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DR. RUMSEY'S PATIENT:

A VERY STRANGE STORY.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

The twilight darkened into night, but Andrew still remained in the office. After a time he groped for a box of matches, found one, struck a match, took a pair of heavy silver candlesticks from a cupboard in the wall, lit the candles which were in them, and then put them on his office table. The room was a large one, and the light of the two candles seemed only to make the darkness visible. Andrew went to the table, seated himself in the old chair which his father and his grandfather had occupied before him, and began mechanically to arrange some papers, and put a pile of other things in order. His nature was naturally full of system; from his childhood up he had had untidiness of all sorts. While he was so engrossed there came a knock at the office door. He rose, went across the room and opened it; a footman stood without.

"Mrs. Andrew has sent me to ask you, sir, if you are ready for dinner." "Tell your mistress that I am not coming in to dinner," replied Andrew. "Ask her not to wait for me; I am particularly busy, and will have something later."

The man, with an immovable countenance, turned away. Andrew once more locked the office door. He now drew down the blinds to the other two windows, and began to pace up and down the long room. The powers of good and evil were at this moment fighting for his soul—he knew it; there was a tremendous conflict raging within him; it seemed to tear his life in two; beads of perspiration stood on his brow. He knew that either God or the Devil would have won the victory before he left that room.

"I must make my decision once for all," he reflected. "I am wide awake; my whole intellectual nature is full of vigour; I have no excuse whatever; the matter must be finally settled now. If I follow the devil—he shrank as the words formed themselves out of his brain; he had naturally the utmost loathing for evil in any form, his nature was meant to be upright; at school he had been one of the good boys; one of the boys to whom low voices, dishonourable actions of any kind, were simply impossible; he had had his weaknesses, for who has not?—but these weaknesses were all more or less akin to virtues."

"If I choose the devil," he repeated. Once again he faltered, trembling violently; he had come to the part of the room where his father's old desk was situated, he lent up against it, and gazed gloomily out into the darkness which confronted him.

"I know exactly what will happen if I follow the downward path," he thought again. "I must force myself to think right, and right wrong. There is no possible way to me to live this life of deception except by deceiving myself. Must I decide to-night?"

He staggered into the chair which his father used to occupy. His father had been a man full of rectitude; the doom of the house had never overtaken him; he had been a man with an almost too severe, too lofty code of honour. Andrew remembered all about his father as he sat in that chair. He sprang again to his feet.

"There is no use in putting off the hour, for the hour has come," he thought. "This is the state of the case. God and the devil are in this man. I cannot lie in the presence of such awful, such potent beings. I must face the thing as it is. This is what has happened to me. I, who would not willingly in my sober senses, hurt the smallest insect that crawls on the earth, once, nearly six years ago, in a sudden moment of passion killed a man. He attacked me, and I defended myself. I killed him in self-defence. I no more meant to kill him than I mean to commit murder to-night. Notwithstanding that fact I did the deed. Doubtless the action came over me as a tremendous shock—immediately after the deed the horrible doom of my house fell on me, and I forgot all about what I myself had done—for five years the memory of it never returned to me. Now I know all about it. I committed murder and another man is suffering in my stead. Now if I follow the devil I shall be a brute and a scoundrel; the innocent man will go on suffering, and his mother, whose heart is already broken, may die before he recovers his liberty. Thus I shall practically kill two lives. No one will know—no one will guess that I am leading a shadowed life. I feel strong enough now to cover up the deed, to hide away remorse. I feel that the least doubt that I shall be outwardly successful—the respect of my fellow men will follow me—the love of many will be given to me. By and by I may have children, and they will love me as I loved my father, and Margaret will look up to me and consult me as my mother looked up to and consulted my father, and my honor will be considered above reproach. My people too will rejoice to have me with them. I can serve them if I am returned for this constituency—in short, I can live a worthy and respected life. The devil will have his way, but no one will guess that it is the devil's way—I shall seem to live the life of an angel."

