STORIES FROM THE DIARY OF A DOCTOR.

A DOCTOR'S DILEMMA.

"I suppose there is nothing for it but to take your advice," he said.

"You will not repent it," I answered. "Shall I write to Russell for you to-night?"

"Better wait until the morning," he replied. "I will sleep over all you have said, and give you my final decision then."

"Well, I must leave you now," I replied. "I have promised to look in on one or two patients this evening; we shall meet at breakfast."

The next morning I was down early, and entered my breakfast-room before eight o'clock. I noticed that a place was only laid for one. "How is this Harris?" I said to my servant. "Have you forgotten that Dr. Feveral is in the house?"

"Dr. Feveral left this morning, sir," replied Harris. He came down stairs very early, and told me to tell you that you would find a note from him in your study. I enquired if he would like breakfast, but he said that he did not wish for anything. He was out of the house before half-past six, sir."

I hurried off to my study in some alarm. Feveral's note was on the mantelpiece. I tore it open; it ran as follows:—

"My dear Halifax,—I regret to say that I find it impossible to remain in your house another hour. I spoke to you last night about what I believed at the time to be a delusion, namely, that I was followed wherever I went. I now perceive that this is not a delusion, but a grim reality. Even in your house I am not safe. Last night two men entered my room—they watched me from behind the curtains, and did not leave until daylight. I have risen early, and am leaving London without delay. My fear is that I have already made some extraordinary mistake in my dispensary, and have, perhaps, during my queer lapses of memory, given medicine which has deprived a fellow-creature of life. In this way I have undoubtedly laid myself open to the punishment of the law. The men who came into my room were policemen. You will understand that I can't stay longer in London—Yours,

"ARTHUR FEVERAL."

The moment I read this extraordinary letter I put my hat on and went out of the house. I went to the nearest telegraph office, and sent the following message to Mrs. Feveral:—

"Your husband called on me last night he was not well; he left suddenly this morning, giving no address. If you have no clue to his whereabouts, come and see me at once."

To my surprise, no reply came to this telegram for several hours. In the evening I found a yellow envelope lying on the slab in my hall. It was from Mrs. Feveral—it ran as follows:—

"Thank you for telegram—no cause for uneasiness. Arthur returned this morning, looking better and cheerful. He is busy in the dispensary now—I have not shown him your telegram.—INGRID FEVERAL."

"This is not the last of what may turn out a bad business," I could not help saying to myself.

The next event in my friend's queer story scarcely surprised me. Within forty-eight hours after his sudden departure, Mrs. Feveral called to see me. I was just going out when she drove up to my door in a hansom cab. I had last seen her as a bride—she was now in deep mourning. She was a remarkably handsome young woman, with an extraordinary fairness of complexion which one seldom sees in an English girl. It suddenly flashed through my memory that Feveral had married a young girl of Norwegian origin. This fact accounted for the whiteness of her skin, her bright blue eyes, and golden hair. She stepped lightly out of the hansom, and, seeing me, ran up the steps to meet me.

"Thank God you are not out," she exclaimed. "I am in great trouble. Can I see you immediately!"

"Certainly," I answered, leading the way to my study as I spoke. "How is your husband, Mr. Feveral? I hope you are not bringing me bad news of him?"

"I am," she replied. She pressed her hand suddenly to her heart. "I am not going to break down," she continued, giving me an eager sort of pathetic glance which showed me a glimpse into her brave spirit. "I mean to rescue him if a man can be rescued," she continued. "No one can help me if you can't. Will you help me? You have always been my husband's greatest friend. He has thought more of your opinion than that of any other man living. Will you show yourself friendly at this juncture?"

"Need you ask?" I replied. "Here is a chair—sit down and tell me everything."

She did what I told her. When she began to speak she clasped her hands tightly together. I saw by her attitude that she was making a strong effort to control herself.

