

The Doctor's Dilemma

By Hasba Sirettou

CHAPTER XXV.

"I will send the child to sea in 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. "I told you my address? You may have it, but if I did not, I should lose both it and the refuge I had sought 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 willing handmaid. The child was thin and shabbily dressed for her long journey, and there was a forlorn loneliness about her position, left thus with 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, 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 impatient 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 after revenge, which had died away in the quiet and tranquility 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. 'Bill dead! My heart beat faster and faster as I pondered over those words. Then I should be free indeed; his death would release me from bondage, from terror, 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! what 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. 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 going into foring Paris," she said, "ought to get a good English meal before 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 Hondeur to Falaise warm, genial 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 pyramids of apples. Truck-loads of them stood at every station. The air was scented by them. Children were pelting one another with them. It was almost like going into a new world, and I breath-

ed 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 pummeling down some steep and narrow streets, lighted by oil 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 port 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.

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streets were narrow. A small house stood before us, and Madame Perrier opened 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 French woman in dress. The kitchen was a picture of squalor and dirt and neglect. The few cooking utensils were scattered about in disorder. The stove before which we sat was rusty. "Oh! I'm dreaming of this filthy dwelling and this slovenly woman? No! It was all too real for me to doubt their existence to 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 indelicately 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 unbecoming sight.

"Eat, mess," 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 curt 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 undress, and tucked her up in bed. She put her arm round my neck, and drew down my head to whisper cautiously into my ear.

"They're cheats," she said earnestly "dreadful cheats. This isn't a splendid place at all. Oh! whatever shall I do? Shall I have to stay here four years?"

"Hush, Minima," I answered. "Per haps it is better than we think now. We are tired. To-morrow we shall see the place better, and it may be splendid after all. Kiss me, and go to sleep."

I was awakened while it was yet quite dark, by the sound of a carpenter's tool in the room below me. Almost immediately a loud knock came at my door, and the harsh voice of Madame called to us.

"Get up, mess, get up, and come on," she said, "to the school. Come on, quick!" The air was raw and foggy when we turned out of doors, and it was so dark

still that we could scarcely discern the outline of the walls and houses. The school, Madame informed me, was registered in the name of her head governess, not in her own; and as the laws of France prohibited any man dwelling under the same roof with a school of girls, except the husband of the proprietor, they were compelled to rent two dwellings.

"How many pupils have you, Madame?" I inquired.

"We have six, mess," she replied. "They are here now."

We had reached the house, and she opened the door of a long, low room. There was an open hearth, with a few logs of green wood upon it. A table ran almost the whole length of the room, with forms on each side. A high chair or two stood about. All was comfortable, dreary and squalid.

But the girls who were sitting on the hard benches by the table were still more squalid and dreary looking. Their faces were pinched, and just now blue with cold, and their hands were swollen and red with chilblains. They had a cowed and frightened expression, and peeped askance at us as we went in behind Madame.

"Three are English," said Madame, "and three are French."

She rapped one of the swollen hands which lay upon the table, and the girl dropped it out of sight upon her lap, with a frightened glance at the woman. Minima's fingers tightened upon mine. The head governess, a Frenchwoman of about thirty, was now introduced to me.

Breakfast was being brought in by one of the pupils. It consisted of a teaspoonful of coffee at the bottom of a big basin, which was placed before each of us, and a heap of flatbread crumpled with bread. I sat down with the rest at the long table, and ate my food, with a sinking and sorrowful heart.

As soon as Madame was gone, Minima flung her arms around me and hid her face in my bosom.

"Oh!" she cried, "don't you leave me; don't forsake me! I have to stay here four years, and it will kill me. I shall die if you go away and leave me."

"We must make the best of it, Minima," I whispered to the child, through the hum of lessons. Her shrewd little face brightened with a smile that smoothed all the wrinkles out of it.

"That's what father said," she cried; "he said, 'Courage, Minima. God will take care of my little daughter.' God has sent you to take care of me. Suppose I'd come all the way alone, and found it such a horrid place!"

(To be continued.)

Servant Girls in Germany.
The growing demand for women in the factories of Germany is bringing the servant-girl problem more and more to the front.

Better a prudent enemy than a friend without discretion.

GOWNS FOR EVENING.

THEY ARE VERY ELABORATE AND EXPENSIVE.

Only Fine Feathers Have Value This Winter—Admirable Materials Are Many, and They Are Most Heavily Trimmed and Ornamented.

