

MY SINGULAR VISITOR.

A DOCTOR'S STORY.

I AM A DOCTOR. I live in London, and in one of the most crowded localities.

I had been in my present abode two years, and had never had a patient from the more aristocratic circles, when one night, about 11:30, I was startled by a violent ring at my bell, and having just got to bed after a hard day's work, I can't say the summons was agreeable.

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

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

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

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

"Yes," I said.

"Then come with me," said she.—"Don't delay. It's life or death. Come!"

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

"You must be my guide, madam," I said. I don't know where you live."

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

"Who is ill madam?" I inquired, "a grown person or a child?"

"A young lady—my daughter," she said.

"Suddenly?"

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

"I keep no conveyance," I answered.

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

"Certainly not rich," I said.

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

"You are excited, madam," I said.—"Pray be calm."

"Calm!" she said—"calm! but you don't know a mother's heart."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I will be there in an hour," I replied.

The lady took out her purse.

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

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

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

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

"Ah," said she. "Has missus called you in again?"

"Yes," I answered.

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

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

Three weeks passed by, when, lo! the old lady again.

She walked into my consulting room, dressed as before, as greatly agitated, as carefully polite.

"Sir," she said, "again I trouble you. My poor daughter! Come at once."

"Madam," I answered, "It's a doctor's duty, as it should be his pleasure, to obey such calls; but you are not aware that I have been sent from your door twice without seeing the patient. Allow me to ask you a question—are you the mistress of that house?"

"Heaven knows I am," said the old lady. "I have lived there for forty years. I own it. I am the only person under that roof who has the right to give an order."

"And the person who sent me away?"

"My old servant, Margaret."

"Did she do it at your order?"

"No, sir; it was a piece of presumption. But Margaret means well. She loves us."

"Then, madam, if I accompany you, I shall see the patient?"

"Assuredly, sir."

I put on my hat again, and we went out of the house together. We exchanged very few words as we walked the streets. At the door of her house the old lady paused.

"Don't mind Margaret," she whispered. "She means well."

Then she ascended the steps.

At the last one the door was opened to us by the woman I had seen twice before.

"The doctor must see my child, Margaret," said the old lady.

Margaret stepped back.

"Walk in, sir," was all that she said.

The old lady beckoned me to follow her. I did so. She went up stairs and opened the first door we came to. It was an empty bed-room. She closed it with a sigh. The next room into which she led me was also empty. So were all the others. In effect, we visited six apartments, only one of which seemed to be regularly occupied as a sleeping chamber and at the last the old lady turned to me with a strange glitter in her eyes:

"Stolen," she said, "stolen; somebody has stolen my girl. Sir, do you know, I think it must be Satan!"

Then a steady step crossed the sill.—Margaret came in, and the old lady, bursting into tears, suffered her to lead her away.

As I made my way down stairs Margaret rejoined me.

"You understand it now," she said.—"You see, this poor lady is not in her right mind."

"I do, indeed," I said.

"She had a daughter once," said Margaret, "and the girl—a pretty creature of sixteen—ran away with a bad man.—She came home one day and begged forgiveness. Her mother turned her from the door in a fury. It was night; the rain and hail beat down on the poor thing, and the wind buffeted her. There is no knowing what happened her that night; but next morning she lay dead in the police station. Her mother's address was pinned to her baby's clothing and they brought her home. From that awful day, sir, my mistress—who, in her remorse and delirium, called in twenty doctors to bring her dead daughter to life—has always been doing what she has done to you. I try to keep the secret generally, but some find it out and others think odd things of us. I thought I would let you know the truth. If she contrives to come again to you, you can always promise to call, and so be rid of her. Poor soul! she has nobody in the world but me now. She's punished for her hardness, at any rate, and you'll excuse her conduct."

I bowed. I could say nothing. Margaret opened the door for me, and I walked out into the fresh air.

As I looked back upon the house, with all its elegance, it seemed to me to have a haunted air, as though the ghost of the poor girl still hovered about it.

"God only knows how many fearful secrets such handsome homes may at times shut in," I said to myself as I turned my back upon it gladly.

I have never seen the poor old lady since that hour. Probably Margaret has kept too close a watch upon her.

