STORIES FROM THE DIARY OF A DOCTOR.

A DOCTOR'S DILEMMA.

"Thanks," I answered; "your information is of great importance. Now, if I can obtain North's address at Monte Carlo, I think my business here will be over, and I should like, if possible, to catch the midnight train to town."

"What in the world do you mean?"

"I am scarcely in a position to explain myself at the present moment," I answered.

"Will you oblige me by sending a note round to North at once, asking his brother's address?"

"Why, yes; I will do that, certainly. Here we are, at home—you can have an answer to my note while we are at supper."

Russell was as good as his word; he sent a messenger to North's house asking him for the name of his brother's hotel at Monte Carlo. The answer came back quickly, and with it in my pocket I returned to London.

As I hurried back to town in the express train, the thought which had suddenly darted through my mind on hearing that Feveral had ordered North to seek change at Monte Carlo gathered strength and substance. The advice which he gave this young man was exactly the reverse of what he would have given had his mind been in its normal healthy state. If in a hasty moment he had ordered North to seek change of scene in the very place where he would be most exposed to temptation, was there not a possibility that he might himself seek the same relief? The fact of his having a horror of gambling in his sane moments would make it all the more probable that he would turn to it in his insane hours. In short, the idea grew stronger and stronger the more I thought it over, that North was the man to help me to find Feveral. In the early hours of the morning I reached town, and, driving straight to an office which was open all night, wired to North to his Monte Carlo address. I worded the telegram in the following manner:—

"Dr. Feveral is ill, and has disappeared from home—look out for him at Monte Carlo. If he arrives, telegraph to me without delay."

Having sent off this message, there was nothing whatever to do but to wait. Until I heard either from Hudson, the detective, or from North, I could take no further steps.

On the evening of that day I received a telegram from the detective—it was unsatisfactory, and contained the simple words:—

"No news; writing."

The following morning I received his letter.

"Dear Sir,"—it ran—"I am completely foiled in my efforts to trace Dr. Feveral's unknown patient; beyond the fact that a young man in some respects answering to his description was noticed by a porter at the railway station entering a third-class carriage for London, I have no tidings to give you. I will continue to make investigations, and will let you know immediately anything turns up.

"Yours respectfully,
"JAMES HUDSON."

I had scarcely read this letter before Mrs. Feveral, who had moved to a hotel close by, called to see me. I showed her the letter. She read it with impatience.

"Can nothing be done?" she cried. "Have you no plan to propose, Dr. Halifax?"

"I have the ghost of a hope," I answered, "but it is really so slight that I have not dared to tell it to you."

"Oh, do not deprive me of the slightest shadow of hope," she answered; "you don't know what my despair is and what my fears are."

At that moment Harris entered the room, bearing a telegram on a salver.

"Wait one moment while I attend to this," I said to Mrs. Feveral.

I opened the envelope and saw, with a sudden leap at my heart, that my conjecture with regard to Feveral had been correct.

"There is no answer, Harris," I said to the man.

He withdrew. I glanced again at the words of the telegram, then placed it in Mrs. Feveral's hands.

"There," I said, "this will explain itself."

She almost snatched it from me, devouring the words with her eyes. They were as follows:—

"Feveral arrived here last night—he is at the Hotel des Anglais—does not recognize me—visited the tables after dinner—lost heavily."

"Thank Heaven he is found!" exclaimed Mrs. Feveral.

Tears streamed from her eyes—she let the little pink sheet of thin paper flutter to the floor.

"He is safe—he is alive," she gasped, with a choking noise in her throat. "How—how did you guess that he might be at Monte Carlo, doctor?"

I repeated in a few words my reasons for telegraphing to North—her tears ceased to flow as she listened to me—her eyes grew bright—a look of determination and courage filled her beautiful face.

"And now, what do you mean to do?" she asked, as soon as I paused.

"Go to him at once," I answered.

"I will come with you, if I may."