"I asked my husband to visit you a few days ago," she began. "He had spoken of some of his symptoms to me, and I begged of him to put his case into your hands. I hoped great things from your advice. Your telegram a couple of days ago naturally frightened me a good deal, but almost in the moment of reading it I received another from my husband, in which he asked me to expect him by an early train, and told me he was better. He arrived; he looked cheerful and well. He said that he believed his grave symptoms had suddenly left him. Several patients were waiting to consult him; he went off at once to the dispensary. I felt quite happy about him, and telegraphed you to that effect. In the evening he was wonderfully cheerful, and said he did not think it necessary to go to the expense of a change. He slept well that night, and in the morning told me that he felt quite well. He went out early to visit some patients and came home to breakfast; afterwards he spent some hours, as usual, in his dispensary. I had been very unhappy and depressed since the death of my child, but that morning I felt almost glad—it was so good to see Arthur like his usual self again. I was upstairs in my room—it was a little after twelve o'clock—when someone opened the door in great excitement. I looked up and saw Arthur—he almost staggered into the room—his hair was pushed wildly back from his forehead—he went as far as the mantelpiece and leant against it.

"'What has happened?' I asked.

"He pulled at his collar as if it would choke him before he replied.

"'I have just committed murder,' he said—then he stared straight past me as if he did not see me.

"'Oh, nonsense,' I answered; 'you can't possibly know what you are saying.'

"'It is true—I have taken a man's life,' he repeated. 'I am ruined; it is all up with me. There is blood on my hands.'

"'Sit down, dear, and try to tell me everything,' I said to him.

"I went up to him, but he pushed me aside.

"'Don't,' he said; 'my hands are stained with blood. I am not fit even to touch you.'

"'Well, at least tell me what has happened,' I implored.

"After a time he grew calm, and I got him to speak more rationally.

"'You know those awful lapses of memory,' he began. 'A young man—a stranger—came to consult me this morning. I diagnosed his case with my usual care, and then went to prepare some medicine for him. I went into the dispensary as usual. I felt quite well, and my intellect seemed to me to be particularly keen. I remember distinctly putting some ammonia and some salicin into a glass—then followed an awful blank. I found myself standing with a bottle in one hand, and a glass containing medicine in another—I did something with the bottle, but I can't remember what. After another period, in which everything was once again a blank, I came to myself. I found myself then in the act of giving a bottle made up in paper, and sealed in the usual way, to my patient.

"'"By the way," I said, "would you not like to take a dose at once? If so, I will fetch you a glass—even the first dose of this medicine will remove your troublesome symptoms almost immediately."

"'The man to whom I was speaking was a fine-looking young fellow of about three or four and twenty. He hesitated when I suggested that he should take a dose of medicine directly. After a pause, he said that he would prefer to take the medicine when he returned to his hotel. I shook hands with him, he paid me his fee, and then left the house. A moment later I returned to the dispensary. I there made the following awful discovery. In a moment of oblivion I had put strychnine instead of valerian into the medicine. The quantity of strychnine which I had used would kill anyone. I rushed from the house like a distracted person, hoping to be in time to follow my patient. I made inquiries about him, but could not catch sight of him anywhere. Even one dose of that medicine will kill him. He will die of convulsions even after the first dose—in all probability he is dead now. Oh, what a madman I was to return to Staffordshire!'

"I tried to comfort my husband, Dr. Halifax, but soon found that my words had not the slightest effect upon him. I saw that he was not even listening to me—he crossed the room as I was speaking and, going to one of the windows, flung it open and leant half out. He began to look up and down the street, in the vain hope of seeing his unfortunate patient amongst the crowd.

"'I shall never see him again—he is a dead man,' he repeated. 'He is dead—his blood is on my head—we are ruined.'

"'We must try and find him immediately,' I said.

"'Nonsense, we shall never find him,' replied Arthur.

"As he said these words, he left the room. I paused to consider for a moment, then I went to consult Dr. Russell. My husband's partner is, as you know, an old man. He was terribly disturbed when I told him what had happened, and said that immediate steps should be taken to find the poor fellow who had been given the wrong medicine. He went out himself to inquire at the different hotels in the town. Meanwhile, I began to search for Arthur. I could not find him in the house. I asked the servants if they had seen him. No one knew anything about him—he had not gone out in his carriage. Dr. Russell presently returned to say that he could get no trace of the stranger. Almost at the same time a telegram was brought to me. I tore it open—it was from Arthur.

