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THE DOCTOR'S STORY, —OR— A Bride From the Grave.

IT is almost an old story now, though I was an actor in it; but the world is ever reproducing itself in some form or fashion. Was there not an instance, in the August of this very year, of a resurrection taking place at Harrington, when all that quiet locality was startled from its propriety by the discovery of a body cast in its shroud beside its grave, which had been violated to procure the jewelry with which the deceased had been interred? My adventure, however, refers to the regular old "body snatching" times, before unclaimed subjects were supplied to the anatomical theatres from our public hospitals, and when houseless ruffians of the lowest and vilest type made a livelihood by their loathsome and almost nameless trade.

I had graduated at the great medical school of Edinburg, after a hard tussel with Hunter and Fyfe's Anatomies, Bell on the Bones, the cell theories of Schwann, and even grappling with some of the abstruse and now exploded speculations of Gall and Spurzheim. I had mastered all; I had undergone all the jollity of the graduation dinner, and with Frederick Morrison, M. D., duly figuring on my portmanteau, found myself, with my college chum Bob Asher (who, by the way, had not passed), sailing from the harbor of Leith for London, in the Royal Adelaide, one of the only two steamers which then plied between these ports.

Though "plucked" for the third time, poor Bob was in no way cast down. With him, study at Edinburg had been all a sham. He had duly "matriculated," and sent the ticket as a proof thereof to his father, who duly paid for classes he never attended, and expensive books he never read. But Bob had always plenty of money then, at least, while I had barely wherewith to pay my class fees and lodgings in Clerk Street, a quiet place near the university.

At last I had the letters "M. D." appended to my name—those magical letters which open the secrets of households, the chambers of the fairest, the purest, and most modest and most refined to the perhaps hitherto wild, and it may be "rake-hell" student, who is thereby transformed suddenly into a member of the learned profession, a grave and responsible member of society.

I had graduated from one of the best German universities, and was turned out with the mystic letters, "M. D.," to my name.

A comfortable home, board and washing, with forty pounds per annum whereon to enjoy the luxuries of this life, were the inducements which drew me back to London, where I became duly inducted as assistant to Dr. Crammer, in Bedford Street, Strand, one of those old-fashioned practitioners who always had a lighted crimson bottle flaming over the door by night, and had a dingy little room off the entrance hall, with a skull or two on a side table, snakes in "good spirits" on the mantel-shelf, and which by its appurtenances seemed laboratory, surgery and library in one.

The doctor's practice was more fashionable, however, than one might have expected from his locality, and many a patient of his I visited in the stately regions of Piccadilly and those pretty villas that face Buckingham Palace and the Green Park. Dr. Crammer was a fussy and pompous little man, with a bald head, an ample paunch, and a

general exterior like that of the well-known Mr. Pickwick. He was vain of his aristocratic practice, and more vain of none than of the family of Sir Percival Chalcot, whose eldest daughter was said to be one of the handsomest girls in London, and whose son was in the Household Brigade.

I flattered myself that I had rather a taking manner and gentlemanly exterior; and that old Crammer was a little vain of me as an assistant, especially after I passed at Apothecaries Hall—an absurdity necessary then for graduates of the Scotch universities, who otherwise were liable to imprisonment.

I soon remarked, however, that he never sent me to the baronet's. Every visit there he made in person, and by himself; every dose of medicine, however infinitesimal, was conveyed there by his own hand; for he liked to have it to say to a friend, *en passant*, "I am just going to," or, "have come from Sir Percival Chalcot. Lady Chalcot is unwell;" or, "Miss Gertrude overdone herself at the palace, last night." So that great house, near where now the stately arch is overtopped by that hideous statue of Wellington, was to me as a sealed book. I soon ceased to think about it, and gave all my attention and skill to the smaller fry in the neighborhood of the Strand; and between St. Clements and St. Martin's there is scope enough, heaven knows.

