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THE COUNTRY DOLLAR.

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From Sartain's Magazine, for September.

THE DOCTOR'S THIRD PATIENT;

Or, Remembrances from the Life of old Doctor Micah Asher.

BY THE REV. JOHN TODD, D. D.

The young medical student who now goes to the medical school, where he meets with a multitude of eager young men pursuing the same end, where are learned professors to instruct them, a beautiful cabinet, opportunities to visit hospitals, to witness surgical operations, to obtain subjects for dissection, and to read from a full library, can have no conception of what it was to become an eminent physician fifty-five years ago. If he shall advance as far beyond the men of that period as his opportunities are greater than theirs, he will indeed be a distinguished man. Now that the frosts of seventy winters are upon me, I have thought perhaps it would interest my young brethren of the profession to have me recall some of the incidents in my professional life. "Anti labres jucundi," and I hope to be pardoned if I am more egotistical than some would allow to be in good taste. It is the privilege of age to be garrulous.

One of my earliest and deepest impressions was made by our old family doctor. He was a large, portly man, kind-hearted, good-tempered, though his speech was quick, seldom giving offence, and always right in principle. His presence always lighted up a smile on the face of his patient, for the angel of hope always accompanied him. How often in my childhood have I slipped behind the great pear-tree by the garden gate and watched him, as he dismounted—for he always rode horseback—throw his huge saddle-bags over his left arm, and slowly walk into the house without knocking! I knew that in those saddle-bags were mysteries, and horrors, and sleeping agencies of great power, and I looked upon them as an Indian might be supposed to look upon a charged bomb-shell—not knowing when or how it might explode. I felt sure, for "all the boys said so," that his emetics were made of toads caught alive, and carefully baked and ground to a powder. With what reverence did I look upon "the Doctor"—a man who could feel the pulse and detect a fever in the wrist, who could extract teeth, take blood, draw a blister, order emetics, and make even stubborn "old Cæsar" swallow pills, salts, ipecac, jalap, however much he might writhe his great black face, and make mouths, or shrug the shoulders. Next to the minister whom I saw in the pulpit, I considered the doctor the greatest man living, and at a very early age I determined to be a physician. How often did I return to my humble home with bundles of wild weeds, or my hat full of "gold thread," dug up in the swamp! How rich I felt when I had a supply of "pennyroyal," "mother-wort," "bone-set," "snake-root," "elm-bark," "elder-berries," and every other herb with which I could fill the garret. I remember catching some green frogs and putting them in air-tight bottles, because I had understood that they were good to draw canker from children's mouths; but they unfortunately died before the experiment could be tested. Not a plant grew in "Canoe Swam," in the "Wampas Lot," or in the "Maple Lot," from the "adder's tongue" up to the "whistle-wood," with which I was not familiar. All the good old ladies for miles round said, "That boy'll certainly make a doctor—he takes to it so."

Thus I passed my boyhood on a farm, enjoying no advantages for education, except such as were afforded by the common free schools strung along the base of the Green Mountains, from the bluffs at New Haven to Canada. Medicine was my amusement during the sunny days of boyhood. If any of our domestic animals were sick, or looked sick, I was down upon them at once, and I distinctly remember, (why can't we as distinctly remember what we have done to human patients in the course of our practice?) giving my old dog Rover a dose that made him afraid of me for a whole year, and our one-eyed cat, Cyclops, a prescription that threw her into fits, and the young turkey, Taro, a few pills which for ever after stopped his growing and gobbling. I called them my "elongated pills."