"'Don't attempt to follow me,' he said in it; 'it is best that we should never meet again. If I can I will provide for your future, but we must never meet again.'

"There was no signature.

"That is the whole story," said Mrs. Feveral, standing up as she spoke. "After receiving my husband's telegram, I went to his bank and found to my astonishment that he had drawn nearly all the money we possess. He took a thousand pounds away with him in notes and gold. That fact seems to point to the conclusion that he had no intention of committing suicide; but where has he gone—why did he want so much money? What did he mean by saying that he would provide for me? I know that he is not responsible for his actions—it is very unsafe for him to be alone. I thought the whole thing over, during last evening and during the long hours of the night, and resolved to come to you this morning. I must find my husband again, Dr. Halifax, and I want to know now if you can help me to search for him."

"I certainly will," I replied; "the story you have just told me is most disastrous. I warned Feveral the other day that he was in no fit state to dispense medicines at present. He did very wrong not to take my advice. Of course, I ought not to blame him, poor fellow, for he is not responsible for his own actions. Two duties now lie before us, Mrs. Feveral."

"Yes?" she replied, eagerly.

"We must first discover whether your husband has really caused the death of this man or not. After all, he may only have imagined that he put strychnine into the medicine."

"No, no," she interrupted; "there is no hope of getting out of the terrible dilemma in that way. My husband used two glasses to mix his medicines—they were found in the dispensary unwashed. Dr. Russell, on examining one, found some drops of strychnine adhering to the bottom of the glass."

"Then that hope is over," I answered. "Well, we must only trust that something prevented your husband's victim from taking the medicine. Our first duty is to find that young man immediately; our second, to follow Feveral. Will you rest here for a few moments while I think over this strange case?"

I left the room, ordered Harris to bring the poor young wife some refreshment, and went off to my consulting-room to think over matters. I was busy, it is true, but I resolved to cast everything to the winds in the cause of my unhappy friend. I had known Feveral since he was a boy. I was not going to desert him now. I came back presently and told Mrs. Feveral that I had made arrangements which would enable me to devote my time for the present to her service.

"That is just what I should have expected," she replied. "I won't thank you in words—you know what I feel."

"I know that you are brave, and will help me instead of hindering me," I rejoined. "Will you accept my hospitality for to-night, Mrs. Feveral? My servants can, I think, make you comfortable. I mean to go to Staffordshire by the next train."

"Why so?"

I must set inquiries on foot with regard to your husband's patient—I must find out his name and all possible particulars about him. I hope to be back in town with news for you early in the morning. In the meantime, will you hold yourself in readiness to accompany me the moment I get a clue as to Feveral's present whereabouts?"

"I will do exactly what you wish," she answered.

I saw that her lips quivered while she spoke, but I also perceived to my relief that she had no intention of breaking down. A few moments later, I found myself in a hansom cab driving as fast as I could to Paddington Station. I took the next train down to Staffordshire, and arrived at Westfield, the small country town where Feveral had his practice, about nine o'clock in the evening. I drove straight to Dr. Russell's house. He was in, and I was admitted immediately into his presence. The old doctor knew me slightly. When I appeared he came eagerly forward.

"I can guess what you have come about," he said; "that unhappy business in connection with poor Feveral. His wife told me that she was going to town to consult you. Of course, I am glad to see you, but I don't know that you can do anything."

"I mean to find the man if he is still alive," I rejoined.

"The whole case points to suicide, does it not?" replied Russell. "But sit down, won't you? Let us talk it over."

I removed my overcoat and sat down on the chair which Russell indicated.

"I don't believe in the suicide idea," I began. "If Feveral meant to commit suicide, he would not have drawn a thousand pounds out of his bank. He is undoubtedly at the present moment suffering from a degree of mania, but it does not point in that direction. I want, if possible, to get a clue to his whereabouts; and, what is even far more important, to find out if the strychnine which, in a moment of oblivion, he put into his patient's medicine has really led to a fatal result."