One day a professional visit had taken me further westward than usual, and I was sitting wearily on a seat in Hyde Park, near the statue of Achilles, watching the occasional carriages rolling past—I say occasional, for it was an hour or two before the fashionable time—when a cry roused me, and I saw a spirited horse coming along the drive at a terrific pace. Its head was down, and it had evidently the bit between its teeth; while the reins, which had escaped the hand of the rider, a lady, were dangling between the forelegs. She seemed a skillful horsewoman, and kept her saddle well. I saw her floating skirt, her streaming veil, her pale face, and wild, imploring glance as she came on. One or two men attempted to catch the bridle, but were instantly knocked over.

I leaped the iron railing, and by the greatest good fortune contrived to snatch the reins, to gather them together at the same instant, to twist the curb behind the horse's jaw, thus arresting his progress; and then, with a strength I did not think myself possessed of, to bear it furiously back upon its haunches. At the same moment that I thus mastered it, I was conscious of hearing something snap; a dreadful pain shot through my left arm, which hung powerless by my side; but the lady, who was both young and beautiful, with a charmingly pretty face, and large dark hazel eyes, gave me a glance expressive of intense relief and gratitude.

"Thank you, sir—thank you. O, how shall I ever sufficiently thank you!" she muttered, hurriedly, with pallid lips.

"It was well done, miss—splendidly done of the gentleman," said her old gray-haired groom, who came up at a rasping pace. "Another instant, and the blind brute would have dashed you ag'in yonder gate."

"My papa shall thank you for this, sir; at present I am unable to speak," she added.

So also was I; but she knew not the extent of the injury I had suffered, as she bowed and rode away, her horse being now led by the groom, who had taken its bridle; while I was left there with my broken limb, and without any clue as to who she was, save her handkerchief, which I picked up on the walk, and in a corner of which was the single letter "G."

For a time I felt very faint; but at that juncture Bob Asher drove past in his phaeton, and took me home. Old Crammer set the bone, which progressed favorably, and after a few days I was able to go abroad a little, with my arm in a leather case and black sling.

The face of the girl I had saved—a haunting face, indeed—dwelt in my memory; and, now that danger was past, I thought of the episode with pleasure, for I had scarcely a female friend in London; and I wondered in my heart if she ever thought of the humble pedestrian to whom she owed so much, and who had so suffered in

her cause. I could scarcely flatter myself that she did so, for she was evidently by her air and bearing, and by the mettle of the horses ridden by herself and her groom, one of the "upper ten thousand," one in wealth, if not in rank and position, far above an assistant to a sawbones in the Strand. She might be married, too; yet she had nothing of the matron in her appearance.

But often, when I had the opportunity, I went back to the place where I had checked the furious horse, and looked, but in vain, for it and its bright-eyed rider; so I kept the little lace-edged handkerchief as a *souvenir* of the occurrence.

About a fortnight after this, Crammer was summoned to attend the deathbed of an aunt at Gravesend—one from whom he had some monetary expectations that were not to be neglected. The whole *onus* of our practice thus for a time fell on me, and I was worked very hard. Among other visits to pay, was one at the house of Sir Percival Chalcot, from whom a message came for Crammer, urging his attendance without delay. Ordering the little "pill-box," as we called his brougham, I drove off in state to explain about his absence, and offer my professional services.

A tall servant, in showy livery, with the invariable whiskers and calves of his fraternity in London, ushered me along the marble vestibule up a stately staircase, adorned by pictures and statuary, into a beautiful little library, where Sir Percival, a tall, thin and aristocratic old gentleman, received me politely, but somewhat pompously, and with an air of puzzle and surprise.

"It was Dr. Crammer I most particularly wished to see," said he; "and he may be absent some days, you say? Very awkward—especially as he, and he alone, knows the general constitution of my family. I dislike to consult a young man on the nervous disorder of a young lady, but I may mention to you that my eldest daughter has been engaged for a year past to a friend; the settlements are all drawn out most satisfactorily, I assure you; everything has been adjusted for the marriage, even to the line of their continental tour; but for the last three months she has sunk into exceedingly low spirits. She suffers from nervous depression, and at times is quite listless. Now, I think that something bracing—some system of tonics—you understand?"

"Sir Percival, could I see Miss Chalcot?"

"Well—yes, certainly; that, of course, will be necessary first."