At the age of twenty-two I found myself, with another student, and with a medical book protruding from each pocket, fairly on the track of my profession at old Dr. Sale's. He had a great reputation for being a deep man; and if talking in supertechnical language, and in a way not to be understood by anybody, is evidence of depth, then he was a deep man. But I have since learned that the world will call a man deep who brings up mud, whether he dive deep for it or not. The great burden of his instructions to his brace of students was on "the great importance of commanding the temper, keeping cool, and having the feelings in an imperturable state of quiescence." Alas! he was the most irritable and passionate man I ever knew. I had been with him at a distance one afternoon to visit a patient, and it was a cold April midnight before we got home. The Doctor's house stood on the very apex of a hill, and on the west side of it was a very steep descent. In trying to find the kitchen door—it was very dark—the Doctor stumbled over something, he knew not what. "Hang it and dang it!" cried he, for he never swore in good English. "Here, Mike, take hold of this confounded shin-breaker, and let us see if we can't get it out of the way! We lifted a while, when he gave it a furious kick, and away down the hill it went, rattling, and bounding, and clinking, till it reached the brook at the foot of the hill.—"There! lie there, will ye!" said he. The next morning I heard his meek wife lamenting that "all her new soap was spread over the ground like gravy, and the only soap-kettle in the region cracked and ruined." This was his imperturbation, and as he prided himself in governing his temper, I used to wonder what it *would* have been had he not governed it.

I now began to find real difficulties. I had very few books, had never seen the skeleton or frame of the human body, and had never witnessed a surgical operation, or a body dissected. Oh! if I could have had a skeleton to look at for a single hour! Accidentally, or rather providentially, about this time I met with an old hunter, who had spent most of his life in the wilderness. In narrating his exploits, he told how he and a fellow-hunter had once found a man dead in the forests, who had probably got lost and eventually died of starvation. The hunters buried him slightly, and placed a heap of stones over the grave. I made the most minute inquiries of the old man, as to the spot, the route to it, the distance, and the like. I then tried to draw a map of the way; but I soon found that when imagination came to retire, and knowledge to tell what she knew, it was a very different affair. I retired to think and to plan. The grave was in the heart of the great wilderness in the State of New York, on a little lake, called by the hunters "Cranberry Lake," and known only by them. I knew it would be impossible to get a hunter to go with me on such an errand, or even to allow me to go if he knew my object. Would it be possible for me to go alone? Would it be possible for me actually to possess a human skeleton? I determined to try. So on a certain day I was at the last hunter's lodge, on the Saranac River, questioning old Mr. Moody as to the route, the crossings from river to lake, and from one water to another, as to "the carrying places," and comparing his answers with my map, it seemed madness to attempt to go alone, as really so as if I were setting out for the moon.—But I procured a little boat from Moody, and taking an old rifle, a bag of provisions, and an axe, launched my frail craft on the lower Saranac Lake, and set off alone. What days of toil I had, searching for outlets to the lakes, carrying my boat through the woods and brush, guided by trees marked by the Indian's tomahawk, and half killed by fear of the panthers, with which the forest abounded. On the fifth day I had travelled perhaps a hundred miles in my circuitous route, when I came to the "Great Falls," on the Rachette River, and then knew that I must here leave my boat and strike off through the woods for Cranberry Lake. Drawing my boat up carefully into the bushes, I found a new cause of fear. It was an Indian newspaper! i. e., one side of a large cedar had been hewn off, and on it, with charcoal, was drawn an Indian canoe, with two men in it paddling, a dog looking out, and six deer's (buck's) heads. The canoe was headed down stream. A full moon was over them and a buck's head under it.—By this I knew that there were Indians near me, who had just gone down the river, having killed six bucks already, and were to spend the full moon in hunting below. This was for the information of other Indians who might wish to find them. I concealed my boat with great caution, and set off at once for my lake. A deer bounded up before me, but I was too much afraid of the Indians to let my rifle be heard. All that day I travelled in the woods by the instructions I had received. How often I hastened towards a bright spot in the woods before me in hopes of seeing my lake, and how my heart leapt for joy when, just before sunset, I actually struck it! I could have kissed its very mud.—How I found the poor stranger's grave, and exulted as a miser would have done over gold, and how I worked, and toiled, and finally got the bones, every one of them! into my bag, and on my back, I shall not attempt to describe. It cost me three days' hard work, and work not the most pleasant. And I was ready to set out for my boat, and set out I did, but had hardly left the lake ere I was lost! It was cloudy, the forest was thick and wet, and I knew nothing which way to go. The man that is lost in the woods is not merely bewildered, but he is maddened. I rushed one way till exhausted, and then another way, but the trees were all alike, and I was lost. The night came on, wet, cold and dreary. My provisions were gone, for I had been nearly twice as long in the forest as I expected. My punk was wet, and my knife and steel would afford me no fire. So I lay down in the great woods lost, without food or fire, with no company but the dead man's bones! The wolves were howling near me, and the sharp cry of the panther was added, while the owls sang a full and dismal chorus.—What a long, awful night was that! Should I ever find the way out of this mighty forest, or must I there perish, and perhaps somebody hereafter find my bones, and come and back them out for a skeleton! I looked into the utter darkness of the place, and more than once asked, mentally, if there was any possibility that the spirit of the dead man would come back and upbraid me with robbing his grave? I felt my bullet-pouch, and found I had just seven balls; these I thought I might cut in two pieces, and thus give me a chance of fourteen shots for food. But that long night was invaluable to me. I reviewed my life, and examined the object for which I had lived. For the first time in my life I truly and sincerely prayed. I made vows to God, if he would conduct me out alive, & laid plans for my future life, and laid down the principles on which I would act. All my success and character are to be traced back to that lonely night. In the morning, without having closed my eyes in sleep, faint and hungry, I sit off again, tho' with feeble courage. How intensely burdensome was my pack and my rifle now! About noon I came to a lofty mountain, and after panting and resting many times, I reached its summit. Then a world of forest lay spread out before me, and many a beautiful lake too, looking in its green fringe like a basin of silver. After a long time in settling the geography, I decided which must be Tupper's Lake, and though I could not see the thread of the Rachette River, yet I knew it must lie west of it and that the Falls must be about so and so.—Then came hope and whispered to me, and I felt strong and revived. That night I got so near as to hear the roar of the falls, and the next day I reached my boat. I then killed a deer, ate with a relish which I remember to this day, and in a few days more was out of the woods, and my treasure with me. I dared not show it even to the old Doctor; but how I gloated over those bones! studied them! strung them! They were the beginning of my professional knowledge, and were worth to me a thousand fold more than their cost.

