

The New Doctor.

It was settled in solemn conclave among the matrons of Eastwood that Dr. John Mortlake ought to marry. No Doctor could get on without a wife. It was the sound diploma that was necessary to his profession.

Eastwood was a small country town in the North Riding. It had a High Street, a town hall, and, as the reader has heard, a Doctor. A year ago old Doctor Helme had died, and his practice had been purchased by a Mr. John Mortlake, a young man coming from London with the highest credentials. Personable and gentlemanly, equally attentive to the poor as to those who paid fees, he gained general approval save in one respect: he was a bachelor.

Now, it is well known that this is the greatest drawback a Doctor can possess; consequently, out of a sense of duty, the feminine inhabitants decided that John Mortlake must marry. More than this, they had found a fitting partner in Laura Hepworth, the only child of Thomas Hepworth of Hepworth Lodge.

It was not likely the selection would have been so universal—for the new Doctor was a parti in whose favor they would have been many rivals—had it not been seen that out of all the marriageable young ladies John Mortlake showed most attention to Laura Hepworth, whom he had saved from scarlet fever and the brink of the grave, thereby winning Mr. Hepworth's sincere gratitude. He had bidden the young man regard the Lodge as his home; and John Mortlake, glancing at Laura's hazel eyes and soft brown silky braids of hair, thankfully accepted the invitation.

Thus the new Doctor became a constant guest. No event occurred but his aid or advice was needed, certainly giving ground for Eastwood gossip, until a circumstance happened which seemed to bring matter to a climax.

One July afternoon, while a thunderstorm, which for days had been threatening was raging with considerable violence over Eastwood, John Mortlake, returning at speed from a distant patient, through the heavy rain, beheld Laura Hepworth standing for shelter beneath an oak that extended its magnificent branches like a canopy over the road. The shelter was perfect, but the peril was great, the air being so charged with electricity; and a tremor ran through the Doctor as he urged his horse on that he might warn her.

Scarcely, however, had he advanced many yards, exchanging Laura's gay wave of the hand, than a blinding flash illuminated the spot, followed by a crash of thunder as though the world were coming to an end. When John Mortlake, quieting his horse, looked up, his horror was beyond delineation to perceive the oak split asunder, and Laura Hepworth extended lifeless upon the ground.

A great cry burst from his lips, succeeded by a terrible paleness. The next moment he was kneeling by the young girl, holding her in his arms.

Great Heaven! was she dead? Apparently. She lay white and motionless, though no scar on face or mark on dress told the electric fluid had touched her, and for a second John Mortlake gazed on the fair face in speechless agony.

Recovering himself hurriedly, his trembling fingers sought her pulse, her heart, and another cry, now of rapture, escaped him as he pressed the girl with an uncontrollable impulse to his breast, exclaiming: 'She lives. Thank Heaven—she lives! Oh! my darling—my Laura—my love!'

And with his quivering lips he touched the white forehead. At the instant Laura's eyes opened. She had caught those last words—the had felt those lips, and, with a fit of hysteria, nestling to him, she sobbed: 'Oh! Mr. Mortlake—oh! John, save me!'

She had remembered her peril; she had recognized his affection, and came to his strong heart for protection. With a strange alarm on his face, the doctor rose.

'Do not fear, Miss Hepworth,' he said, almost; coldly 'the danger is passed. How could you have taken so perilous a position?'

She yet leaned on him, and now lifted her soft eyes in wonder at his change of tone. Why? Had she not long before known his love, though unspoken? His gaze fell before hers as those of the guilty before the accuser; but he was spared the

necessity of answering the mute interrogation by the sound of approaching wheels.

The vehicle was a country gig belonging to a well-to-do farmer of Eastwood, who pulled up in surprise at perceiving the pair standing in the pouring rain. A few words and the riven oak were all sufficient an explanation, and readily the new comer offered what the doctor was on the eve of asking—the vacant seat in the gig to carry Miss Hepworth home to the Lodge.

