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CURED.

Peter Patterson was ill—at least he thought so—and depressed; he had a headache, and he hated the dusty streets, in which the summer heat burnt and the summer sun shone before the green leaves had draped the trees and potted geraniums, which had come to be so blessedly popular in New York, lent their summer freshness.

‘What shall I do, doctor?’ he said. ‘You say nothing ails me, but I can tell what my feelings are better than you can. I know I shall be down with something soon. I rode in the car with half a dozen dirty children the other day—going to the small-pox hospital, I haven’t a doubt—very red and nasty looking; and while I was buying something in a store the other day a horrid old woman begged of me because her husband was sick with typhoid fever. No doubt I’ve caught both diseases, and it’s the complication that puzzles you. Couldn’t relish my coffee this morning; left my milk toast untasted. Hateful life that of a bachelor at a hotel. Oh, dear me!’

‘Why don’t you marry, then?’ asked the doctor. ‘They need so much courting,’ said Patterson. ‘You spend six months or so dangling at a woman’s apron strings. You must go to the theatre and opera if she is gay, and to church if she is pious. At fifty a man likes his slippers and dressing gown and chair of an evening. If it was just stepping to the clergyman’s and getting married, putting a ring on her finger and saying or nodding yes two or three times, why I wouldn’t mind it, you know.’

‘Ah, well, courting is the fun of it, in my opinion,’ said the old doctor; ‘but every one to his taste. And my advice to you is to get out into the country.’ ‘To another hotel and more mercenary waiters!’ said Mr. Patterson. ‘No,’ said the doctor; ‘go to a nice private home. I know one—a motherly widow lady who cooks a dinner fit for a king. River before the house, woods behind it, orchard to the left, kitchen garden to the right; no fever and ague; no misquitos. Heavenly! I am going up there to-morrow, and I’ll see if she will take you.’

‘Very well,’ said Mr. Patterson; ‘I think I will try it.’

‘And you must drink plenty of milk, and eat plenty of nice home made bread.’

‘Yes, I will,’ said Patterson, overjoyed at hearing something that sounded like a prescription. ‘And you would advise milk?’

‘Quart of it every day,’ said the doctor.

‘I’ll take note of it,’ said Patterson. ‘And if I should be very ill she’ll nurse me?’

‘Splendidly,’ said the doctor; and he went on his way.

Mr. Patterson thought the matter over and thought better every day; and when the little note informing him that the widow would ‘take him in and do for him’ reached him, he had his trunk and portmanteau packed, and was ready to start that afternoon.

As for the widow the doctor had prepared her for her boarder’s peculiarities thus:—

‘Nice fellow, social; plenty of money; thinks himself ill, but isn’t; ought to be married; told him so, but he hates the idea of courting; marry off some day, no doubt. ‘Will you have me?’ ‘Yes.’ Call in clergyman. But then old bachelors are peculiar generally.’

The widow was a smart woman. She had married at sixteen, and had never failed to have her washing over when other people were hanging theirs out. Her bread always rose, her cake was always good, and her butter was always sweet. At forty-five she had married off all her daughters, was well-to-do, buxom and happy. Her son and his wife boarded with her, and she added to her plentiful savings by taking a summer boarder or two, if they happened to offer.

‘Fifty, and a bachelor,’ said Mrs. Muntle, looking in the glass. ‘Well, it seems a pity, but when elderly gentlemen marry it is to some hity-tity girl that leads them a terrible life, and likely it’s for the best.’

Then she looked in the glass again; for the widow was but a woman, after all.

Mr. Patterson came to the widow’s and obeyed the doctor’s prescription carefully. He ate bread and milk, robbed the orchard like a school-boy, and reclined over the strawberry short-cake after a fashion that would have made his reputation at the bar. Then, too, Mrs. Muntle did not smile at his aches and pains and insist that he must be perpetually well because he had a fresh complexion and dimples in his cheeks. She had savory herb teas and potions which she produced when he complained of feeling miserable.

For two months and more, Mr. Patterson boarded with Mrs. Muntle, and happier months he never lived through.

Then he went back to the city for a few weeks, returning in urgent need of pellets from the medicine chest, and staying until the last pink chrysanthemum was blooming on its withered branches. He had grown so fond of his little room, with its white curtains and grass-bleached linen, of the country good things and of the buxom Mrs. Muntle, that he could not bear the thought of parting with them altogether.

After all, why could he not buy a house and get Mrs. Muntle to keep it for him? Perhaps she would. He would offer her a high salary, and she could have plenty of servants. Then, indeed, he might have friends to dine with him, and be as happy as possible.