"You certainly may. There is still time to catch the eleven o'clock boat train from Victoria; we shall arrive in Paris this evening, and, if we are lucky, may catch the Mediterranean Express. Can you have your things packed and be back at this house in a quarter of an hour?"

"I can and will," she answered.

She left me immediately. I gave hasty directions to my servants, saw the doctor who was to take charge of my patients in my absence, and was ready when Mrs. Feveral returned. We drove to Victoria, caught the boat train by a minute or two, and soon found ourselves rushing away to Dover. We arrived in Paris without any adventure, and were fortunate enough to catch the Mediterranean Express at the Gare de Lyon. I wired to North to tell him of our proposed visit, begged of him to meet me at the railway station, asked him to watch Feveral, and to say nothing of the fact that his wife and I hoped to reach Monte Carlo the following day.

Mrs. Feveral and I reached Marseilles at eleven o'clock on the following morning. There we left the train for breakfast. During breakfast I said, suddenly:

"It would be well for us to arrange our plan of action now."

She looked up at me in some surprise.

"Is there anything special?" she began.

"I want you to promise me one thing," I said.

"Yes, of course, anything," she said with a heavy sigh.

"I want you to be guided by me—I want you to obey me explicitly."

"Yes, I will, of course; but surely there is but one thing for me to do?"

"You think you must go straight to your husband?" I said.

"Certainly; that is why I am visiting Monte Carlo."

"It seems hard to say 'no' to such a natural desire," I said, "but I am anxious that you should not see Feveral on our arrival. All this future depends upon our acting with circumspection in the present crisis. I firmly believe that your husband's insanity is only of a temporary character, but one injudicious move would confirm his delusion and make him insane for the rest of his life. He has rushed from home now, under the impression that he has taken the life of a fellow-creature."

"There is little doubt that such is the case," replied Mrs. Feveral.

"I am by no means sure on that point. I have asked Hudson, the detective, to telegraph to me at the Hotel Metropole at Monte Carlo. I may find news on my arrival there. All depends on the nature of this news. When we reach our destination to-day, will you allow me to take you straight to a hotel, and will you stay there quietly until the moment comes for you to make your presence known to your husband?"

"It is hard for me to obey you, but I will," answered the poor wife, with a heavy sigh.

We soon afterwards took our places in the train, and between three and four o'clock that afternoon arrived at Monte Carlo. Young North was waiting on the platform to receive us. He shook his head when I introduced myself to him. By a gesture, I warned him not to say anything in Mrs. Feveral's presence. She was completely worn out by her journey, and fortunately did not notice the expressive action by which he gave me to understand that he had bad news. I took her to a large hotel not far from the Casino, saw that she was accommodated with a comfortable room, and promised to return to see her after a few hours. I then went out with North. He walked with me to my hotel.

"Well, I am glad you've come," said the young fellow. "I have had an awful time ever since Feveral's arrival. He is as mad as a man can be—spends every moment of his time at the tables, eats nothing, drinks a good deal—either does not recognize me or won't. He is losing money at a frightful rate, but, from the manner of his play, seems to be absolutely reckless as to whether he loses or wins."

"And where is he staying?" I asked.

"At the Hotel des Anglais. He has rooms on the first floor, and evidently denies himself nothing."

I knew that Feveral was not rich. A little more of this reckless sort of thing, and he and his young wife would be beggars.

"The poor fellow is not responsible for his actions at the present moment," I said.

"No, he is as mad as a March hare," said North, with vehemence.

"Well I trust his madness will not continue," I replied. "He is suffering at the present moment from a sort of double shock. The death of his child, followed immediately by an attack of influenza, produced the first bad effect upon his nerves—the second shock was worse than the first, but for that, he would not be losing money as fast as man can at the present moment."

"What do you mean?" said North.

I then told him what had occurred a few days ago at Westfield.

"The unfortunate thing is this," I said: "we cannot find the patient to whom Feveral gave the strychnine. I have put the best detective in Westfield on his track, but there are no tidings whatever of his whereabouts. I had hoped to have a telegram from the detective, Hudson, on my arrival. I desired it to be sent to this hotel, but none has yet arrived."