I was sitting alone in the Doctor's office one day, when who should come waddling up to the door but "Aunt Becky" Gorhom—as everybody called her. She was the shortest person for her size and weight I ever saw,—a poor woman who lived and laid up money on twenty dollars a year & her board,—one who had no enemies, and not character enough to have very warm friends. She had a very good opinion of herself in all respects, and there was something so irresistibly ludicrous in her round, unmeaning face and masculine voice, one could hardly keep from laughing whenever she appeared. As she rolled into the door, I knew that something was out of sorts.

"Is the old Doctor at hum?"

"No, Mrs. Gorhom. Can I do anything for you?"

"Why I've got the toothache most despitly. Where *is* the Doctor?"

"Gone out of town. But I think I can take out your tooth for you."

"You!" and her face actually expressed amazement."

"Yes."

"Why you don't know nothing about it! Never pulled a tooth in your life."

"You are mistaken, Mrs. Gorhom, I have pulled several this very day."

(I had been pulling the teeth out of the skeleton, and putting them back again.)

"You don't say so!"

"I do say so. Suppose you just let me look at your tooth."

She opened her mouth, and there it was—a huge double tooth, just such a tooth as I wanted to begin with. It was much decayed. But she would not let me touch it.

"Mister, can't you put something in it—some of your stuff?"

I bethought myself, and could hardly conceal a smile as I crowded in a neat piece of saltpeter! She shut her mouth, and fearing lest she must have something to pay, left at once. It was just as I expected. In five minutes she came back, holding her head with both hands, and exclaiming, "Why, what on earth *did* you put into it, young man?"

"*Nitrate of potassa*, madam, nothing else, I assure you."

"Well—Oh dear! dear! you have killed me! Do get it out!"

Once more she opened her mouth, and the turn-key which I had concealed in my sleeve was on it, and in one instant the tooth flew across the room. She gave a yell of pain and indignation.

"Why, you pesky fellow, I told you to take out that stuff, that *niter of potato*, as you called it."

"Well, I have taken it out."

"Yes, and the tooth too, and mayhap ruined my jaw forever."

"Not at all. You will find all safe."

She then washed her mouth, found her jaws all right, and a smile lit up her face as she left, and said,

"Really, doctor, you've done the work as well as the old doctor, only I don't like to have things done so quick. Thank the Lord, though, that the thing is out!"