The farmer was of a hearty, jovial mood, and had not been deaf to Eastwood rumours. Consequently he chuckled inwardly at the blush with which Laura took leave of the Doctor, who pleaded a professional call in another direction; and half an hour later, standing on his own hearth, the farmer declared that the matter was surely settled now that Miss Hepworth was to be the Doctor's wife.

Rumour is like the grain of mustard-seed: though at first small, it is capable of increasing to the largest dimensions; and before night it had crept through Eastwood that Dr. Mortlake's confession of love had, at least, been made. Society, nodding, waited expectant of its being declared publicly.

But Society was disappointed. No such intelligence reached them. Could Laura Hepworth have refused him? Impossible. Yet how grave and altered the Doctor looked! What did it mean? What could it mean for actually John Mortlake and Thomas Hepworth had met in the High Street, and had passed like utter strangers. Eastwood was in a ferment of curiosity until another rumour got afloat, started by an old almshouse-woman.

She reported having been in the Doctor's surgery waiting his return, when she had heard him enter the adjoining sitting-room with Mr. Hepworth. Though nearly deaf she had caught something of their conversation. Mr. Hepworth had desired to know John Mortlake's intentions respecting his daughter. The Doctor had rejoined those of a sincere, faithful friend. Whereupon high words had risen on the part of Mr. Hepworth. He had made reference to the thunderstorm, and sentences uttered on the occasion. John Mortlake had hardly answered. 'Only once,' when the listener had heard him ejaculate, with a bitter groan, upon the other declaring that he had compromised his daughter.

'Heaven forgive me; but I trust not! It so, tell me what reparation I can make, and I will—I will leave here. I will do anything; but I cannot marry. There is a reason.'

Mr. Hepworth had used harder words yet; then, exclaiming, 'By Heaven, John Mortlake, I'll ruin you for this!' had flung out of the room. Whereupon, the Doctor, ejaculating, 'I had better tell him—better confess all!' had called upon his visitor to stay.

But the street-door had banged, and, with a groan, the Doctor seemed to cover his face with his hands, and sob like a woman, fearing detection, had quietly stolen away.

As weeks passed, however, it became a question whether John Mortlake had rejected Laura Hepworth, or vice versa.

It was decided by the majority that the old woman's death had misled her, and the latter was the case; for though rather pale Miss Hepworth was gay, and attended even more parties than ever; while the Doctor went about like a man whose death warrant had been signed.

Assuredly Mr. Hepworth had learned some evil event of his private life, and had forbidden him his house. That must be it and the Doctor's practice fell off accordingly.

The above was sad trouble to Mrs. Langleigh when her annual picnic in Gray Woods came round.

She had built upon the help and presence of John Mortlake.

'If John Mortlake comes, the Hepworths will refuse,' remarked Mr. Langleigh.

'That is certain,' sighed Mrs. Langleigh. So the Doctor was not asked. He was, however, there.

He, too, had built up this picnic—upon the pleasure of being with Laura, and upon wandering through the shady woods.

'I was wrong—I was a coward—a villain! Yet Heaven knows! meant no harm,' he groaned.

Still in secret he went—in secret he beheld the merry party beneath the trees, and in secret tried to feel happy in watching Laura's mirth, for she seemed the gayest of the gay. He had set himself a task he could not perform. His misery was unbearable as he beheld Herbert Langleigh seated by her side chatting so eagerly.

'It is he who will win her—who will call her his,' he groaned, 'and it is right. But to me it is death.'

Turning he plunged further into the underwood.

Had he stayed a second longer, balm would have come to his heart. He would have seen Laura, seizing an opportunity steal away from the picnic party. He would have seen her gaiety become sadness, tears rise to her eyes, and have heard her exclaim, with a sob:

'Oh! John—John, how hard it is to play so false a part as I, when my heart is breaking! Can you be the villain papa says? No—no, I feel you are not. There is a reason. What reason?'

She started, hearing a footstep on the dry leaves.

Looking up, she beheld it was a woman slowly approaching—a woman with a young pretty face—deformed, haggard, by disipation—a woman attired in tawdry, dragged garments. Her dark, hollow eyes were fixed with a wild, eager glance on Laura, as she advanced with the uncertain steps of one labouring under severe bodily fatigue.