After much consideration he finally mustered up courage for the effort, and walked into the front parlor and sent the servant to ask Mrs. Muntle to please step there for a moment.

‘Gracious!’ thought Mrs. Muntle to herself; ‘what can he want?’

Then she blushed brightly, settled her necktie, took off her apron and walked demurely in.

‘Be seated, ma’am,’ said Mr. Patterson. ‘Sit here, please. Allow me to sit near you, as I have something to ask which may require some consideration.’

‘Oh, dear, it’s coming!’ thought Mrs. Muntle.

‘I suppose you know I’m a man of considerable means, ma’am,’ said the old bachelor; ‘able to buy a nice house, furnish it well, and live in it comfortably?’

‘So I’ve understood, Mr. Patterson,’ replied the widow.

‘And of course it is pleasanter to live that way than at a hotel,’ said Mr. Patterson.

‘I should judge it might be,’ said Mrs. Muntle, cautiously.

‘You judge rightly,’ said Mr. Patterson; ‘but you know a bachelor must be in the hands of his servants if he keeps house. A gentleman doesn’t want that; he wants a lady to superintend things for him—some one of taste and refinement and all that. Common people don’t understand his feelings, and mercenary servants are a poor dependence.’

‘I know that,’ said Mrs. Muntle.

‘You are almost as much alone as I, aren’t you, Mrs. Muntle?’ he went on coaxingly.

‘The doctor knew him. He’s going to do it just as he said he would if he ever did,’ said the lady, to herself. Aloud she answered, ‘Well, sir, I am pretty free, it is true. All my children are married well.’

‘I know money would be no object to you,’ said Mr. Patterson. ‘You have enough. But if I was to tell you that I hated boarding-houses and wanted a home, I think you would have pity on me. I’ll buy a beautiful house, and you shall have complete control of every-

thing. Only make my strawberry short-cake for me all my life.’

He passed and looked at the lady. ‘That is delicately put,’ he thought. ‘Now will you hire out for a house-keeper, I wonder.’

‘I ain’t romantic,’ said Mrs. Muntle; ‘but still we ain’t young, neither of us, and it gets to be just that after a while with the most sentimental.’

‘Don’t refuse me,’ pleaded Mr. Patterson.

‘Well, Mr. Patterson, I won’t,’ said the widow. ‘I’m my own mistress; and though I’ve never thought of a second marriage, why, I think I’m warranted in making one. And no doubt I shall never repent, for I think you’ve a fine disposition, and I understand your ways and tastes.’

Mr. Patterson listened. He saw what he had done—proposed and been accepted without having any idea of what he was about. He looked at Mrs. Muntle. She was very nice and comely and ten years his junior. He could not have done a better thing, and would be married without any troublesome courting. So he put his arm around her waist and said,—

‘Thank you, my dear. I consider myself very fortunate.’

He wrote to his doctor in about a fortnight that he had taken both his prescriptions; was a married man, and intended to bring his wife home the first of the new year.

THE LOVE BRACELET.

There are two young ladies in town who have been rivals. They are both handsome and both have lots of admirers. Like all rivals in the world of young men, they finally dropped their affections on one man. He was the devotee of one, and the other naturally wanted to capture him. She did, and in the course of the eventful conversation she wanted to know what key he wore on his chain. Being violently enamored, he told her it was the key of a padlock bracelet clasped on her rival’s arm.

You can’t love me. I won’t have anything to do with you. Go back to that mean girl.

I swear I don’t care anything about her. I really don’t.

Will you send that key back to her?

Certainly. Here, if you don’t believe me, I’ll let you take it back to her.

Oh, how good of you. I’ll see she gets it.

And the next day she went to call on the rival.

I’ve got such news for you, Ida.

Yes; what is it?

I’m engaged.

You don’t say. To whom?

To Henry Smith.

Henry Smith?

Yes, I know, of course, he’s been an old flame of your’s—and well—I couldn’t naturally, my dear, allow him to keep the little key. I know what it is, and so I brought it to you.

She watched her rival’s face very closely; but the rival had given too many mean thrusts in her time to meet this unprepared. She smiled.

Oh, you needn’t have troubled. You might have let him keep it.

I couldn’t think of it. How could you get the bracelet off?

That key doesn’t open this bracelet. Try it.

She put it in the lock. It turned around with a little click, but the padlock did not open.