"Hudson is a very sharp fellow," said North. "If anyone can help to solve a mystery, he is the man. I am glad you put the case into his hands. My father who is supposed to be the best solicitor at Westfield often employs Hudson, and thinks most highly of him."

"Well," I said, "there is nothing to do at the present moment, but simply to wait. One false step now would confirm Feveral's insanity."

"Will you not let him know that his wife has arrived?" interrupted North.

"Not at present; I must be guided altogether by circumstances. It will be your business and mine, North, not to lose sight of him. If by any chance he leaves Monte Carlo, he must be immediately followed."

Shortly afterwards North left me, and I went to seek an interview with Mrs. Feveral. Poor girl, she was worn out in every sense of the word. I begged of her to take some rest, assured her that I would send for her the moment her presence was likely to be of use, and went away.

On the afternoon of the next day, I was walking in the gardens just outside the Casino, when I suddenly saw Feveral coming to meet me. The weather resembled that which we have in June in England. The tender blue of the sky was intensified in the deep blue of Mediterranean. I was standing near a large bed of mignonette when Feveral walked by. He was dressed with care and looked like, what he was, a remarkably handsome and well-set-up fellow; he was evidently going to the Casino. He passed within arm's length of me, stared me full in the face, showed no gleam of recognition, and was about to pass me, when I could not help speaking to him.

"How do you do?" I said.

He stopped when I said this and looked at me fixedly. A curious change came over his face; his eyes, which had appeared quite frank and untroubled when first he saw me, assumed a secretive and almost sly expression.

"I know who you are quite well," he said. "Will you oblige me by walking down this path with me?"

He pointed to a shady avenue of eucalyptus as he spoke. I yielded immediately to his humour. We walked together for a few paces, then he turned abruptly and faced me.

"You are a detective officer from the London police force," he said. "I know you quite well, and what you have come about. The whole thing is perfectly fair, and I have not a word to say. It is my last intention to defeat the ends of justice in any way. I have committed murder—I am stained with blood. The law must, of course, have its course—all I beg of you is to give me time. Before I am arrested, I am anxious to win a sum of money to place my wife above want. I came to Monte Carlo for this purpose. Hitherto I have been strangely unlucky, but I have a presentiment that my luck is about to turn. I shall win largely either this afternoon or this evening. After the gaming-tables are closed to-night, I am at your service, Inspector——"

He paused, but I did not supply any name.

"I will wait on you this evening at the gaming-tables," I said, suddenly.

"As you please," he replied," but don't come until late—I am certain to win largely. You know yourself how important it is for a man in my position to provide for his wife."

I nodded, and he left me. I sat down on a bench and watched his retreating figure. He went slowly up the steps into the Casino and vanished from view. The beautiful scenery which surrounded me—and, perhaps, there is no more beautiful scenery in the world than is to be found at Monte Carlo—no longer gave me pleasure. I thought very badly of Feveral. His malady had progressed even farther than I had anticipated. If he had indeed killed his man, all hope of his recovering his senses was completely at an end. I went back to my hotel and spent some anxious hours there, during which I could settle to nothing. I had asked North to dine with me, and he came at the appointed time. I told him of my interview with Feveral—he shook his head as he listened.

"He took me for one of the gardeners here," he answered, "and asked me how I acquired my very excellent English. His brain is quite gone, poor fellow. I must say that I am rather surprised, Dr. Halifax, that you don't——"

"Don't do what?" I asked.

"Don't use your authority, and take the poor fellow back to England. He surely is not in a condition to be at large."

"Any forcible step of that kind would make the case hopeless," I answered. "I am inclined to use the most cautious measures until we really know the fate of his unlucky patient."

"And do you intend to follow him to the Casino to-night?" said North.

"Yes, I promised to be there—I shall keep my word."

"May I accompany you?"

"Certainly; I should like you to do so."

"What about Mrs. Feveral?"

"Poor soul, I must have an interview with her before I go," I answered.