Andrew paused here in his own thought. "I feel as if the devil were laughing at me," he said, speaking half aloud, and looking again into the darkness of the room—"he knows that his hour will come—by and by my span of life will run out—eventually I shall reach the long end of the long way. But until that time, day by day and hour by hour, I shall live the life of the hypocrite. Like a white sepulchre shall I be truly, for I shall carry hell here. By and by I shall have to answer for all at a Higher Tribunal, and meanwhile I shall carry hell here." He pressed his hand to his breast—his face was ghastly. "Shall I follow the devil? Suppose I refuse to listen to him, what then?"

There came another tap at the office door. Andrew went across the room and opened it. He started and uttered a smothered oath, for Margaret stood on the threshold,

"Go away now, Maggie, I cannot see you; I am very much engaged," he said.

"Instead of obeying him she stepped across the threshold. "But you have no one with you," she said, looking into the darkness of the room. "What are you doing, Robert, all by yourself? You look very tired. We have finished dinner—my uncle has come over from Cuthbertstown, and would like to see you—they all think it strange you being away. What is the matter? Won't you return with me to the house?"

"I cannot yet. I am particularly engaged." "But what about? Uncle James will be much disappointed if he does not see you." "I will come to him presently when I have thought out a problem."

Margaret turned herself now in such a position that she could see her husband's face. Something in his eyes seemed to speak straight to her sympathies, she put her arms round his neck.

"Do not think any more now, my darling," she said. "Remember though you are so well, that you were once very ill. You have had no dinner, it is not right for you to starve yourself and tire yourself. Come home with me, Robert, come home!"

"Not yet," he replied. "There is a knot which I must untie. I am thinking over a very grave problem. I shall have no rest, no peace, until I have made up my mind."

"What can be the matter?" inquired Margaret. "Can I help you in any way?" "No, my dearest," he answered very tenderly, "except by leaving me."

"Has it anything to do with your accounts?" she asked. She glanced at the table with its pile of letters and papers. If so, I could really render you assistance; I used to keep accounts for Uncle James in the old days. Two brains are better than one. Let me help you."

"It is a mental problem, Maggie; it relates to morals."

Oh, dear, Robert, you are quite mysterious," she said with a ghost of a smile; but then she met his eyes and the trouble in them startled her.

"I wish I could help you," she said. Do let me."

"You cannot," he replied harshly, for the look in her face added to his tortures. "I shall come to a conclusion presently. When I come to it I will return to the house."

"Then we are not to wait for you? It is getting quite late, long past nine o'clock." "Do not sit up for me; leave the side door on the latch; I will come in presently when I have made up my mind on this important matter."

She approached the door unwillingly; when she reached the threshold she turned and faced him.

"I cannot but see that you are worried about something," she said. "I know, Robert, that you will have strength to do what is right. I cannot imagine what your worry can be, but a moral problem with you must mean the victory of right over wrong."

"Maggie, you drive me mad," he called after her, but his voice was hoarse, and it did not reach her ears. She closed the door, and he heard her retreating footsteps on the gravel outside. He locked the door once more.

"There spoke God and my good angel," he murmured to himself. "Help me! Powers of Evil, if I am to follow you; give me strength to walk the paths of the lowest."

These words had scarcely risen in the form of an awful prayer from his lips when once again he heard his wife's voice at the door. She was tapping and calling to him at the same time. He opened the door.

"Well?" he said.

"I am sorry to disturb you," she replied, "but you really must put off all your reflections for the time being. Whom do you think has just arrived?"

"I cannot guess," he answered, in a listless voice.

"Your old friend and mine, Dr. Rumsey," Rumsey replied Andrew, "he would be a strong advocate on your side, Maggie."

"On my side?" she queried.

"I cannot explain myself. I will see Rumsey. It would be possible for me to put a question to him which I could not put to you—ask him to come to me."

"He shall come at once," she answered, "I am heartily glad that he is here."

She turned back and went to the house—she ran up the front steps—Rumsey was in the hall.

