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DR. BLUNT'S PATIENT.

BY FAITH IRVING.

If ever mortal man was fitly named, such was the case with Dr. Blunt, the name expressing one of his strongest characteristics. Had he been called Dr. Skillful, the same could have been said with truth. And then the expression on his face was a faithful index of another strong point of character—viz: great kindness of heart. So quick-spoken was the Doctor on ordinary occasions, he not only abbreviated sentences, but words themselves frequently suffered a very preceptible clipping.

All the village of L—— was very much exercised one morning by the intelligence that the two best rooms in Mr. Lowell's elegant house, which had been unoccupied for a year or more because the rent was so high, had been taken by a young lady who was a real, live heiress, having no one but herself to support; and she was going to furnish the rooms with no end of costly 'pieces' and lovely ornaments, and furthermore, Lawyer Peckham, who had charge of her estate, said she was a beauty, but in very poor health, he believed. So the good-natured gossips ruminated as to how sad it was that one couldn't have everything in this world. If you have wealth, likely as not you have no health with which to enjoy it; things are pretty evenly dealt out, after all; and so on, after the manner of news-venders.

Dame rumor seemed for once to have heard only the facts in the case, for in a few days the rooms were really furnished and occupied as predicted, and Mrs. Lowell was highly elated over the good looks, as well as affluent circumstances of her new boarder, though in describing her she had said—

'But something ails the poor girl; she is so nervous—why! fearfully nervous, my dear—but fresh-looking as a daisy, and not the least mite pale or wasted, and my! the way she dresses!'

One morning as Lawyer Peckham was coming out of Mrs. Lowell's house, he met Dr. Blunt going in.

'Morning, Peckham,' said the Doctor, in his quick way.

'Good morning, Doctor. Guess my client is about to become your patient, eh?'

'Yes, yes,' jerked out the Doctor, 'shouldn't wonder,' and he disappeared.

A moment later Dr. Blunt entered Miss Lacey's room. A very fair young lady reclined languidly in the sumptuous depths of a 'Sleepy Hollow' chair, but the quick, experienced eye of the medical man knew at a glance something was wrong; altho' as Mrs. Lowell had said, she was rosy and plump, the expression of the eye was troubled, restless, morbid. The Doctor seated himself beside his fair patient, felt her pulse, and then vented the remarkable query—

'Was it me or the young doctor you wanted?'

'Oh, you, by all means,' said Miss Lacey, with a smile, but instantly the troubled look returned. She added, 'I want all the experience possible brought to bear upon my case.'

'Any parents?' queried the Doctor.

'No, sir; my mother died of consumption when I was very young; my father also died when I was a mere child.'

'Humph! Have any local pains? Suffer from headache, nausea?'

'No, sir, nothing of the kind! There seems to be a fear of something all the time, an undefined apprehension; sometimes I think I may die, as mother did, of consumption.'

'Got any religion?'

'Why, certainly, Doctor, I should hope so. I am a church-member and have been for years. I love my religion;' and quick, sympathetic tears affirmed the truth of the prompt assertion.

'Ever seen Jesus Christ sick and visited Him, or naked and clothed Him, or ministered to the thousand-and-one wants of the 'little ones' forever representing the Savior's symbolized sufferings?'

'Alas, no!' sighed poor Miss Lacey: 'I have wanted to for years, but this nervous weakness unfits me for anything useful or practical. I give regularly to several charitable objects, and hope some good is done in that way.'

'Humph! Well, I'm going now. Don't know just what I shall prescribe, but feel confident I can help you. Perhaps I'll run in again before night, with directions—bless me what looking gloves! Will you mend these for me, my dear?'

'Certainly, with pleasure,' laughed Miss Lacey, and for that instant there was no trouble in her clear eyes.

'You see,' added the Doctor, apologetically, 'my housekeeper isn't much on mending, according to my idea, and then there is only my boy, the young Doctor, as people call him—the most graceless piece. As for my wife'—and the voice grew wonderfully tender—'dear wife has been singing in Paradise these dozen years or more.' The door opened and closed softly, and the Doctor was gone.

