellate court of Indiana) held the fair association liable for the injury on the ground that the cause of the injury was the failure to inclose properly the track. (Wandler vs. Rush County Fair Association, 60 N. E. Rep., 954.)

MEXICAN ARISTOCRATS.
They Are Extraordinarily Tenacious of Class Distinctions.

The cultivated Mexican, priding himself on his "education," looks for its manifestation in the person who claims his friendship and intimacy. He insists on good breeding among his own people, or they may not pass his threshold; all the more he is likely to insist that the foreigner who would visit him be a man of polish, and with the ability to say and do things the right way.

A Mexican of excellent family was saying to me the other day that going to an interior State he had sojourned at a hacienda where the men there assembled, on engineering and other matters, were not of his kind, and "so I did not eat at the same table," for they were not "caballeros," or gentlemen. "I demand brains and good breeding in my associates, or I live alone!"

This gentleman speaks English perfectly, and reads our best authors, and he is equally well grounded in other foreign languages. He has none of that snobbish pride that offends, would not hurt another's feelings, and does not insist on nicety of dress, but does demand of his associates that fine breeding and perfect tact that characterizes people who have inherited the courtly traditions of old Spain.

It struck me that he went too far, that the technically trained men he met in the country were quite good enough to associate with, but to all objections he would reply: "They were not of my kind!"

A Mexican lady of the old nobility of the country, wealthy and of long residence abroad, witty, of linguistic accomplishments, and much social experience in Europe as at home, said:

"I do not invite foreigners to my table, not even diplomats, for they are too critical of the service, and here you know that it is impossible to have such well-trained servants as in France or England. I have been hurt in my feelings, at my own table, at the quiet amusement of guests when something went wrong, some blunder in service. And, as foreigners will make no allowances for our domestic shortcomings, I close my doors to them. In Paris I should entertain foreigners, for there I could be sure of my servants. But we Mexicans do not want to be laughed at, and that, perhaps, by people who are not at home in their own countries, of our class. One does not know who they are or what is their origin. The lower their extraction the greater their presumption here."—Boston Herald.

Words Coined in Boston.
When Boston was three years old, the word "coasting," in the sense of sliding down an inclined plane, was used for the first time by the Court of Assistance. The term "lumber" appeared first in the town records in 1633, being employed to designate the embarrassment caused by the "lumbering" up of the streets at a time when the settlers were doing a great business in forest products. Schooner, sleigh, harness, phaeton, carry-all, barge, currency, tender, sinking-fund, depreciation, appreciation, caucus (1740), labor trust (1741), unconstitutional, gerrymander, warden, unconstitutional, immigrant, and chronic, are all Yankee words that have been imitated and used far and wide.

A Bluff.
"Why are you so pessimistic?" "No reason in particular," answered Willie Washington. "I didn't have anything else to do, so I thought I might as well look as if I were thinking."—Washington Star.

Considering the monotony of a married man's life, his wife should really consider it fortunate to have hot biscuits and blackberry jam.

Odd Names of Kentucky Towns.
Kiddville, Right Angle and Log Lick are Kentucky post-offices.