"My hearty congratulations," he said, coming up to her. "Your letter contained such good news that I could not forbear hurrying down to Grandcourt to take a peep at my strange patient; I always call Andrew my strange patient. Is it true that he is now quite well?"

"Half an hour ago I should have said yes," replied Margaret; "but—"

"Any recurrence of the old symptoms?" asked the doctor.

"No, nothing of that sort. Perhaps the excitement has been too much for him. Come into the library, will you?"

She entered as she spoke, the doctor following her.

"I wrote to you when I was abroad," continued Margaret, "telling you the simple fact that my husband's state of health had gone from better to better. He recovered tone of mind and body in the most rapid degree. This morning I considered him a man of perfect physical health and of keen intellect. You know during the five years when the cloud was over his brain he refused to read, and lost grip of all passing events. There is no subject now of general interest that he cannot talk about—all matters of public concern arouse his strong sympathies. To-day he has been nominated to stand for this constituency, vacant by the death of our late member. I have no doubt that he will represent us in the House when Parliament next sits."

"Or perhaps before this one rises," said the doctor. "Well, Mrs. Andrew, all this sounds most encouraging, but I fear from

your manner that you have something not so satisfactory to tell me."

"That is so; at the present moment I do not like his state. He was out and about all day, but instead of returning home to dinner went straight to his office, where he now is. As far as I can see, he is doing no special work, but he will not come into the house. He tells me that he is facing a problem which he also says is a moral one. He refuses to leave the office until he has reached a satisfactory conclusion."

"Come, he is overdoing it," said the doctor. "I think so. I told him just now that you had arrived; he asked me to bring you to him; will you come?"

"With pleasure."

"Can you do without a meal until you see him?"

"Certainly; take me to him at once."

Mrs. Andrew left the house, and took Dr. Rumsey round by the sidewalk which led to the office. The door was now slightly ajar; Margaret entered, the doctor following behind her.

"Well, my friend," said Dr. Rumsey, in his cheerful voice, "it is good to see you back in your old place again. Your wife's letter was so satisfactory that I could not resist the temptation of coming to see you for myself."

"I am in perfect health," replied Andrew. "Sit down, won't you, Rumsey? Margaret, my dear, do you mind leaving us?"

"No, Robert," she answered. "I trust to Dr. Rumsey to bring you back to your senses."

"She does not know what she is saying," thought Andrew. He followed his wife to the door, and when she went out turned the key in the lock."

"It is a strange thing," he said, the moment he found himself alone with his guest. "that you, Rumsey, should be here at this moment. You were with me during the hour of my most terrible physical and mental degradation; you have now come to see me through the hour of my moral degradation—or victory."

"Your moral degradation or victory?" said the doctor; "what does this mean?" "It simply means this, Dr. Rumsey: I am the unhappy possessor of a secret."

"Ah!"

"Yes—a secret. Were this secret known my wife's heart would be broken, and this honourable house of which I am the last descendant would go to complete shipwreck. I do not talk of myself in the matter."

"Do you mean to confide in me?" asked the doctor, after a pause.

"I cannot; for the simple reason, that if I told you everything you would be bound as a man and a gentleman to take steps to ensure the downfall which I dread."

"Are you certain that you are not suffering from delusion?"

"No, doctor, I wish I were."

"You certainly look sane enough," said the doctor, examining his patient with a keen glance. "You must allow me to congratulate you. If I had not seen you with my own eyes I could never have believed in such a reformation. You are bronzed; your frame has widened; you have not a scrap of superfluous flesh about you. Let me feel your arm; my dear sir, your muscle is to be envied."

"I was famed for my athletics long ago," said Andrew, with a grim smile. "But now, doctor, to facts. You have come here; it is possible for me to take you into my confidence to a certain extent. Will you allow me to state my case?"

"As you intend only to state it partially it will be difficult for me to advise you, said the doctor.

"Still, will you listen?"

"Well, the fact is this," said Andrew, rising, "either God or the Devil take possession of me tonight."