'What a funny Doctor! what a queer, dear old gentleman!' thought Miss Lacey; 'and those gloves! Well, I have a piece of work here, no mistake; must get out my piece-bag and find some bits of silk or something,' and, forgetting her fears and weakness, she was seen doing her best towards repairing the Doctor's well-worn riding gloves.

Presently there came a knock at the door, and Mrs. Cameron was admitted, the 'very respectable Scotch woman' whom Mrs. Lowell had recommended as a 'first-class laundress, neat, honest, and a church member.'

The woman bore in her arms a goodly-sized basket in which were various articles of clothing beautifully done up. As Miss Lacey rose to receive them, Mrs. Cameron remarked:

'Perhaps some one is sick i' the house; I saw the Doctor gang awa' just as I was coming in.'

'I was not feeling very well,' answered Miss Lacey; 'he came to see me.'

'Oh, did he, miss! and isn't the auld gentleman jis' lovely?' And in the most enthusiastic terms she told of the great goodness and kindness experienced at the Doctor's hands. Told how all her life was bound up in her 'one wee girlie, her bonnie little Janie,' who had never been strong since the first time she had convulsions caused by indigestion, and how 'mony was the night the gude mon had staid until the mornin' and never a penny of pay would he take for it.'

'Do you know the young Doctor, ma'am?'

'No, I am but a stranger here, and know but very few persons.'

'Well, miss, the young Doctor is a winsom lad, and a Christian indeed. He tells me oft I shouldn't fret for fear my lassie will be taken from me, but prays the good God to spare me one ewe lamb, an' it be His will. He has practiced with his father the year or more, and how the old Doctor loves him! He has a funny way of calling him all kinds of uncanny names, but ivery one knows he is the light of the auld man's eyes.'

And soon after Mrs. Cameron gathered up her basket and departed.

Miss Lacey had succeeded in closing up the gaping rents in the Doctor's gloves, the tea-hour had come and gone, but no Doctor had reappeared.

'Oh, he thinks me too comfortable a patient to need much attention,' she thought, repiningly; 'but he might at least have told me what my complaint was. There! the bell rings; perhaps that is he now.'

And the next moment a rap at her door being answered, Dr. Blunt entered, hurried, flushed, and more abrupt in speech and manner than before.

'Say, my dear girl, will you help a poor woman in great extremity?'

'What do you mean, Doctor?'

'Oh, get your hat and shawl, and come now. You've no husband to consult, no children to leave, and a poor widow is in danger of losing her only child this night, and some one must watch with her. I must be in another direction. My dear child'—again that tender tone—'wouldn't you like to hear Savior say to-morrow morning: 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these ye did it unto me.?'

'Oh, I'll go, Doctor; I'll be ready in a moment.'

'Better take off that long-tailed dress, and don a good sensible calico, I'll go down to the parlor,' added the Doctor, 'and wait and take you right along in the buggy with me. Quick, now; I wouldn't wait long for the Queen of Sheba.'

'Well, of all things!' thought Miss Lacey, 'I don't know but that Doctor will be the death of me, or—perhaps his strange method will be the making of me.'

She flew about the room in a surprising manner for her; donned a good warm morning dress, and in another moment the Doctor's horse was tearing along the road as if to outrun his master's impatience. Yet, during the ride, the Doctor explained to his companion that she must be very calm, 'and you can be,' he added with convincing emphasis—for the child was suffering from spasms, violent, distressing and dangerous. He told briefly how the baths must be administered, and the water kept hot all night; and, finally in mentioning the patient's name, surprised Miss Lacey by revealing the fact that it was poor little Janie Cameron, who had been taken ill that very afternoon, during her mammy's absence.