What an hour was that! I had pulled my first tooth, and had been called "doctor!" My conscience smote me for the deception I had practised, and I felt that I had violated one of the principles agreed upon in the dark night in the forest.

There were no diplomas, no being made doctor by a vote of half a dozen men. It took the whole community to make a doctor in those days. But I was sure I had now received my doctorate. And sure enough, after that, people taller than Aunt "Becky" began to call me doctor, or "the young doctor."

I now left my old teacher, and sought where I might set up for myself, though every day satisfied me that I was poorly prepared to have human lives committed to me, I read everything on medicine & disease which I could obtain, and questioned every doctor, and even every old nurse I could light upon. Some shook their heads at my questions, and hinted at the danger of experimenting and tampering with human life, with being rash and the like. Others tried to persuade me that the whole of medical practice consisted in being able to cleanse the bowels and empty the stomach, and let nature have the opportunity to do her own cures. In vain did I procure vials and saddlebags, open an office, hang out my sign, "Dr. Asher," and advertise "To be seen at the office at all hours." The last was lilerally true, for nobody called me away, or came there to consult me. At the end of three long months, during which I was invited out to tea twice, but without having had my first patient, an uncle of mine proposed to send me up to the head-waters and sources of the Hudson, to examine a township of land mhich he had been purchasing. So I advertised "that Dr. Asher being called away by urgent business, would close his office during his unavoidable absence, which would be as short as possible." My directions were to follow the Hudson up as far as Indian River, then go up to Indian Lake, take Elijah, or "Lige," (the Indian,) as he was called, as a guide, and go over to Rock Lake, where the land was to be found. After various mishaps, I found "Lige," a noble fellow, but then, his cance must be *puccoed*, (made tight with pitch,) and then, I must wait another day for him to go down to M'Elroys to get his trousers. M'Elroy was a squatter on the Indian River, and the only man who lived in that township. All day, till three o'clock in the afternoon, I waited for my guide, but he came not. After trying to sleep, to "whittle," to whistle, and be patient, I determinid to go after my Indian. Following the blazed trees through thick woods for a mile or more, I came to the log cabin. At the door I met my friend "Lige," as pale as a sheet. I had no idea that an Indian could look so white.

"Why, Elijah, what's the matter? Have you got lost?"

Turning round and mysteriously pointing to the cabin, he said, in a low voice,

"Woman there—he sick—he very sick!"

"Ah! what is the matter with her?"

"Me don't know. He very sick. He see angel, see God, see devil! He's eyes look so, me fraid! He's teeth bite so!—He point so!"

On entering the log house, I found a woman lying on a very rude bed, with an idiot son on one side of the room holding up a sore foot, and the husband standing over the woman with a kind of howl continually poured out of his mouth. The woman was rolling her eyes, gnashing her teeth, pointing upward, screeching and shuddering. She trembled all over, and was apparently on the point of convulsions. The husband was nearly intoxicated, and kept howling "Oh! och! what *will* I do?—Poor wife, pou'll die—you'll certainly die, and oh! och! what will I do?" The woman was seeing snakes, angels, devils, & I know not what besides. I stepped back and beckoned the Indian.

"Elijah, does this woman drink?"

"No, he never drink. Man drink so as horse. Woman never drink."

"Are you sure?",

"Yes—he never drink. He good woman."

Once more I rushed into the house again and said, "Stand back, and be still, Mr. M'Elroy. Let me see her. I hope I can do her good."

"Who are you?" asked he fiercely.

"Oh, don't you know? I am Dr. Asher, from Massochusetts."

I had on a red flannel shirt without any collar, wood-pants, and boots, and looked like anything rather than a doctor.

"Oh! my *dear*, my *dear!*" shouted he, "here's the great Dr. Asher from New York! the great Dr. Asher! An angel of mercy from heaven, and the great brazen serpent in the wilderness, my dear! He'll care you! Oh! och! the great brazen serpent!"