"Come, come," said Rumsey, "you are exaggerating the state of the case."

"I am not. I am going through the most desperate fight that ever assailed a man. I may get out on the side of good, but at the present moment I must state frankly that all my inclinations tend to getting out of this struggle on the side which will put me into the Devil's hands."

"Come," said the doctor again, "if that is so there can be no doubt with regard to your position. You must close with right even though it is a struggle. You confess to possessing a secret; that secret is a cause of your misery; there is a right and a wrong to it?"

"Undoubtedly; a very great right and a very grave wrong."

"Then, Andrew, do not hesitate; be man enough to do the right."

Andrew turned white.

"You are the second person who has come here tonight and advised me on the side of God," he said.

"Out with your trouble, man, and relieve your mind."

"When I relieve my mind," said Andrew, "my wife's heart will break, and our house will be ruined."

"What about you?"

"I shall go under."

"I doubt very much if your doing right would ever break a heart like your wife's," said Rumsey, "but doing wrong would undoubtedly crush her spirit."

"There you are again—will no one take the Devil's part? Dr. Rumsey, I firmly believe that it is owing to your influence that I am now in my sane mind, and when I think of the path which you now advocate, I could curse the day when you brought me back to health and sanity. A very little influence on the other side, a mere letting me alone, and I should now either be a madman or in my grave; my secret would have been inviolate in the bitter end. As it is—"

There was a noise heard outside—the sound made by a faltering footstep. The brush of a woman's dress was distinctly audible against the door; this was followed by a timid knock.

"Who is disturbing us now?" said Andrew with irritation.

"I will see," said the doctor.

He crossed the room as he spoke and opened the door. An untidy dressed girl with a ghastly face stood without. When the door was opened she peered anxiously into the room.

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"Is Mr. Andrew in?—yes, I see him. I must speak to him at once." She staggered across the threshold. "I must see you alone, Squire," she said—"quite alone and at once."

"This has to do with the matter under consideration," said the Squire. "Come in, Hetty; sit down. Rumsey, you had best leave us."

CHAPTER XXIV.

A real faint, or suspension of the heart's action, is never a long affair. When Hetty fell in an unconscious state against the body of her dead husband she quickly recovered herself. Her intellect was keen enough, and she knew exactly what had happened. The nice black stuff which gave such pleasant dreams had killed Vincent. She had therefore killed him. Yes, he was stone dead—she had seen death once or twice before, and could not possibly mistake it. She had seen her mother die long ago, and had stood by the deathbed of more than one neighbour. The cold stiffness, the grey-white appearance, all told her beyond the possibility of a doubt that life was not only extinct, but had been extinct for at least a couple of hours. Her husband was dead. When she had given him that fatal dose he had been in the full vigour of youth and health—now he was dead. She had never loved him in life, although he had been an affectionate husband to her, but at this moment she shed a few tears for him. Not many, for they were completely swallowed up in fear and terror which grew greater and greater each moment within her. He was dead, and she had killed him. Long ago she had concealed the knowledge of a murder because she loved the man who had committed it. Now she had committed murder herself—not intentionally, no, no. No more had she intended to kill Vincent than Andrew when he was out that night had intended to take the life of Horace Frere. But Frere was dead and now Frere was dead, and Hetty would be tried for the crime. No, surely they could not try her. How could such a little, timid, weak creature be supposed to take the life of a big man? She had never intended to injure him—she had only intended to give him a good sleep, to rest him thoroughly—to deceive him, of course—to do a thing which she knew might break his heart; but to take his life, no, nothing was further from her thoughts. Nevertheless the deed was done.

Oh, it was horrible, horrible—she hated being so close to the dead body. It was no longer Vincent, the man who would have protected her at the risk of his life, it was a hideous dead body. She would get away from it—She would creep up close to Rover. No wonder Rover hated the room; perhaps he saw the spirit of her husband. Oh, how frightened she was. What was the matter with her side?—why did her heart beat so strangely, galloping one, two, three, then pausing, then one, two, three again?—and the pain, the sick, awful pain! Yes, she knew—she was sick to death with terror.