"What is her age, may I ask?"

"Twenty. Please to follow me."

He led me into a magnificent drawing room, through the festooned curtains of which I saw another beyond, with buhl and marqueterie tables, easy chairs, couches, mirrors and glass shapes peculiar to such apartments. There was a pleasant odor of flowers and perfume; and there, seated on a low folding chair, was a young lady, in a maize-colored silk dress, the tint of which well became her rich dark beauty. On the soft carpet we approached unheard, or, if noticed, she never deigned to move, and I could observe the superb development of her figure, which looked more like the maturity of twenty-eight than of twenty.

Her attitude was expressive of perfect listlessness; a book lay on her knee, but her eyes were bent on vacancy. The purity of her profile was most pleasing; her eyelashes were long and black, and curled at the tips. The masses of her dark chestnut-colored hair were looped up on her head in such a manner as to show the delicacy and contour of her throat and cheek, the complexion of which was pale and clear. Her nose was straight, with nostrils deeply curved; and the lips were full, as if with a fixed pout.

"It is the doctor, my dear girl," said Sir Percival.

But she only raised her shoulders and eyebrows a little, and became again still and quiet.

"Gertrude, dearest, 'tis the doctor. I told you that I should send for him."

"He is welcome," replied the girl, as she raised her large, dark, and at that time sullen-looking eyes to mine; and then added, "But this is not Dr. Crammer, papa."

"It is his assistant, Dr.—Dr.—Colliner."

"O papa!" she exclaimed, suddenly starting to her feet, as the whole expression of her face changed; "it is the gentleman who saved me in the park, when that horrid animal—and your arm, sir—was it injured on that occasion? O, I hope not!"

"It was broken—"

"O good heavens!—and for me!"

"In such a cause I should have risked the arms of Briereus, had I possessed them!" said I, with unthrusting.

"Permit me to thank you, sir," said the baronet, stiffly and grandly. "I always thought that the gentleman who had rendered my family a service so important would have done us the honor to have left his card, at least."

"But I knew not whom I had aided, sir, or where to call."

"Most true," said Miss Chalcot; "I left you in such rude haste; but, then, I was so alarmed!"

"And now, Miss Chalcot, permit me to feel your pulse."

I put my fingers on the delicate wrist. Her pulse was going like lightning for a time; then it became intermittent; then feeble, as the old listless expression of inquietude stole over her fine face again, as her mind, probably by the object of my visit, reverted to its old train of thought, whatever it was.

Sir Percival regarded us dubiously over the point of his high, thin, aristocratic nose. I was evidently too young, perhaps too good-looking, or had too great an air of *empressment* about me, to suit his ideas of a medical adviser for his daughter, so he said, coldly and loftily:

"Without disparagement to you, sir, I think I should rather have Crammer's opinion, Dr.—Dr. Lorimer."

"Morrison," I suggested, mildly.

"Ah yes! If he don't come soon to town, I'll have Clarke or Cooper to see her."

"Then I shall bid you good-morning," said I, assuming my hat; but turning again to the daughter, while he was ringing the bell for the servant—he of the calves and whiskers—to order the "pill-box," I said, "I have often gone to the scene of your accident, at the same hour, to look for you. Pardon me saying this; but your face so dwelt in my memory."

"At the same hour—it was about two in the afternoon," said she, with a bright smile.

"Yes—good-evening, Dr. Short," blundered the baronet.

My name was evidently not worth his memory.

And I drove away, feeling happy in the consciousness that I had seen her again, and that, though engaged, as I had been told, I should see her again where we first met, for her bright glance of intelligence told me that.

Her father had shown pretty pointedly—with all his punctilio, almost rudely—that he had no further use for my professional services; but I felt deeply smitten by the beauty of the girl. I strove in vain to thrust her image from my thoughts, and recalled again and again the galling information that she was the betrothed bride of some beast—I rated him "a beast"—unknown; but strove in vain; and found myself going to sleep that night in my den above the surgery in Bedford Street, with her lace handkerchief under my pillow, like a lover of romance, with all the roar of the prosaic Strand in my ears.