"That I can't tell," replied Russell. "The young man who came to consult Feveral yesterday morning appears to be a stranger in Westfield. Just after Mrs. Feveral left for town I succeeded in tracing him to a commercial hotel of the name of Perry's in a bad part of the town. He must have walked straight to the hotel after leaving my partner's consulting room. The waiter there tells me that he looked ill when he entered the house—he observed that he carried a bottle of medicine wrapped up in paper in his hand. The bottle seemed to be unopened when the waiter observed him—he asked for his bill, which he paid, and in ten minutes' time had left the hotel. Yesterday was market day at Westfield, and there were a good many strangers in the town. This young man evidently attracted no special attention—the waiter did not even know his name.

He arrived early in the morning, asked for a room, had a wash and change; had breakfast, of which he ate very little; went out, evidently to consult my partner; returned, paid his bill, and vanished. Where he is now, Heaven knows."

"The case must be put into a detective's hands immediately," I said. "Have you a good man in the town, or shall I wire to Scotland Yard?"

"There is, I believe, a private detective in Short Street," answered Russell; "but may I ask what is your object in following up this man's history? If he really dies of the medicine, we are likely to know all about the affair soon enough."

"There is just one chance in a hundred that he has not taken the medicine," I replied, "and on that chance we should act promptly."

"I can't follow you," replied the old man, impatiently. "If this young fellow never takes the medicine, why move at all in the matter? If the thing is known, it will be disastrous to us in every way. It is hard enough, Heaven knows, in these times of keen competition, to keep one's connection, and if it were bruited about that we had a mad doctor on the premises, who administered poison instead of cure, we should lose all our patients in a month's time."

"Don't you see my point?" I answered. "In order to prevent your having a mad doctor on the premises, I insist on having this thing cleared up. If by a lucky chance the young man who called at your dispensary this morning is still alive and well, Feveral will in all probability recover from the mania which now threatens to overbalance his reason. From the nature of the medicine given, the patient was most likely only suffering from some simple disturbance. He refused to take the medicine while in Feveral's consulting-room—it is evident that he left the hotel with the bottle still unopened—it is not wrong, therefore, to infer that he was better. Being better, it is also on the cards, although I know it is scarcely likely, that he never touched the medicine at all. If this is the case and the fact is known, Feveral's reason may be saved."

"Oh, poor fellow, I doubt if he is in the land of the living," interrupted Dr. Russell.

"I am certain he is alive," I replied; "but the fact is this, doctor: he will be insane to the end of his days if he has really killed that young man. If his supposed victim is alive and unhurt, Feveral will in all probability soon be restored to his normal state of health."

"Perhaps you are right," said Dr. Russell, "and if so you had better come with me at once to consult Hudson. He is a shrewd fellow, and will in all probability soon be able to trace the man to whom the strychnine was given. But how do you propose to find Feveral?"

"We will tackle Hudson first," I said. "I want to set him to work without a moment's delay."

Dr. Russell rose, put on his hat and great-coat, and we soon found ourselves in Short Street. Hudson, the private detective, happened to be in—we had an interview with him. I put the case as briefly as possible in his hands; he promised to take it up; assured us that it was a very easy and promising investigation, and told us that in all probability we should know whether Feveral's victim was alive or dead by the following morning.

As we were returning to Russell's house, a young man came up and spoke abruptly to the old doctor.

"How do you do?" he said. "Will you take a message from me to Feveral?"

"Feveral is from home at present," replied Dr. Russell.

"What a pity. The fact is, I heard from my brother this morning. He particularly begged of me to see Feveral, or by some means to convey his thanks to him."

"I hope your brother is better, North," said Dr. Russell, in a kindly tone.

"Thanks, he is getting as fit as possible—he thought Dr. Feveral would be glad to know about him—he is now at Monte Carlo, having a right good time—in short, his nerves are completely restored, and he proposes to return to work within the next fortnight or so."

Dr. Russell said a few more words, assured North that he would give Feveral his message when he saw him, and we continued our walk.

"What is that about Feveral sending a patient to Monte Carlo?" I asked, suddenly.