She got up presently from where she had been kneeling by her dead husband's side and staggered across to the fireplace. She tried wildly to think, but she found herself incapable of reasoning. Shivering violently, she approached the table, poured out a cup of the cocoa which was still hot, and managed to drink it off. The warm liquid revived her, and she felt a shade better and more capable of thought. Her one instinct now was to save herself. Vincent was dead—no one in all the world could bring him back to life, but, if possible, Hetty would so act that not a soul in all the country should suspect her. How could she make things safe? If it were known, known everywhere, that she was away from him when he died, then of course she would be safe. Yes, this fact must be known. Once she had saved the Squire, now the Squire must save her. It must be known everywhere that she had sought an interview with him—that at the time when Vincent died she was in the Squire's presence, shut up in the office with him, the door locked—she and the Squire alone together. This secret, which she would have fought to the death to keep to herself, an hour ago, must now be blazoned abroad to a criticising world. The lesser danger to the Squire must be completely swallowed up in the greater danger to herself. She must hurry to him at once and get him to tell what he knew. Ah yes, if he did this she would be safe—she remembered the right word at last, for she had heard the neighbors speak of it when a celebrated trial was going on in Salisbury—she must prove an alibi—then it would be known that she had been absent from home when her husband died.

The immensity of the danger made her feel quiet and steady. She took up the

lighted candle and went into the dairy—she unlocked the cupboard and took out the bottle of laudanum. Returning to the kitchen she emptied the contents of the bottle into the range and then threw the bottle itself also into the heart of the fire—she watched it as it slowly melted under the influence of the hot fire—the laudanum itself was also licked up by the hungry flames. That tell-tale and awful evidence of her guilt was at least removed. She forgot all about Susan having seen the liquid in the morning—she knew nothing about the evidence which would be brought to light at a coroner's inquest—about the facts which a doctor would be sure to discover. Nothing but the bare reality remained prominently before her excited brain. Vincent was dead—she had killed him by an overdose of laudanum which she had given him in all innocence to make him sleep—but yet, yet in her heart of hearts, she knew that her motive would not bear explanation.

"Squire will save me," she said to herself—"it is proved that I was with the Squire I am safe. I will go to him now—I will tell 'im all at once. It is late very late, and it is dark outside, but I will go."

(To be concluded)

MONEY SAVERS.

For Families Who Desire to Economize.

Diamond Dyes the Agents.

It would require many large volumes to give a complete record of all the strong testimonial letters written by the women of the country in favor of Diamond Dyes. These indispensable aids in good house-keeping are gaining in public favor every week, and once tried, they become permanent home favorites.

Just think of it! One package of Diamond Dye will color from one to six pounds of goods, according to shade desired. This is wonderful work when the small expense is considered.

Your last year's jacket, suit, cape, dress, and your husband's suit and children's clothes may be soiled, faded and unsightly; but with a ten cent package of Diamond Dyes you can work wonders, and make the old things look like new for this season's wear.

Have you ever tried this work with Diamond Dyes? One effort in this direction of true economy will convince you that Diamond Dyes are money savers to the family.

TRUE WHEN WRITTEN.

But Time Brought Changes at the Summer Resort.

I was attracted to a place in Virginia, near the Atlantic Ocean, where the combined advantages of surf bathing and an absence of mosquitoes was advertised.

The surf bathing was there, but there were never more or larger mosquitoes than infested the place. The landlord was a leader in the church and made a great point of his conscientiousness, so I questioned him about the insects:

"Mosquitoes worse this year than usual?"

I asked.

"Reckon not. They gen'ally bite purty sharp this season of the year."

"Are there always this many here?"

"Erbout—some gets killed, but don't seem ter make no difference."

"Didn't you advertise that the place was free from mosquitoes?"