New York correspondence.

ONLY fine feathers have value this winter's evening attire. Material that is handsome and rich is seen in abundance, but rarely is it unadorned, and then it is not successful except in suggesting independence amounting almost to eccentricity on the part of the wearer. The rule is for plenty of trimming, no matter how fine the dress goods, and the costliness of the newer trimmings deemed suitable for evening dresses often makes them the big item of the outfit. Many materials are available, stylishly indorsement being given to brocade, flowered and plain silks, to brocade and plain satins, to panne velvet, velvet, crepe de chine, nun's veiling, chiffon, mousseline, spangled net and lace and to almost all kinds of sheer fabrics. White seems to be the most favored color, though all delicate and pastel tints are permissible. Many black and black and white costumes are seen, too. White gowns usually have some bright satin or velvet for trimming.

In the first of the three evening gowns sketched here appears the plainest type of stylish evening gown. It was panne velvet of a richness that most everyone

was willow green corduroy. The skirt's bonemes were finished with stitching, the revers were white satin embroidered with gold, and the front was tucked with satin.

Little that is new is shown in headgear. Brocads, birds, plumes and quills are used with many flowers for trimmings. Birds and breasts are the "made" sort, which accounts for the reasonableness in prices. Milliners are making much of this situation, giving their customers an unusual display by employing such garnitures freely, putting two or three slabe birds on one hat. An example appears in to-day's pictures in a draped black felt trimmed with three black and white birds. Again the single bird is brought into conspicuousness by the striking contrast between its color and that of the hat. Handsome plumes are expensive and are only seen on very showy hats. Fur, flowers, lace and plumes are all used on one hat at times.

Fashion Notes.
Thick corded silk always makes a smart and useful frock.

Coats of waterproof cloth are gaining in popularity every day.

Tucks and lace stitches are in high favor for the better gowns.

Separate waists of brocade are rather a novel feature of the season.

The smart street coat for children is of black velvet, with lace revers.

Pretty white silk waists are trimmed with panne velvet in oriental colors.

Narrow black velvet ribbon is much used for trimming simple evening gowns.

Velvet is the smart material of the hour for middle-aged and elderly wearers.

A smart reception gown is of white cloth, trimmed with white carnal and ermine.

Velveten shirt waists are modish novelties and extremely comfortable for cold weather.

Deep cape collars of guipure lace are a feature on indoor gowns as well as outdoor wraps.

Tucking promises to be used for waist trimmings on every sort of material that can be tucked.

Coarsely colored panne spotted with black forms a pretty bodice, of which

but a fashionable dressmaker would think should stand alone; yet on it were applications of spangled black net, cream lace and green velvet flowers. This applying green on black affords one of the season's color schemes and a very handsome one. White chiffon was the material of the second dress, which is the left-hand one of the lower two in the text picture. Its skirt and waistcoat pleat were embroidered with pink chiffon roses and green silk floss leaves, and the surplice bodice was topped by a cream lace collar. Beside this is a princess gown of white satin brocade with lavender velvet flowers. Its white panne velvet front was trimmed with seed pearls, at its sides on the satin were points of white gold lace, and a collar of this lace capped pleated velvet sleeves.

The stripes and shadow painted flowers of new silks recall the quaint pictures of old-time gowns. Brocade silks in pale colors are beautifully woven with two or more colors in the ground and with white or some tint in the coloring. Cameo colored grounds strewn with bunches of white flowers make a dainty pattern. Fancy stripes are shown in crepe de chine as well as silk. So many colors are combined in some of the new silks, and these shades are so delicate and the designs so artistic, that a distinguishing color or pattern is hardly apparent. Lustrous silks are brocade and painted, while in armures and satins the pattern is woven below the surface and the design appears to be sunken. Pompadour brocade designs are a variety that is recognized as one of the spring's novelties. Voists made of it require no trimming.

New spring chailles are shown in the exclusive shops and are so beautiful in texture and coloring as to be mistaken for a distance for silk. Dresden, cashmere, Persian, flowered and striped effects are shown. White and delicate colored grounds are used, although a pretty shade of red is popular. They are advocated for tea gowns, house dresses and for shirt waists for tailor suits. There is sketched at the left in this group a house dress of red challie figured in green and white. Black and white and black velvet trimmed it.