"I knew nothing about it until North mentioned it," said Dr. Russell. "Both the Norths have been down with influenza—the younger suffered considerably; he went through just the sort of nerve storm, which seems, in a different degree, to have affected poor Feveral himself. I did not know that Feveral had recommended him change—I am surprised that he sent him to a place like Monte Carlo."

"Why so?" I asked.

"On account of the gaming-tables. There never was a man who had such a horror of gambling as Feveral. His father was bitten with the craze years ago, and, as a boy, he learnt something of the tremendous evils which spring from indulgence in such a vice. That he should recommend a patient to put himself in the way of temptation astonishes me a good deal."

I thought deeply for a moment or two.

"Do you happen to know," I asked then, "when the Norths had influenza?"

"Why do you ask?"

I have a reason for wishing to know. In short, if Feveral gave this advice since his own attack, it may give me a clue to his present whereabouts."

"I can't see your meaning," said Dr. Russell, with impatience. "As a fact, the youngest North was down with the malady immediately after Feveral had made his own quick recovery—he had a short, sharp attack, followed by great depression—Feveral spoke about him to me one day. I said, casually, that he should have change—I did not know until to-night that my advice was acted upon."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE WESTERN GOLD FIELDS.

An Englishman's Opinion of British Columbia's Treasures.

Mr. Mitchell Innes, an Englishman now in Montreal on his way home, has been in British Columbia and the North-West for the last three years. Mr. Innes takes a lively interest in mining operations, although not a practical miner, and his faith in the mining possibilities of British Columbia is unbounded. He is about to visit England now with a view to forming a "development company."

"The possibilities of placer mining alone in British Columbia" says Mr. Innes "are enormous and practically nothing has yet been done to develop them. Quartz mining and placer mining are both being carried on in East Kootenay, but there are no large companies at work there just now. Several rich prospects have, however, been reported there this spring. The mining people in this district are for the most part simply prospectors, having little or no means at their disposal in order to develop their properties; what is required in this district is a development company formed for the purpose of acquiring the most promising prospects and sufficiently working them to prove the ground, and to put the properties in a state to be presented to the British investor. At Golden," continued Mr. Innes, "placer mining seems to be the prevailing industry, and the employment is apparently profitable, for the people are fairly well to do."

As an illustration of the wealth that is lying undevoloped in these river beds, he said that two men working on Canon Creek, in the vicinity of Golden, had secured four hundred dollars worth of gold in two weeks just before the rising of the water this spring. That is, he added, without the assistance of machinary or any appliance, save the simple mining contrivances generally in use.

Mr. Innes said that he had two brothers, at work on a claim in Canon Creek, seven miles and a half from Golden. The gold so far taken from this claim was sent to Victoria to be assayed, and yielded a return of 18.43 per ounce, or 927½ thousands of fineness, an unprecedental assay in this district.

The whole province, said Mr. Innes, is teeming with minerals but awaiting the necessary capital to develop it.

Not Serious.

Young lady (out yachting)—What is the matter, Capt. Quarterdeck?

Captain—The fact is, my dear young lady, we've broken our rudder.

Young Lady—I wouldn't worry about that. The rudder is mostly under water, you know, and it isn't likely people will notice it.

BISMARCK OF THE EAST.

STAMBULOFF'S MURDER MAY MEAN TROUBLE FOR EUROPE.

Will Russia Absorb the Slavs—The Young White Czar at the North Would Not Approve of a Republic in Bulgaria—War Storms Will Soon Sweep Over the East.

The drama now swiftly developing in Bulgaria is so big with possibilities of the trouble for Europe that its smallest details are watched with intense interest. The assassination of Stambuloff; the return of Prince Ferdinand, driven back to his post by the force of that public opinion which not even royal rulers may disregard, and the mission of the Metropolitan Clement to St. Petersburg are all indications of an approaching storm which will be heard far beyond the Balkans.

The death of Stambuloff means the resumption of Russian influence in the Balkan Peninsula. It means more: It implies, within a few years, the extension of Pan slavism; the probable disappearance o Austria as an Empire—the absorption in fact, by the great Russian community of the 17,000,000 Slavs now within Austrian boundaries.