My brief interview with the poor young wife was full of pain. I told her that I intended to follow her husband to the tables, and would bring her word of the result before midnight. She replied to this with a ghastly smile. As I was leaving the room she called after me.

"You are excepting a telegram at the Hotel Metropole from Mr. Hudson?" she said.

"I asked him to wire there if he had any news," I answered.

"Suppose his message comes while you are at the Casino?"

"In that case it must wait until I return," I replied.

"Will you commission me to bring it to you, if it does come?" she asked.

"I would rather you did not come to the Casino," I replied; "it is not a fit place for you to visit alone."

She made no answer, but I noticed a queer, determined look creeping into her face.

The hour was growing late now, and North and I hastened to the Casino. We followed the crowd into the vast building, obtained the usual cards of admittance, and soon found ourselves walking slowly through the suite of rooms which contain the celebrated gaming-tables. The hour had approached ten o'clock, and the numerous visitors from the different hotels were crowding in for their evening's amusement. Both ladies and gentlemen were in full evening dress, and the scene which met my eyes was a very brilliant and animated one. Each of the long tables was surrounded by groups of players seated on chairs close together; outside these groups, three or four rows deep, were crowds of spectators, some merely watching the play, others playing themselves over the heads of their more fortunate neighbors, others again waiting for their turn to find seats at the tables. The roulette tables, which were eight in number, were all crowded, but as we walk through the rooms, North whispered to me that Feveral despised roulette, and only played for high stakes at the trente et quarante tables. We passed the first of these, and eagerly scanned the faces of the men and women who surrounded it. Feveral was not amongst them. We stood for a moment or two to watch the play. A woman, splendidly dressed, was drawing attention to herself by the reckles manner in which she was flinging one-hundred-francs pieces on different divisions of the table. She lost and lost, but still went on playing. Her play was reckless in the extreme, and some people who stood near begged of her to desist. The terrible passion for gambling in its worst form was written all over her excited face. I turned away with a sense of disgust, and followed North to the other trente et quarante table. Here I found the object of my search. Feveral was in irreproachable evening dress; his face was calm and pale, there was no apparent excitement either in his manner or appearance. He sat rather near one of the croupiers, and, to all appearance, was playing with extreme caution. From thirty to forty hundred-franc pieces were piled up at his left hand. He was making careful notes on a card which was placed in front of him, and was evidently playing with intelligence. At each deal of the cards he placed his gold on certain divisions, and as we stood at a little distance and watched, I noticed that he won at every deal. His pile of gold grew larger, but his cautious and steady manner never deserted him. By degrees some people who were standing near began to remark on his invariable luck. Hearing a remark close by in the English tongue, he raised his eyes, and for instant encountered mine.

"I told you I should win tonight," he said; "but you have come a little early, inspector. It is all right—quite right; but you must give me time."

As his success went on he began to double and quadruple hir stakes—never once did he lose. A man who was standing near me said:—

"That Englishman has been here for the last three nights, and he has not had a moment's success until now. He evidently means to carry all before him to-night. If only he has sense to stop playing before his luck turns, he may retrieve his losses, which must have been very considerable."

"He plays with caution," I answered.

"He does to-night," was the reply, "but last night and the night before his play was reckless beyond words."

Some people in the crowd of spectators moved away at this moment, and North and I stepped into the space which they had vacated. By doing so we stood at Feveral's left hand, and could look over his shoulder. In the midst of his play he glanced at me once or twice. My presence did not irritate him in the least. He supposed me to be a detective come to take him into custody—his impression was that his time was short to accomplish the task he had set himself to do—he went on doubling and doubling his stakes—still without any apparent recklessness—never once did he lose.

The moments flew by, and the time for closing was not far off. Feveral was already a rich man.

"Stop him now, if you can," said North. "Let him take away his enormous winnings, and whatever happens, his wife is provided for. Stop him, for God's sake, doctor, before his luck turns."

Before I could reply, a noise at my left caused me to turn my head—there was a slight commotion—a little pressure in the crowd, and I heard a woman's clear voice say:—

"Pardon me if I ask you to allow me to pass. That gentleman sitting there is my husband—I have something I wish to say to him."