"Sartin. I allus do, an' ef ther war a single skeeter here I'd say so. I never lied yit, an' I never shall. No, sir; when I say a thing it's jest that way. I would be willin' to give you a hundred dollars fer every skeeter you could hav' found hyar when I writ that thar 'ad,' las' January. Ef you stay till frost you'll fin' that thar ain't one let!" In July an' August it stan's to reason thar mus' be skeeters.—Washington Star.

Struck With Lightning.

Neatly describes the position of a hard or soft corn when Putnam's Painless Corn Extractor is applied. It does its work so quickly and without pain that it seems magical in action. Try it. Recollect the name—Putnam's Painless Corn Extractor. Sold by all druggists and dealers everywhere.

NICKNAMES ONLY.

A Family Who Were Known Only by Funny Nicknames.

Half a century ago, in the rural portions of England, it was no uncommon thing for people to grow up, live and die without ever being called by their family names. Their neighbors, and even their own children, knew them only by some nickname. This was especially true in fishing hamlets on the Lancashire coast. Kendall Perry vouches for the following story:

Wishing to secure the services of a boat-builder known to be living in Little Haws, Mr. Thomas Rigby visited over a dozen of the fishermen's cottages, inquiring for Mr. Richard Wright, boat-builder. After being told repeatedly, with many a solemn shake of the head, accompanied by gaping grins and incredulous looks, "that nobuddy o' that name bides 'ere or ever did sin wa coom 'ere," the discouraged man spied a new rowboat, bottom side up, glistening with paint, before a cottage.

"Here's a boat anyway," he exclaimed, "so the builder cannot be very far away," and hastened to the cottage.

His brisk knock brought a trim little woman of middle age, dressed in the usual fishwife's kersey and linsey petticoat; but to the oft-repeated inquiry, "Does Mr. Richard Wright, boat-builder, live here?" she shook her head decidedly, and said, "No, he does na'."

"I want to get a boat built. Can you tell me where he does live? It is in this place somewhere."

"Happen he is a newcomer to these parts. There is but one boat-builder abouts, an'—"

At this point of the conversation a little gray-headed man arose from the chimney-corner and came forward, pipe in hand, to the open door, at sight of which the baffled searcher cried out:

"I've been hunting for thee all over Little Haws, and no one knew where thou lived!" "Ah," chuckled the little old man, "thou shouldst have asked for Aud Cossie, an' thar 'adst' coom eet to the place."

The funniest part of all was, the old wife stood by, peering over her spectacles, and slowly circulated in admiring tours, "An' is thy name Mr. Richard Wright?"

We may as well add that Mr. Rigby found that Mr. Wright had three brothers. Their names, according to their respective ages, were, Kessie, Bossie, Bummie and Buss.

MIRACLES TODAY.

William H. White of Portuguese Cove Racked by the Tortures of Rheumatism, Is Quickly Relieved and Permanently Cured by the Great South American Rheumatic Cure.

"I was a martyr to acute rheumatism for years. All the known remedies and best doctors were given a trial, but nothing ever gave me any permanent relief until I obtained your great South American Rheumatic Cure. It has done so much for me that I gladly give my testimony, that other sufferers from the agonies of rheumatism may take my advice and try this great remedy. I am satisfied it will cure them as it has mine."

Haste Wastes Time.

A gentleman who had an impediment in his speech was dining in a restaurant, and was being served—a great favor—by the proprietor of the establishment. This man was a bustling, nervous person, with an exaggerated opinion of the value of his time.

Soup was served. The guest waited a moment, and at the first opportunity, began to say to the restaurant-keeper:

"I o-c-c-a-n't e-e-e-eat."

"Well, what is it, sir?" asked the restaurant-keeper, impatiently.

"I o-c-c-a-n't eat my soup."

"The man snatched up the plate of soup and was off after another, which in due time he brought; but again the guest began to murmur:

"Well, pray," asked the restaurant-keeper, "what may be the matter with this soup, that you are unable to eat it?"

"I o-c-c-a-n't e-e-e-eat my soup. I t-tell you," answered the guest, "w-w-w-ite-out a s