A Funny Predicament.

ABOUT 11:30 o'clock on Wednesday night there was a peculiar noise noticeable to the passer-by near the corner of Fifth and Main streets. The boarders at McQueen's restaurant were the first to hear the noise; and the first to rush forth to save a corpulent colored lady from Warrensburg, weighing not less than two hundred and thirteen pounds and a half.

She had become oppressed by the heat

at Long's Hall during the "celebration ball," and had stepped out upon the little veranda over the back alley to fan herself and "get a breff of air." Unfortunately for the well-fed female, she did not preserve her equilibrium, as she rocked herself to and fro upon the slight railing. Suddenly, and when no one else was nigh, Mrs. Duncan went over with a short and agonizing squeak of alarm.

Lucky for the corpulent old lady, there was a dry-goods box exactly beneath the window, and as luck would have it, she struck square upon her head. She fell with such force—eighteen feet—as to burst in the side of the box, punching a hole large enough for her head, but too small to admit her shoulders, and there the poor old lady was pilloried head downwards, and it were her shrieks which attracted the attention of McQueen's boarders.

At first none of the young men dared approach the strange-looking spectacle. There legs, and these were high in the air, but the head was out of sight.—There was crinoline and muslin, but it was out of shape and form. But from the cavernous recesses of the huge box came forth the plaintive plea: "For de lub ob God pull me out! Ise on de brink ob deff!" With some difficulty the unfortunate old lady was extricated from her unpleasant position and sent on her way rejoicing. She was hurt somewhat about the neck by the splinters of the box, and her nose was somewhat scratched. The box had a hole punched in it as nicely as though a battering ram had been driven through it.—Kansas City Times.

OLD TIMES OF PHILADELPHIA.

THE Philadelphia North American gives the following interesting account of some of the Old Times of that city:—Before the modern style of hotel came into vogue there existed in all our cities and towns a class of caravansaries called inns, modelled after the English type portrayed by Hogarth in one of his best pictures, which were the headquarters of travel, and where people found stabling for the horses and carriages they journeyed in. This was essential in an age when there were no railroads and when all travel by land was in stage coaches, post coaches or private vehicles. Before the introduction of railroads and steamboats, therefore, the inns of Philadelphia were establishments of very considerable importance. They all had extensive stables, yards, and out-houses attached, and all the business of the city clustered about them. They were all named in the quaint olden style, based upon the ancient European custom of having for each trade place a symbol or sign of some kind. Our Philadelphia inns held out pretty well, long after the railroads had become all the rage. Those which remained longest and are best remembered by the present generation were the Red Lion, on Market street, above Sixth, with stable on Sixth street; the Western Exchange, on the present site of the Pennsylvania Railroad freight station, Fifteenth and Market streets; the Black Bear, at Fifth and Miner streets; the Golden Horse, in the rear of the northwest corner of Third and Market streets; the White Swan, in Race street, above Third; the Camel, the Wheat Sheaf, the Barley Sheaf, the White Bear, the Bull's Head, and a number with such signs as White Horse, Sorrel Horse, Farmer's Inn, Western Inn, etc. The inns served for the headquarters of various distinct classes.—Some were frequented by the country gentry with horses, carriages and servants. Others were chiefly for butchers and drovers, and had drove-yards attached. Others were for farmers and their wagons and horses, and very often their families also. Some were famous for horse sales.

Along the Delaware river grew up a peculiar class of inns at the public landings, the earliest and most celebrated of which was the Crooked Billet, where Benjamin Franklin stopped when he first arrived in Philadelphia, a runaway apprentice from Boston. The growth of population and trade along the river made all the ferry-houses important. But only one survives in the old style at the foot of Arch street. Of the farmers' inns it may be said that they clustered near the market houses on Market street, north Second, south Second, Callowhill, Shippen, and other streets, and this class of business survives, as the farmers who come to market are quite numerous. The stables are still attached to many of these inns, and the old style of management is pretty well kept up. They are, however, far below the dignity of the inns of the olden time, though the fare is wholesome and plentiful, and the comfort decidedly good.

