

A DOCTOR'S STORY.

I am a doctor, I live in London, and in one of the most crowded localities.

I had been in my present abode two years, and had never had a patient from the more aristocratic circles, when one night, about 11.30, I was startled by a violent ring at my bell, and having just got to bed, after a hard day's work, I can't say the summons was very agreeable.

However, I ran to my window at once, and thrusting my head out into the rain, cried, 'Who is there?'

A voice answered, 'Only I, doctor. It's an urgent case. Please come down to the door.'

I hurried on some clothes, sped down stairs, and opened the door. There stood, in the full light of the hall lamp, an elderly lady dressed in deep mourning.

She put out the smallest of hands, in a fine black kid glove, and said, pitiouly, 'Are you the doctor?'

'Yes,' I said.

'Then come with me,' she said. 'Do not delay. It's life or death. Come!'

I hurried on my overcoat, caught up my umbrella, and offering my arm to the old lady, walked down the wet street beside her.

'You must be my guide, madam,' I said. 'I do not know where you live.'

She instantly gave me a street and number that surprised me still more. It was in a tolerably aristocratic quarter of the town.

'Who is ill, madam?' I enquired, 'a grown person or a child?'

'A young lady—my daughter,' she said. 'Suddenly?'

'Yes, suddenly,' she answered. 'Do you keep a brougham? You should have it out if you do. We would have been able to go faster.'

'I keep no conveyance,' I said.

'Perhaps you are poor?' she said, eagerly.

'Certainly not rich,' I said.

'Cure her, and I'll make you rich,' she said, in a sort of suppressed shriek. 'Cure her, and I'll give you anything you ask. I don't care for money. I am rolling in gold. Cure her, and I will shower it on you.'

'You are excited, madam,' I said. 'Pray be calm.'

'Calm!' she said. 'Calm! but you do not know a mother's heart.'

We had reached the street she had indicated, and were at the door of one of its houses. The old lady ascended the steps, and opened the door with a latch key. A light burned in the hall, another in one of the parlors, the furniture of which was draped and shrouded in white linen.

'Wait here, sir, if you please,' she said, as she led me into one of these.

I waited what I thought a most unreasonable time in that gloomy parlor. I began to grow a little nervous, when a stout, short, red-faced woman bustled into the room.

'I beg your pardon, sir,' she said, in a singular tone, such as one who had committed a speech to memory might use; 'but my missus—the lady who brought you here—is very nervous, and needlessly alarmed. She begs your acceptance of the customary fee, and there is no need of your service.'

Thus speaking, she handed me a guinea, courtesied, and opened the door for me. I bowed, expressed my pleasure that the patient was better, and departed.

It was a queer sort of an adventure, rather amusing than otherwise; besides, I had a good fee.

I rose early next morning, and paid a couple of visits before breakfast. Returning, to my astonishment, I found, sitting in my consulting room, the lady of the night before. She rose as I entered.

'What must you think of me?' she said. 'But no matter. My daughter is very dear to me, and I have heard of your skill. She is worse again. Can you call some time to-day, as early as possible, at my house?'

'I will be there in an hour.'

The lady took out her watch.

'I am an old-fashioned woman,' she said. 'I retain old-fashioned habits. In my day, the doctor received his fee on the spot. It was, in ordinary cases, a guinea. Will you receive it now?'

I did not know what to say, but she laid the money on the table and departed.

I ate my breakfast, and, having dressed myself carefully, made my way to the old lady's house. I knocked. The door was opened by the stout female who had dismissed me the night before.

'The doctor,' I said, by way of explanation.

'Ah!' said she, 'has missus called you in again?'

'Yes,' I answered.

'There is no need, I assure you, sir,' she said. 'I can't really ask you in. There's no one ill here. It's a whim of missus'. I'm a better judge of illness than she. No need of a doctor.'

I left the house, of course, partly in judgment, partly in amazement.

(Concluded in our next.)

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Donations of money will be received by them through Dr. Dodd and Mr. J. Quirk.

N. B.—Food for the sick carefully prepared by the Committee.

Dec. 27—tf

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Dec. 18, 1877—ex 1m no a pat pres 4i

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Ch'town, Dec. 26, 1877.—3i

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Dec. 26—1m 2aw

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July 24 1877.

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1878

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