Bidding the foot to hold his tongue, I next summoned all my little medical knowledge to bear upon the agnosis of my patient's disease, and soon satisfied myself that it was a violent case of hpsteria, bro't on by hard labor and severe exposure.—Rummaging between the logs, what was my joy to find a paper containing a lump of assafœtida! I made up several pills, and dropped one into the snapping jaws of the woman every few minutes. The discovery of this medicine satisfied me that it would not have been in that peculiar place unless she had been in somewhat similar condition before. Before I got there, she had complained of burning up, and they had dashed a pail of cold water over her. Then she had complained of freezing, and they had a fire large enough to roast an ox. In further searching, I found a bundle of valerian, which she had gathered in the woods, and making a strong decoction of it, I induced her to drink now and then a swallow. In short two hours she was quiet, her senses returned, and I found her a modest, sensible, and intelligent woman. The violent symptoms were gone and returned no more. I then prescribed such poultices for the poor idiot's foot as were to be had. The woman recovered in two days so as to leave her bed. Among the many patients I have since had, and among the heavy fees and rich gifts which I have since had showered upon me, I have never had any so rich as were the thanks of that poor woman when I came to save her. She had nothing to offer me but a single loaf of coarse bread. I took a piece of it and carried it with me, and every time I took it out of my provision bag I blessed God that my profession was one of mercy, and promised him that if ever I got into practice I would be as faithful to the poor as to the rich. In proportion as I have been faithful to this vow I have been prospered. I felt encouraged too, because *now I had had my first patient!*

Having accomplished my examination of timber, I returned to my uncle's, and held a consultation as to what was next to be done. "The difficulty," said he, is "in getting the first patient. When a young physician has once accomplished that, he is in a fair way to gain practice." I told him that I was safe then, for I had had my first patient, and related the circumstances as above. The old gentleman shook his head. "That would have done admirably had it been in your village, where it could have been wondered over; but now nobody but your Indian friend can marvel over it. You must try again; and in order to aid you, I will lend you my colt, Lebo, and sulky. You must go back to your home where your office is, and you must rattle boxes, jingle vials, and every morning you must get out Lebo, and drive through the village as if life and death hung on your speed, and by and by you will be in demand as well as appear to be. Depend upon it, nephew, the world does not think or judge for itself, and the article that is in demand, be it what it may, is the article that all seek after. The certain and sure way to make your fortune would be to get up some quack pills made of aloes, flour, and molasses; but I trust you have too much self-respect and too much principle to swindle the public out of money, for which you render no equivalent. I see no difference myself between putting off money, or flour, or medicine, that is worthless—unless it be that the last is the most cruel, as it raises hopes to be dashed, and probably prevents the use of means that might be useful in restoring health. Never do that. But this riding out—why it will do Lebo good to exercise, and you good to ride, and I don't see as it can be wrong, and yet," shaking his head, "I confess I don't quite like the looks of it."

Promising to follow his advice as far as I could, without compromising principle, I accepted the horse and sulky, and once more announced to the public that I had returned, and would be most happy to wait on the good public. Still I was "the young doctor, and nobody gave me patronage. Some were afraid of new doctors, some were afraid of young doctors, some wanted the doctor to be a married man, and some hated to leave "an old road for a new one." In vain did I open door and windows, and show vials, and let the noise of my pestle and mortar ring early and late; in vain I harnassed Lebo and drove out in different directions. No patients were offered. At length, when I had become much discouraged, as I brought out my horse one morning I saw Ned Lundy bring out his, at the door of the hotel immediately opposite. I knew not how it was, but I suspected mischief in the fellow. But what could I do? My patients, (imaginary ones,) must be visited punctually.—So I pounded with my pestle and mortar for a few moments, took up my saddle-bags, hung out on the door, "to return soon;" mounted my sulky, and drove off at a furious rate. In a few moments I looked back, and there was Ned Lundy behind me, with a half-roguish smile on his face. I reined up to let him pass, but no, he would not go past. I drove Lebo to the top of his speed, but there Ned was behind me in my wake, evidently determined to follow me, and to show up all my riding and diligence to be mere put on!—How I perspired and almost groaned as the fellow stuck to me like a bur. At length I turned suddenly down Rainbow Lane, and drove as fast as I could. In vain—Ned was a fixture. Being assured that he would make me the laughing-stock of the village, I was planning what to do, when I noticed Farmer Fitch at a distance before me mowing. As my eye fell on him, I noticed that he faltered and fell.—By the time I got opposite him I heard a groan! In a moment my reeking Lebo was stopped, and I was lifting Farmer Fitch up from the ground and calling Ned Lundy to come to my aid. The farmer was bleeding like an ox, for he was terribly cut with his scythe, and was fainting. How I staunched the blood, bound up his wound, carried him home, attended him during his confinement, and, as he said, "saved his life!" No matter; Ned did not get the laugh on me. I obtained a *second* and a valuable patient, and felt encouraged.