Arrived at the house, the poor, distressed mother became much comforted by the presence of 'the dear, sweet young leddy who was too good to show such kindness to a poor body like mesel!' The Doctor gave some most minute directions to be followed through the night, then left with the cheerful observation:

'I'll send the young doctor around about midnight, if he makes his appearance at the family mansion before that time. Oh, the most graceless biped!' and he was gone.

Miss Lacey reflected with great satisfaction the next day that not one thought could she remember having bestowed upon herself during that long, painful night, with its new experiences of real suffering. All her energies and sympathies were directed towards helping and comforting the agonized mother and relieving the sick child.

About midnight, while she was bending over a warm bath, in which she was holding the convulsed frame of poor Janie, the door opened and the young doctor entered. There was no sort of an introduction between the two—who think of formalities at such a time?—but at once they worked together over the suffering child. Miss Lacey was vaguely aware that a young man, bearded and moustached, with a calm, deep voice and shapely white hands, gave orders which she promptly obeyed, and spoke words of hope and encouragement to the poor, dazed mother. It did not occur to her that there was anything novel in her position, as holding the child in her arms, quieted at last, the young doctor sat close beside her, asking questions and giving advice, now and then turning down a corner of the blanket to watch the changing expression of the little sleeper's face.

But he, more accustomed to such trying scenes, after the first few moments of intense application to the case, began wondering who this lovely angel of mercy could be, working as if her soul were bound up in relieving this poor little child of a lowly mother. How long he might have remained is uncertain, had not a messenger from another quarter summoned him away.

The next morning Janie was better, and continued to improve until the anxious mother was again relieved concerning her.

The next day but one Miss Lacey received a call from three bright, interesting young girls, who, to her utter astonishment, informed her that old Dr. Hunt had recommended her as just the person to become President of a Dorcas society.

'Oh, you must, you must!' they chirped in concert, and before they left she had partially promised to accept the position—to her own dismay.

But when the minister called a few days afterward and said old Dr. Blunt had insisted that a class of unruly little boys, who needed a teacher, was just the work adapted to her case, she succumbed at once, 'surrendering at discretion' all right to decide for herself.

Miss Lacy finally wrote the doctor a spicy little note, telling him she believed any more of his peculiar prescriptions would undo the wonderful cure already accomplished.

But of late the village gossips could not fail to note how continually the young doctor called at Mrs. Lowell's house.

One morning, as the elder doctor was coming out of the house, he met Lawyer Heckham, while the following characteristic colloquy ensued:

'Hi, good morning, doctor. Well I hear the young doctor is about to bring a daughter for you to the family mansion.'

'Yes, yes!'—very quickly. 'Well, well, there's room enough in the house and my heart for the precious girl, the good Lord knows; and as for young Blunt, M. D.—who actually presumes to believe he loves and appreciates her better than I do—the renegade! if she can do anything toward reclaiming that graceless case—There! forgotten my gloves, true as the world; must go back for them. Morning Peckham.'

For the Journal.

Famine in Ireland.

BY LENA LARSE.

It was in the month of February, 1880, in a little village in Ireland during the great famine of that stricken country, that Widow Conway was bending over her poor, emaciated boy, grown thinner and paler day by day from disease and hunger. The day was bright and beautiful without. The glorious sunshine was flooding the hills, throwing its bright, warm beams upon the village of D——, striving to shine through the little half curtained window of Widow Conway's humble cottage, and into the room where lay a noble and beautiful boy of twelve years of age, the joy and pride of his widowed mother.

Emmet Conway was a handsome, manly lad; his brown, clustering hair lay in many a curl about the broad white brow, and the deep, earnest hazel eyes were fixed lovingly on the face of his agonized mother, who was bending over him, in great tenderness, and deep, enduring love.

"Oh! mother, has God forgotten us? Or do you think he will yet send us a friend in our time of need? But, mother, I am faint, and so very hungry; give me a spoonful of that nice gruel you made this morning."