STAMBULOFF A PATRIOT.

Stambuloff was by no means a good man, but he was sincere in one respect—he was an honest and ardent patriot. This means that he preferred to see his country emancipated from all foreign influences rather than held in tutelage by Russia or Austria. The result was that when the proper time came in the opinion of the Power which felt itself offended by his patriotism he was murdered by bravos, quite in the manner of the thirteenth century. Europe supposed herself weaned from all such savagery, but it must be remembered that Bulgaria is on the confines of Europe.

LEARNED FROM THE TURKS.

Not far away is the savage Turk, from whom Bulgarians have learned many of the cruelties which they put into practice as soon as Russia had removed the Turkish heels from their necks. Stambuloff would never have consented to the torture of his prisoners to make them confess if he had not inherited, as it were, a legacy of cruelty from the Turk.

Bulgaria has certainly been a land of savagery since the Russian campaign of 1877. The knife and the revolver have been used by diplomats almost as much as the dinner party and the policy of persuasion. Dynamite has even been enlisted against persons who were obnoxious because they were laboring to give Bulgaria real independence.

BULGARIAN ATROCITIES.

The "Bulgarian atrocities" committed by Bulgarians themselves have been almost equal to those of Batak, which roused the world, and precipitated the Russian campaign of liberation.

Of course Russia uses this as an argument against the complete political independence of Bulgaria. "These people cannot govern themselves," say the Russian agents at Sofia. "Look at Stambuloff; he was a nationalist, yet he had his fellow-countrymen done to death, kept them in damp, noisome prisons, and accumulated an immense fortune from the presents of contractors. If the 'Bismarck of the Balkans' was no better than that, what might have been expected from the President of a Bulgarian republic?

FEARS REPUBLICANISM.

So speaks M. Hitrovo, Russian diplomat at Sofia; and so echo his friends. The fact is that the possibility of a Bulgarian Republic alarms them more than anything else. The young White Czar in the North would even form a coalition with Austria—his bitter enemy and rival in everything in Southeastern Europe—rather than see a republic in the Bulgarian valleys and the students from Roberts College at Constantinople coming to sit in a real Congress to legislate without dictation from St. Petersburg, and without the fear of Vienna before their eyes.

Would these same students become hard and cruel like Stambuloff if they had the power? Who can tell?

DREADS REVOLUTION.

Austria has too keen and constant a dread of revolution to take any chances in this Bulgarian matter. She knows that the example of a successful popular government in her neighborhood might mean the springing up of republics in Roumania, Servia and in those mountain provinces which fell to her share when the spoil of the Turk was divided at Berlin in 1878.

Bulgaria has no hope, for the present, of independence worthy the name. A revolution, even should it have for its pretext a rush to the relief of the oppressed peasantry in Macedonia, would simply afford the Russians an excuse to march in. And Salisbury would not enter upon a campaign simply to get them out again.

PRINCE FERDINAND IN DANGER.

Prince Ferdinand, if he can show that he was in no wise concerned in the conspiracy for taking the life of Stambuloff, and if some assassin does not empty his revolver at him, may cling to his throne a little longer. The Russians will smile on him as long as he suits their programme. He seems to be an nonentity is politics, frivolous in social life, incapable of any wise or worthy move. He laughed at Stambuloff when the great statesman was alive, and made jokes concerning his murder. Not much can be expected of him. The Russians will displace him whenever they are ready to defy Europe and to enter boldly into posession of Bulgaria.

STORMS ARE GATHERING.

Vast storms are soon to sweep over the East. In the coming political convulsions the Turkish power in Constantinople will probably be wrecked; and if Austria, in opposing the march of Russia, happens to be beaten, "Panslavism" will be a living fact, and not the cold abstraction which even its professors in Russia were beginning to believe it.

Poor Stambuloff's mutilated and amputated hands, exhibited beside his body when he lay in state before his funeral, seemed outstretched appealing to Europe and the world, soliciting pity for the infant nation which is in danger of absorption by greater powers and of being ensnared under the web of Russian autocracy.