The gentle, high-bred tone had an effect. I turned quickly, and saw, to my astonishment and horror, that Mrs. Feveral had come into the room. Unlike the other women present, she was in the quietest morning dress. Her fair face looked all the fairer because of the deep mourning which she wore.

"Your telegram has come at last, Dr. Halifax," she said to me. "I have taken the liberty to bring it to you—don't keep me, please—I must speak to my husband."

Before I could prevent her she had reached his side, her arms were round his neck, her cheek was touching his. The crowded room, the gaze of the many spectators, were nothing to her—she only saw her husband.

"Come away, darling," she said; "come away at once."

He started up when she touched him, and stared at her more in impatience than surprise.

"Don't interrupt me, Ingrid," he said, "I will come presently. Leave me now; I am busy."

He tried to resume his seat, but she clung to him, holding one of his hands in both of hers with a sort of desperation.

"No; you must come now," she said. "You don't know where you are——"

"I don't know where I am!" he interrupted, speaking fast and thick, his face scarlet now with intense excitement. "Yes, by Heaven! I do. I am here because my hands are red with blood. I conceal nothing. All the world may know the truth. I am in this place to-night because I have taken a man's life. I am about to pay the forfeit of my crime. This detective," here he pointed at me, "will arrest me in a moment or two. Before I go, I wish to provide for you—don't touch me—I am a murderer. Hands off, I say."

He pushed her from him. His eyes were wild. The people in the immediate neighborhood heard his words—they began to move away from him with looks of horror, even the croupiers turned their heads for a moment.

"Go home, Ingrid," said her husband. "Don't touch me. I have made a bargain with that man," again he pointed at me; "he is a detective from Scotland Yard. My bargain is that I am not to be arrested until I have won enough money to provide for your future. I am going to double my winnings. There is blood on my head—don't touch me."

His last words were uttered with a shout. Mrs. Feveral turned ghastly pale. Feveral sat down again by the table. At this moment I remembered the telegram, which was still unopen in my hand. I tore the seal open and read the contents. These were the words which almost took my breath away with relief and delight:—

"Found Dr. Feveral's patient yesterday—he is a young man of the name of Norris. He lives at Colehill, in Warwickshire. He took the doctor's medicine to the last drop, and says that it restored him to perfect health. On hearing this, I went straight to Dr. Russell, who examined the bottle from which the strychnine was supposed to have been taken, and found it quite full. If Dr. Feveral took strychnine from the bottle by mistake, he must have poured it back again. It is evident that Norris had none in his medicine."

"Read this," I said to Mrs. Feveral; "read it quickly—tell your husband the truth—he may be saved even yet."

Her quick eyes seemed to flash over the words—she took in the meaning in a couple of seconds.

"You have committed no murder," she said to her husband. "Don't go on with that horrid play—it is unnecessary. You are not what you think yourself—you are innocent of any crime. The man you gave the medicine to is alive and well. Read this—read this."

She thrust the telegram before his eyes. He read it—staggered to his feet, turned first red, then pale.

"Is this true?" he said, turning and fixing his eyes on his wife.

"Yes, it is perfectly true; it has just come. The man you gave the medicine to is well, quite well. Your medicine cured him instead of killing him; you shall see him again when you return to England."

Feveral put his hand to his forehead—a bewildered look crossed his face.

"Then what in the name of heaven am I doing here?" he exclaimed.

He turned and looked with bewilderment around him.

The piles of gold which he had won lay close to him, but he did not touch them.

"What am I doing here?" he repeated. "How did I get into this place? They play for money here; I don't approve of it—I never play. Come, Ingrid, come home."

He grasped his wife's hand and led her quickly out of the Casino. I followed the pair, but North stayed behind to gather up Feveral's winnings.

The next day, when I visited him, Feveral was quite sane. He received me with a look of surprise.