Touched by the sight, on perceiving her stumble from weakness, Laura sprang forward to lend support.

'You are ill,' she said. 'Do you want—I want,' exclaimed the woman, eagerly, raising her eyes, 'John Mortlake!'

'John Mortlake!' gasped Laura, recoiling. 'He is not here.'

'Yes; I was told he was,' was the answer 'See; he is behind you now!'

The young girl turned, and beheld the Doctor, who had unexpectedly emerged from the trees. Her movement revealed to him the woman. His face went white, as, leaping back, with a painful cry of horror, he ejaculated:

'Agnes!'

'Yes,' rejoined the woman. 'I have sought and I have found you, John. Listen! and she caught Laura's arm. 'He—he is my husband. What a difference between us! When I was as young and good as you, he married me. He was kindness itself, and for a year we were happy; then—he fled from me, for I had given way to sin—to vice—to drink. Look at me; I carry the truth on my features; I disgraced—I ruined him!'

'As,' groaned John Mortlake, bitterly, his face buried in his hands, 'you have come to do here.'

'No, John; for once you wrong me. I have come—come to see it—if you can pardon. John,' she added, with a tremor in her voice, 'I am dying.'

He glanced quickly up; his professional knowledge told him she was right. He moved forward and caught her as her figure swayed before him.

'Oh! Agnes—Agnes,' he murmured; 'that the Agnes I first knew should have come to this!'

'Ah! John,' she sighed, sadly, 'how many are mentally blind until approaching dissolution opens their eyes! You were a good, fond husband, and I disgraced you. You can forgive? I have travelled all this way on foot to hear you say you pardon me before I die.'

John Mortlake gazed into the eager, pleading face. He recollected only the bright, pretty girl whom years ago he loved. Her tears fell on the wan cheek as he pressed his lips to hers, saying:

'Agnes, from my soul I forgive you!'

The wife with a cry, flung her arms around him.

'Noble—noble to the last!' she exclaimed, then sunk a heavy weight in his grasp. Gently, after a space, John Mortlake laid her down among the ferns, and kneeling, his head bowed, he wept.

She was dead. With his pardon her soul had quitted earth.

Deeply touched, easily divining all, Laura stood apart, passive but sympathetic. She felt she had no right yet to intrude on the Doctor's grief.

Abruptly another stood there—her father. She saw tury on his countenance at perceiving John Mortlake kneeling in her presence, for at first he did not see the dead.

Words of passion were on his lips when Laura, moving quickly to him, placed her hand on his arm.

'Hush! papa,' she whispered. 'I know Mr. Mortlake's reason, and forgive him all. See!'

'His reason?'

The Doctor here arose, a d turning his white face, pointed downward.

'Is there, Mr. Hepworth,' he said, 'in this poor, dead woman you see my wife. Do you wonder I refused to confess my disgrace?'

The news of the Doctor's unhappy marriage, and its final soon ran through Eastwood, winning for him—when all was told—greater favor and sympathy than before.

The doors of Hepworth Lodge were again open to him, and a year later Laura, happy and content, became her new Doctor's wife.

A Blow at Cupid.

It was pretty hard to have the the honey moon clouded before we had been married two hours,' complained a newly-married man, as reported by the Detroit Free Press.

'Fact is, though, the excitement of the wedding-day took away the little sense I had remaining.'

'We were married at noon, and after dodging the customary rice and old shoes, left for the station. We had barely time to catch our train, and I rushed up to the ticket window at once. Then, once more we had to run the gauntlet of friends, who think it smart to throw rice down one's collar and have it sift down into one's shoes.'

'We got aboard at last, and when the train started I heaved a sigh of relief. When the conductor came around for the tickets I handed mine over. After looking at it for a moment, he asked me if the lady

was travelling with me.

'That was the last straw, and I snapped out for him to mind his own business.'

'That is what I am trying to do,' he answered, coolly. 'One more fare, please.'