Now, see here. Here are three like it. You won’t tell on me dear, will you? But the fact is, I was so pestered by those boys begging me to let them lock this bracelet that I went and got a dozen keys that would go all around the lock and never open or close it, and George Simpson got one, and Harry Jones and Sam Johnson and—I don’t remember who all. The man who’s got the real key is in New York.

And the disgusted rival went back and told Henry Smith that she did not intend to marry a born idiot.

EFFECT OF THE USE OF WHITE PAPER UPON THE EYES.

Many believe the eyelight is impaired by the use of white instead of colored, or at least tinted, paper, and at times the subject comes up for discussion. So far as we have seen, no positive evidence has yet been secured to prove the injurious effect of white paper on the eyes, and some recent inquiries lead us to doubt if such evidence is to be had.

A company engaged in the sale of tinted paper recently urged us to say a word against the use of white

paper for billing, letterheads, records, etc., for that it does more to keep the oculist and optician busy than any other cause. Further along they say: There is no doubt that, in a few years, tinted paper will be used for purpose above named (billing, letterheads, records, etc.) and the white paper now used will be an exception to the rule. In the interests of the clerks and bookkeepers, we appeal to you, etc.

Dr. St. John Roosa, one of the best authorities on the eye here-about, said, when his attention was called to this: I have never yet noticed any special ill effect upon the eye from the use of white paper. I have treated many bookkeepers and others who work with the pen, and do not remember to have heard any complaints against white paper, nor any commendations for tinted paper. My investigations show me that a principal injury to the eye comes from improper arrangements of the light when writing.

He says he does not believe that people who use tinted paper for writing are freer from eye troubles than those who use white. As to myself, he has used both, first one and then another, hoping to be able to note the different effects upon the eyes. None, however, were observed. Dr. Roosa might have gone a step farther, and said that instances could be cited where those accustomed to white paper having suddenly changed, and adopted that with a decided tint, found a mal influence exerted on the eye, and were compelled to go back to white paper.

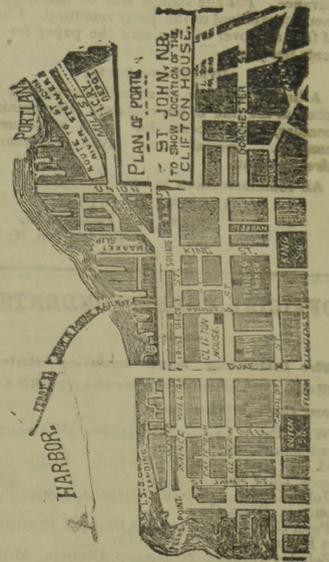
It is well to know that using the eyes too much or in bad lights will serve to hasten the development of myopia, presbyopia, strabismus, and dantionism where there is hereditary inclination; but there is no record of a case, so say the authorities, where the use of white paper hastened or the use of tinted paper retarded such development. It is not likely, therefore, that tinted paper will replace white in the business transactions of the future.

THE CARE OF THE HAIR.—The care of the hair is an important branch of fashion at all times, though often fashion dictates an injudicious treatment and prescribes modes against all rules of health and reason. Such importance has been given to the hair that some philosophers make the chignon, coils and pins the index of civilization, and show how recently in head-dress and attire marks the degradation of the time. It is well understood that masses of hair injure natural growth, but a treatise of fashion which seems harmless may be equally harmful. This apparent innocent fashion is that of fluffiness and lightness of the hair produced by continual washing.

The best specialists on the subject of the hair say that the hair should be washed once in six weeks and with soap and that castile soap and not soda, soda or any other drying material should be used. After washing it is well to rub the scalp with some oil.

The natural oil, which is so necessary and objectionable, is the hair, and should be destroyed. Dry hair has a dead appearance, the ends split and growth is retarded. The fine comb is most harmful; but a soft brush, used judiciously, gives vigor to the scalp and keeps it in a healthy condition. The practice of cutting the ends of the hair is useful, and can be accomplished easily by braiding the hair and then cutting the ends. The care of the hair is certainly as important as that of the teeth but is much more neglected. The rules of its preservation are simple and important. Vigorous brushing, cutting the ends when necessary, washing with castile soap once in six weeks, and the desirable avoidance of soda, should preserve and strengthen the hair. But if the hair comes out, it becomes lifeless and thin in spots. The best remedy is to consult a reliable specialist on scalp diseases, and to submit to thorough professional direction.

I feel myself, said Eckermann, gradually leaving my mind and theoretical tendencies, and more and more able to appreciate the value of the present moment. Only persist in this, said Goethe, and add first by the present. Every situation—nay, every moment—is of infinite value for it is the representative of a whole eternity.



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