Afternoon gowns are to be found mostly in cloth, velvet or corduroy, little silk appearing in them. The skirts remain about the same in finish as they have been. A decided novelty consists of three or more pleated flounces of silk on a silk gown, the flounces headed with an old design of silk hands of silk. White delicate shades are worn. In velvet, gowns, reds, tans and black are used; two or three shades of green. In many the same colors are popular.

The simple afternoon gown pictured here

the yoke and undersleeves are of guipure lace.

Black cloth costumes, made absolutely plain, are the smartest street gowns that are worn for mourning.

The newest chinchilla muffs have the strips running crosswise, giving the appearance of a musketeer.

The heavy walking shoe with expanse sole and Cuban heel is considered the correct style for winter wear.

Brown is one of the fashionable colors and is combined effectively with turquoise, white or deep cream.

As many as ten different materials are employed in constructing some of the elaborate and costly evening gowns.

A novel Eton jacket has five circular shaped collars, each edged with a narrow stitched band of the same material.

Long chains are more than ever in vogue, marked preference being shown for the exceedingly odd and effective ones.

Bodices are all long-waisted, flat and slightly pouched in front, short behind and rounded in under the arms toward the back.

Mercerized percaline is considered by the dressmakers to be one of the most satisfactory and durable skirt linings for woolen fabrics.

Black and white seems to predominate among the large line of stocks which are being sold in the department stores at popular prices.

Pale shades of silk are used in making petticoats for evening wear and are often adorned with deep flounces of lace and festoons of chiffon.

Some of the long evening coats have a deep cape which covers one's arms, giving ample opportunity for decoration as well as extra warmth to the wrap.

Serge, mohair, chevrot and all light-weight cloths are more practically trimmed in strappings of their own material, as silk is apt to wear and look shabby long before the suit shows any sign of deterioration.

Skirt linings are entirely a question of choice, and the length of one's purse. Silk is doubtless the first choice, not merely because it is fashionable, but for the reason that no other fabric proves such comfortable wear, nor holds its original shape so perfectly.

A company is being formed to supply London residents with rain or soft water for the bath at 2d per gallon.

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Medicinal Use of Eggs.
The value of egg albumen in food in certain diseased conditions is referred to in the Pacific Medical Journal. When fever is present the appetite is ill, and what one then wants is an aseptic article of diet; the white of an egg, raw, then serves both as food and medicine.

One way to give it is to drain off the albumen from an opening about half an inch in diameter in the small end of an egg, the yolk remaining inside the shell. Add a little salt to this and direct the patient to swallow it. In epidemic fever the mode of feeding materially helps in carrying out an anti-septic plan of treatment. Furthermore, the albumen, to a certain extent, may antidote the toxins of the disease.

Patients may at first rebel at the idea of eating a raw egg, but the quibleness with which it goes down without the yolk proves it to be less disagreeable than they suppose, and they are then ready to take a second dose.

Seasoned Tomatoes.
Peel and slice a quart of ripe tomatoes; break in small pieces an equal measure of stale bread, and make a pint of white sauce. Put all these ingredients in layers in an earthen-baking-dish, sprinkling upon the tomatoes two tablespoonfuls of granulated sugar; over the top of the dish dust a layer of the crumbs, season them with salt and pepper, dot them with bits of butter, and bake the tomatoes in a moderate oven for about a half hour, or until they are nicely browned; then serve them in the dish which they were baked.

Tomato Omelet.
Remove skin from the tomatoes, chop fine, place in the saucepan with one finely chopped onion, one teaspoon butter, half as much salt and half as much pepper as salt, one large spoon cracker crumbs; cover tight and let simmer about one hour. Beat three eggs to a froth and stir into the tomatoes; beat well together and pour on a hot, well-greased griddle; brown on one side; fold and brown on the other; serve on a hot dish.

Beefsteak Pie with Oysters.
Cut several small slices of sirloin or tenderloin steak and fry them in a little butter. Then add a little water to them, season with salt and pepper, cover tightly and simmer till very tender. Take up, pour the liquor into the bottom of a baking dish, laying the steak in alternate layers with oysters. Pour in more stock, if needed, cover with a good crust and bake till this seems done.

Potato Balls.
Rub four floury potatoes through a wire sieve; add four ounces of minced ham, tongue or bacon, a teaspoonful of chopped parsley, a teaspoonful of chopped onion, pepper, salt, half an ounce of warm butter, and the yolk of an egg. Stir over the fire