"I can't imagine how I came to this place," he said; "I have not the least remembrance of how I got here—in fact, I recall nothing since the evening I interviewed you, Halifax, in Harley Street."

"Well, you are here now, and a very good thing, too," I interrupted.

"Yes," he replied, "and now that I am out of England, I think I shall stay away for a little, for although I feel ever so much better, I am not yet quite fit for work."

"Take a good, long change while you are about it," I answered.

I saw, with a sense of relief, that Feveral had completely lost all knowledge of that terrible episode during which he believed himself to be guilty of having taken the life of a fellow creature. The winnings, which North had carefully secured counterbalanced the large sums which he had lost during his first two evening's reckless play at the Casino.

By my advice, Mrs. Feveral persuaded her husband to leave Monte Carlo that afternoon. They spent the next six months visiting different parts of Europe, and when he returned to his work in the following summer, he was completely restored to his normal state of health. I saw him shortly after his return, but he did not allude to the Monte Carlo incident—he is never likely to remember anything about it.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Among the Salmon.

A correspondence of the Victoria Colonist has been visiting Steveston, the headquarters of the salmon industry. He writes:—Steveston is a live fishing town; during the season there is none livelier, and the sights are so unique that it is worth travelling miles to see. Every nationality under the sun is seen on the street, in the canneries, and sitting side by side in the resturants. And fish, you could see them everywhere lying in heaps. Canned and uncaned, you heard them, smelt them, felt them and breathed them. In travelling along the dyke for two miles on the water front you see many strange sights. You pass in quick successson the Chinese village the Siwash village, the Hebrew quarter, the Japanese village, and the log cabins where the Indians hang out, to say nothing of the neat, roomy quarters of the ordinary British Columbians. But everywhere is cleanliness. On the hottest day the air is laden with a pungent but not unpleasant odour of steamed salmon, but there are no offensive smells in any quarter of the busy little metropolis. In twenty-seven canneries 503,000 salmon were bought in twenty-four hours. The number of cases put up will be 350,050 which, added to the Northern pack of 149,000 cases makes the probable pack of the province for 1895 reach 499,500.

Suggestion In Crime.

It is a notable fact that suggestion plays a prominent part in the commission of crime, and that a crime of a certain kind, suicide for example, is generally followed by one or more others similar in their nature. Such being the case, the decision recently made by the National Medical Congress of Switzerland to vote an address to the press of their country, appealing to it henceforth to maintain strict silence on the subject of suicide, seems a commendable one. The congress expresses its conviction that the particularly high average of suicides in proportion to the population of Switzerland is due in great measure to the fact that each announcement in the newspapers of any sensational suicide is immediately followed by a large crop of acts of felo de se, perpetuated in a manner similar to the one described in print; but unless the newspapers of the little Republic are restrained by law it is hardly likely that they will leave out news of such a character.

Kept House in a Chimney.

A curious case of desertion is just reported from a French regiment quartered in a provincial town. About two months ago one of the soldiers disappeared, and no clue to his whereabouts having been obtained, it was presumed that he had left the country. As some of the men were inspecting the barrack roof the other day they perceived a few wraps in a chimney, and further examination revealed to view their missing comrade, in a state of squalor and reduced almost to a skeleton. He said that as he had no taste for military life he had resolved to desert, but that not daring to leave the barracks, he had installed himself in the chimney, going down to the court-yard in the night in search of food among the refuse piled up in a corner. The man has been removed to the military hospital in a very precarious condition.

A New Illuminant.

Some day we shall, perhaps, settle on a universal domestic illuminant. Will it be acetylene? If so, we shall want a shorter name for it, but that can be shelved for the present. Acetylene is said to give a flame ten or twelve times brighter than an ordinary gas jet, or four and a half times brighter than the very best gas burner can yield. Moreover, acetylene gives out much less heat than gas, and very much less vapor. Add to these advantages the fact that acetylene can be liquified with ease, and kept in liquid form, and you have the claims of acetylene in the rough. It is curious that acetylene has become commercially possible as an illuminant by developments in electricity, with which it will now have to compete.