But my *third* patient! Ah! "thereby hangs a tale!" My *third* patient! That was the turning point in my life! That is yet to be told.

A Country Wedding.

The preacher was prevented from taking his part in the ceremony, and a newly created Justice of the Peace, who chanced to be present, was called upon to officiate in his place. The good man's knees to tremble for he had never tied the knot and did not know where to begin. He had no "Georgia Justice," or any other book from which to read the marriage service. The company was arranged in a semi-circle, each one bearing a tallow candle. He thought over every thing he had ever learned, but all in vain; he could recollect nothing that suited the occasion. A suppressed titter all over the room admonished him that he must proceed with something, and in an agony of desperation he began—

"Know all men by these presents that I"—here he paused, and looked up to the ceiling, while a voice in a corner of the room was heard to say—

"He is drawing a deed for a tract of land;" and they all langhed.

"In the name of God, amen!" he began again, only to hear another voice in a loud whisper say—

"He is making his will; I thought he couldn't live long, he looks so powerfully bad."

'Oh, yes! O, yes!' continued the squire.

A voice replied, "O, no! O, no! don't lets."

Some persons out of doors sung out, "Come into court!" and the laughter was general.

The bride was near fainting; the squire was not far from it. Being an indefatigable man, however, he began again.

"To all and singular, the sher—"

"Let's run; he's going to levy on us," said two or three at once.

Here a gleam of light flashes across the face of the Squire. He ordered the bride and groom to hold up their hands and in a solemn voice said:

"You, and each of you, do solemnly swear, in the presence of the present company, that you will perform towards each other all and singular the functions of husband and wife, as the case may be, to the best of your knowledge and ability, so help you God."

"Good as wheat!" exclaimed the father of the bride.—*Stamford Advertiser.*

Murder at Beverly, New Jersey.

The affray that occurred at Beverly, N. J., on Sunday was a truly deplorable affair. A party of young rowdies, who went there from the city, indulged in a disgraceful fight on the wharf, just as the passengers were coming aboard the steamer Edwin Forrest, Capt. McMakin, to return to town, and a young man named John Collins, living at or near the place, was mortally stabbed by some one in the melee, and expired in about ten minutes. The cowardly assassin who perpetrated the foul murper, and who could not be detected, it is believed came from town in the Forrest, and returned in that boat.—He has not yet been discovered but every effort is being made to ferret him out.—No censure can be cast upon the officers of the Edwin Forrest. An eye witness informs us that Captain McMakin, while he very properly refused, in the midst of the intense excitement that prevailed, to allow the mob to rush into his boat, offered every facility to the police authorities to come aboard and search for the assassin.

Neals's Gazette.

One of the hours each day wasted on trifles or indolence, saved and daily devoted to improvement, is enough to make an ignorant man wise in ten years—to provide the luxury of intelligence to a mind torpid from lack of thought—to brighten up and strengthen faculties perishing with rust—to make life a fruitful field, and death a harvest of glorious deeds.

There is religion in every thing around us—there is a cam and holy religion not only in the animate, but in the inanimate, unbreathing things of nature, and we would be wise to consider it. It is a meek and blessed influence—stealing, as it were, upon the heart. It has not errors, it rouses not the passions—and is untrammelled by the creeds of superstitious men.

Of all the members of the French Provisional Government of 1848, Lamartine and Cremieux alone are now in the Assembly. All others are in disgrace or exile.

MR. POLK.—It is stated that Mr. Polk left a fortune estimated at $100,000.