'Then it flashed upon me that in the hurry and excitement of the moment I had forgotten that I had a wife—and I wilted right then and there. I paid the other fare and tried to laugh it off, but the look that my wife gave me will linger with me as long as I live. It took me two hours to argue her out of the impression that I didn't love her any more, and she isn't fully satisfied yet.'

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DEWEY AND PATTI.

How the Admiral Came to Hear Her Sing in Marseilles in 1866.

Mr. George W. Van Horne was one of Abraham Lincoln's consuls in Europe. He was in Marseilles, France, 1861 to 1866. He was perhaps the youngest man in the consular service, being only 27. His wife tells the following story of a visit by Admiral Dewey, then Lieutenant-commander, in that port:

'In the month of January, 1866, the booming of cannon in the offing told of the arrival of some foreign man-of-war. In the course of a couple of hours a group of naval officers entered the consulate, the spokesman introducing himself as Lieut. George Dewey, stating that the Kearsarge was in port, that he and his companions had come to pay their respects to Uncle Sam's representative, and that others of the ship's officers would follow.'

'Lieutenant-Commander Dewey was then a man of some twenty-eight years. Energy was shown in every movement. He had a kind smile, but for the most part was grave and serious. I liked him from the first, he looked so good, so trustworthy. His extreme neatness, too, impressed me. He was natty from head to foot.'

'The Kearsarge's officers were mostly young fellows of 22 and 23 full of life and delighted at being on shore. Lieut. Dewey was like an elder brother to them in everything, and they looked up to him accordingly.'

'We lunched one day on board the Kearsarge, and were shown over the ship, the places being pointed out where the vessel had been torn by shot and shell from the Alabama. But it was necessary to hurry home from the luncheon in question, for many of the ship's company were to dine with us, and go in the evening to hear Adeline Patti in the ever popular 'Barber of Seville.'

'This indeed was no ordinary event. Patti had been booked for the first time

(and for one night only) in Marseilles ten days before the arrival of the Kearsarge, and all the seats to the utmost limit of the opera house had been sold. The boys were wild to hear Patti, for we claimed her as an American, but admission without the seats could not be obtained. What was to be done? Patti the divine arrived in the city. Mr. Van Horn and myself went to call on the famous diva at the hotel. She seemed so glad to see us, and was most cordial and admonstrative. When she heard of our dilemma, she turned to her manager and brother-in-law, Strakoseh, and told him that he must make room for the officers of the Kearsarge. He replied that it was simply impossible, and emphasized his words with shrugs. Patti remarked, 'No seats, no opera.' And she meant it, too. It was finally arranged by Patti herself that the party from the ship were to have seats on the stage behind the scenes. On our bidding her adieu, she thanked us effusively for the privilege of conferring a favor on our sailor boys, and gave me a warm kiss and her photograph, both of which I dearly prize.'

'Mrs. Morse, the vice-consul, and myself went to see the Mayor, a personal friend, to try and procure a seat for Dewey in the Mayor's box. As a great favor he let us have two for that evening. If fell to me to do the most talking, as Dewey (modest then as ever) did not seem inclined to air his French. We looked from the box, which was in the second tier above the stage, and waved our hands to the boys below us and heard and saw Patti at her best.'

A DOCTOR'S HOMAGE.

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Wm. Erskine, Manager for Dr. R. R. Hopkins, Grand Valley, writes: 'I have a patient who has been cured by South American Rheumatic Cure. He had been trying everything on earth without the slightest relief, and had taken to his bed. Three doses relieved him, and when he had taken two bottles he was able to drive out. He immediately came to me and said this great remedy had saved his life. This remedy relieves in a few hours and is curing the world. Sold by E. C. Brown.'

Costs to Fit Hunchbacks.

A curious illustration of the advance of the cutter's art is shown nowadays in the making of clothes for hunchback men. Forty years ago, as middle-aged persons recall, the coat of a hunchback man was likely to fall more or less loosely from him while now his coat is made to fit him, as far as fit goes, as well as any man's. While the tailor overcomes many ordinary defects of man in fashioning his clothes, he cannot of course overcome this one, but he can cut garments that will make the least of it and will fit the wearer with the same appearance of trimness as that which characterizes every garment designed with care; and that is what he does.

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