Along all the turnpike roads leading to the city there grew up a noted class of country inns, which, in the course of time, became quite celebrated with carriage folks. Such as are still fresh in the memory are the Blue Bell, on the Darby

road; the Fox Chase and the Rising Sun, on the Germantown road; the Jolly Post, at Frankford, long kept by the father of Howard Paul, the actor and author; the Robbin Hood, on Ridge road, and the Bull's Head, on the Westchester road. These old inns are rich in reminiscences of the past. The Robbin Hood gave its name to the bill on which it stood, and Lamb Tavern gave its name to a celebrated road. The Punch Bowl still flourishes on North Broad street.

There are many old taverns in the city that have come down to us from that venerable past that were not inns of the class we have described. These have the peculiar old signs, the antique looking bar-rooms, and the buildings are indisputable relics of the buried generations. But they were only popular resorts for drinking. Some were for a long series of years, the ward houses of the old wards of the city and liberties, when a ward had but one poll to vote at. In those times the ward poll had a political life and vigor wholly unknown. Goldsmith's description of the inn in the "Deserted Village" and Dicken's scenes at Joe Willet's Inn in "Barnaby Rudge" would convey a good idea of the Philadelphia ward house in the olden time.

There was another class of taverns sometimes mixed up with those we have mentioned, which had a distinct fame. Of this there were the Falstaff, corner of Sixth and Jayne streets, the resort of the old Chestnut St. Theatre company in its palmy days, and of all the gentlemen of the city who were mixed up with dramatic affair; the Mummy, in Theatre-alley, back of the old National Theatre, founded by an admirer of Burton the comedian, and a great resort like the Falstaff; Bath Coffee House, on south Delaware avenue, the ferry-house to Smith's Island for nearly half-a-century; the Robert Morris, Fairmount, the headquarters of the boat clubs; Harding's, at the west end of the old Wire Bridge, a great resort for pleasure-parties; Bolivar House, Chestnut St., above Sixth, was the resort of sportsmen. Indeed there was scarcely a fancy or taste of any kind that did not have its special tavern. In the same way English, Scotch, Welsh, Irish, French and Germans all used to have their separate headquarters at public houses, which in that sense were inns. Among the old time names there was an odd mixture of Scripture like The Good Samaritan and Samson Slaying the Lion, with classic like the Golden Fleece, the patriotic like the General Wayne, the General Montgomery, and the Naval Victories of 1812, and all sorts, horses, bulls, lions, leopards and other zoological specimens. And though so many have disappeared before the march of improvement, enough are still left to satisfy the curious.

Sleeping Saints.

IN MOST of our Sunday congregations, about these days, may be found good, weary souls, who are unable to resist the inclination to fall asleep. However resolute to keep wide awake they are sure to succumb, and are often deeply mortified by such Sunday sluggishness. How much charity is demanded for these church sleepers we are not able to determine. No doubt man's indoor habits and outdoor avocations have much to do with their propensity, and they are entitled to our sympathy.

Where the indiscretion is of deliberate intention it certainly merits rebuke, and the course taken by Elder Swan is to be commended. Seeing a man fixing himself in his pew for a comfortable nap, the Elder, suddenly interrupting his discourse, is reported to have said: "When people are overcome with sleep I am moved to pity them, but when I see them deliberately making a nest for themselves, like that man over yonder, I consider it a downright insult to the preacher."

Elder Knapp at a hot evening service in the church at Hamilton, in which were many who were nodding, when they were suddenly startled by his repeated thumping of the Bible, while he cried out, at the top of his voice:—"Wake up! wake up! this house is free for all who wish to hear the Gospel, but those who come here to sleep will be charged two shillings for their lodgings."

In our student days we were acquainted with an eccentric young man, who, when supplying a pulpit not many miles from the institution, was greatly annoyed by observing an unusual number of bowed heads in the congregation, whereupon he gravely remarked: "If all you that have your heads down are praying, it's all right; but, if you are sleeping, I might about as well stop preaching."

On the roads leading from the Whitman mine to the old town of Como, Nev., there is a rock the profile of which has so singular a resemblance to the profile of Washington that from a certain point of view the most careless observer cannot fail to note the likeness.

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