Next afternoon—Crammer was dutifully at his rich aunt's funeral—saw me in the park, and occupying the same seat from whence I started to arrest her runaway horse. Every fair *equestrienne* I saw in the distance made my heart beat quicker, but how joyous were its emotions—how high its pulse—when, exactly at the hour of two, I saw her come trotting along the walk, accompanied by the same old groom, and drew up, with her little gauntleted glove tight on the bridle rein, just before me. I came forward, and, after raising my hat, presented my hand, which I felt to be trembling.

"Somehow, I thought you would be here," said she, with charming frankness, "and how is your arm? Better still, I trust."

"I shall have the splints off to-morrow, Miss Chalcot."

"That is good—I'm so thankful! Do you know that though this is only the third time we have met, Dr. Morrison,

I feel quite as if we were old friends? You must have thought my reception of you rather ungracious yesterday."

"Nay; but for what does your papa think you require medical advice? You seem perfectly well."

Her face fell—her features, or the expression of them, changed as I spoke.

"That is my secret. No doctor can cure me, or 'minister to a mind diseased;' not that mine is precisely so," she added, with a merry ringing laugh. "Neither papa nor mamma can understand me. I lack decision and firmness, I fear. Dark women are imagined to be fiery, and all that sort of thing; but it is the fair little women of this world who possess the firmest will and greatest strength of character."

"But you are subject to low spirits, your papa hinted."

"Not naturally; but for a year past my heart has begun to fall me in hopes of the future, why, I cannot tell you; and now, dear Dr. Morrison, good-morning." And away she trotted, with a pleasant smile and a graceful bow, leaving me rooted to the spot with admiration of her beauty, the craving to see her again strong in my heart, and conflicting with the fear that she was fickle, had wearied of her engagement, and had conceived a fancy for some one else, a year ago. From that period she had begun to date her emotions of sadness.

A year ago I had been a hard student in my little den in Clerk Street, Edinburg, a dim shadow in the distance now.

"Go it, old boy," said Bob Asher, who came suddenly upon me a-foot—the phaeton was gone now—"that's one of old Crammer's patients surely. You are getting on, Fred, and if you wish to continue doing so always talk most to the women and middle-aged ones; flatter the young girls, but on the sly only; and make a most fatherly fuss with babies, however ugly or squally, at all times."

Rashly heedless of what the old groom might think or report on the subject, I had an interview there almost daily, for a few brief minutes; at times it was but a bow and a smile, if she was accompanied by friends, or more especially by her brother; and it went hard with me, but I made my professional visits and old Crammer's practice suit my plans—if plans I had—for I had given myself up to the intoxication of—yes, of loving Gertrude Chalcot, though she seemed placed above me by fate as far as the planets are above the earth; but with the conviction came the reflections that were not in my mind when the charm of her presence absorbed every other thought and feeling.

When I was alone came calmer thoughts. She was engaged, though to whom I knew not, and she might just be amusing herself with me for the time, while I was laying at her feet the purest love of an honest and affectionate heart.

Why did I love her? Curious fool, he still! Is human love the fruit of human will?

Engaged to another—whose ring was doubtless on her finger—another, who had the privilege of kissing and caressing her, while I had but a formal interview, a park rail between, and the eyes of an observant old groom upon us. I felt as jealous as a Turk or Spaniard at the idea.

One day I briefly implored her to meet me a-foot in another part of the park. She agreed to do so, and we had the opportunity of an explanation. I shall never forget how charming my dark-eyed and dark-haired beauty looked in a yellow crape bonnet—that tint ever so suitable to a brunette—with violet flowers between it and her pure complexion.

In language that was broken, but which the emotions of my heart inspired, I told her of the enchantment her society was to me; of the love that was becoming a part of my nature, the love that had been so almost ever since I had seen her, and led me to treasure her handkerchief (which I then drew from my breast), but, I added, that as she was pledged to another—more than all, as she was so rich and I so poor, I had come to the bitter resolution of seeing her no more, and quitting England for some distant colony.

"You love me then?" she asked, and with downcast eyes said, "I, too, am a victim of circumstances.—Concluded next week."