Mrs. Conway moved quickly to a small table in a corner of the room to get the food. Tears filled her eyes,—her lips moved as if in prayer, and she murmured,

"Oh! Thou bountiful Father in heaven, help me, help my little one. Oh! in mercy and for Thy name's sake, send us food—food for my starving, suffering child!"

The patient little sufferer eagerly swallowed the meager gruel, and then said:

"Dear mother, I had such a pleasant dream last night. I thought we were in our old, beautiful home; the fire burned so brightly, and the table was loaded with good things; such sweet, delicious butter and milk. It was the old home, mother, where we were all so happy, before dear father and sister Kathleen died. Now, mother, talk to me of that beautiful home on high, that the Saviour has gone to prepare for all who love Him and keep His commandments. Miss Donovan told us the last Sabbath I was in my class that the Saviour would come again and take us to Himself, and that where He was there we should be also; and, mother, are there no tears there, no pain, no hunger? Shall I eat of the tree of life and drink of the crystal water flowing by the throne of our God?"

"Yes, Oh! yes, my precious darling! My suffering, hungry child! The Lord has promised unto His children, 'They shall go no more out, neither shall the sun light upon them, nor any heat.' In that bright glorious home above, are many mansions prepared for all who love Jesus; all will be joy and gladness in that home of our dear Saviour, where we trust you, dear father and sister Kathleen, are. But, my child, my own noble boy, cheer up. I trust the good Father of all will yet spare you to me, to comfort and support my declining years. Oh! my child, my only one, my all on earth, can I give you up! Must I lay you away from my yearning gaze forever?"

Then she fell on her knees in agonizing prayer, by his little bed:

"Oh, God! spare my child, and this once hear a mother's prayer for her only one on earth."

She rose from her knees and looked upon the face of her boy; a sweet smile was encircling the pale lips. The hands were folded as if in meek, submissive prayer, while the beautiful, heavenly eyes were half closed. Then, summoning all his feeble strength, he said:

"Dearest mother, I feel so happy, and everything looks so beautiful; even this plain rough bed and the room shine with a glorious brightness."

Then, closing the weary eyes, he lay quiet, as if in blissful sleep. Again the lips moved.

"Mother, dear mother, I had such a beautiful dream just now. The angels were beckoning me to go with them. Bright, beautiful angels with glistening, snowy wings! There was one more beautiful than the rest who came nearer than the others, touching my lips and brow, and I saw it was sister Katie, who died four years ago. I thought I was so happy and glad I was going with them; then I thought of you and wanted to say good-by, and that God would comfort you after I was gone. Dearest mother, lay your cool hand on my brow, and kiss me as you did when I said my little prayer at your knees in my earliest childhood."

She clasped him to her throbbing heart, kissing the lips and brow. Then, smoothing the beautiful dark hair from off the placid, white brow of her boy, murmured tenderly and soothingly,

"God is love and His love for thee, my child, is stronger than all earthly love."

Then, falling on her knees, she prayed in submissiveness of spirit:

"Oh, Lord! let this cup pass from me, if it is Thy will; but if not, Thy will, not mine, be done."

Then, rising from her knees, a holy calm spreading over her face, lighting up every feature, she leaned over her child, her only one on earth, saying softly and reverently:

"He doeth all things well."

His eyes were fixed on hers in unutterable love; then the lips were wreathed in an angelic smile.

"Kiss me, mother, the angels are coming; they are all around my bed and in my room. Good-by; you will come soon. Tell Owen to be a good boy, and to think of me when he plays under the old oak tree near the spring."

"Now I lay me down to sleep" was breathed as in infancy. The little heart had ceased to beat, and the spirit, the pure, young, noble spirit, was borne on angels' wings to a home in heaven, where pain and sorrow enter not.

The bright, glorious sunshine was flooding the room, playing, caressingly, with the thin, faded cover of the bed whereon the little immortal had lain but a short time before, but where now the little outward form was quietly sleeping the blissful sleep of Death. No, it is not Death; it is but the beginning of Life. That beautiful Life where all is joy and peace.