

STORIES FROM THE DIARY OF A DOCTOR.

THE STRANGE CASE OF CAPTAIN GASCOIGNE.

It has for some time seemed to me that in the treatment of many diseases the immediate future holds a great secret in its hands. This secret is becoming more, day by day, an open one. I allude to the marvellous success which has already attended the treatment of disease by the elaboration and discovery of new forms of inoculation of sero-therapeutic virus. The following story may serve as a proof of this theory of mine. One evening at my club I came across an old college chum; his name was Walter Lumsden. He had also entered the medical profession, and had a large country practice in Derbyshire. We were mutually glad to see each other, and after a few ordinary remarks Lumsden said abruptly:—

"I was in a fume at missing my train this evening; but, now that I have met you, I cease to regret the circumstance. The fact is, I believe your advice will be valuable to me in connection with a case in which I am much interested."

"Come home with me, Lumsden," I replied to this; "I can easily put you up for the night, and we can talk over medical matters better by my fireside than here."

Lumsden stood still for a moment to think. He then decided to accept my offer, and half an hour later we had drawn up our chairs in front of the cheerful fire in my study, and were enjoying our pipes after some port. The night was a chilly one, in the latter end of November. The wind was roaring lustily outside. It is under such circumstances that the comforts of one's own home are fully appreciated.

"You have done a good thing with your life," said Lumsden, abruptly. "I often wish I had not married, and had settled in London—oh, yes, I have a large practice; but the whole thing is somewhat of a grind, and then one never comes across the foremost men of one's calling—in short, one always feels a little out of it. I used to be keen for recent discoveries, and all that sort of thing in my youth, now I have got somewhat into a jog-trot—the same old medicines—the same old treatments are resorted to, year in, year out; but, there, I have not come to talk of myself."

"You want to give me particulars with regard to a case?" I said.

"Yes, an anxious case, too—it puzzles me not a little."

"Have another pipe before you begin," I said.

"No, thanks; I don't want to smoke any more. Now, then, this is the story."

Lumsden had been leaning back in his chair taking things easy; he now bent forward, fixed me with two anxious eyes, and began to speak forcibly.

"The case, to put it briefly, is as follows," he said. "One of my best patients and staunchest friends in the parish of Wolverton is Sir Robert Gascoigne. He is a rich man; his people made their money in iron during the latter end of the last century. His great-grandfather bought a fine estate which goes by the name of 'The Priory.' The old man strictly entailed the property, leaving it in every case to the eldest son of the house, and failing direct succession to a distant branch of the family. The present baronet—Sir Robert (the title was accorded a couple of generations ago)—is between fifty and sixty years of age. His wife is dead. There is only one son—a captain in an infantry regiment. Captain Gascoigne is now thirty years of age, as fine-looking a fellow as you ever met. For many years the great wish of Sir Robert's heart has been to see his son married. Captain Gascoigne came home two years ago on sick leave from India; he recovered his health pretty quickly in his native land, and proposed to a young lady of the name of Lynwood—a girl of particularly good family in the neighborhood. Miss Helen Lynwood is a very handsome girl, and in every way worthy to be Captain Gascoigne's wife. His father and hers were equally pleased with the engagement, and the young couple were devoted to each other. Captain Gascoigne had to return to India to join his regiment, which was expected to be ordered home this year. It was arranged that he should leave the Army on his return—that the wedding was to take place immediately, the young people were to live at 'The Priory.' All preparations for the wedding were made, and exactly a fortnight after the captain's return the marriage was to be solemnized. All the reception rooms at 'The Priory' were newly furnished, and general rejoicing was the order of the hour. Let me see: what day is this?"

"The twenty-fourth of November," I answered. "Why do you pause?"

"I thought as much," said Dr. Lumsden—"this was to have been the wedding day."

"Pray go on with your story," I said. "It is nearly told. Gascoigne appeared on the scene looking well, but anxious. He had an interview with his father that night, and the next day went to London. He stayed away for a single night, came back the next day, and went straight to see Miss Lynwood, who lives with her father and mother at a place called Burnborough. Nobody knows what passed between the young couple, but the morning after a hurried message arrived for me to go up at once to see Sir Robert. I found the old baronet in a state of frightful agitation and excitement. He told me that the marriage was broken off—that his son absolutely refused to marry either Miss Lynwood or anyone else—that he would give no reasons for this determination beyond the fact that he did not consider his life a healthy one, that no earthly consideration would induce him to become the father of children. The whole thing is a frightful blow to the old man, and the mystery of it is, that nothing will induce Captain Gascoigne even to hint at what is

the matter with him. There is no hereditary disease in the family, and he does not look out of health. By Sir Robert's desire, I ventured to sound him on the subject. It seemed impossible to associate illness with him in any way. I begged of him to confide in me, but he refused. All I could get him to say was:

"An inexorable fate hangs over me—by no possible means can I avert it. All I have to do is to meet it as a man."

"Do you mean that your life is doomed?" I asked of him.

"Sooner or later it is," he replied; "but that is not the immediate or vital question. Nothing will induce me to hand on what I suffer to posterity. My father and Miss Lynwood both know my resolve."

"But not your reason for it," I answered.

"I prefer not to tell them that," he replied, setting his lips firmly.

"Have you seen a doctor? Are you positive of the truth of your own statement?" I ventured to inquire.

"I have seen one of the first doctors in London," was the reply. "Now Lumsden," he added, giving me a wintry sort of smile, "even an old friend like you must not abuse your privileges. I refuse to answer another word."

"He left me, and returned to 'The Priory.' This conversation took place yesterday morning. I saw Robert later in the day. He is completely broken down, and looks like a very old man. It is not only his son's mysterious conduct which affects him so painfully, but every dream and ambition of his life have been bound up in the hope that he could hand on his name and property to his grandchildren. Captain Gascoigne's unaccountable attitude completely crushes that hope."

"Why do you tell me this story?" I asked, after a pause.

"Well, with the vain hope that you may perhaps help me to get a clue to the mystery. Gascoigne refuses to fulfill his engagement on the ground that he is not in a fit state of health to marry. He refuses to tell his ailments. By what means can I get him to speak?"

"There is no way of forcing his confidence," I replied. "It seems to me that it is simply a matter of fact."

"Which valuable quality I don't possess a grain of," replied Lumsden. "I wish the case were yours, Halifax; you'd soon worm the captain's secret out of him."

"Not at all," I answered; "I never force any man's confidence."

"You possess a talisman, however, which enables you to effect your purpose without force. The fact is, this is a serious matter—Gascoigne looks miserable enough to cut his throat, the old man is broken down, and the girl, they tell me, is absolutely prostrated with grief."

"Do you think by any chance Gascoigne has confided the true state of the case to her?" I inquired.

"I asked him that said Lumsden—he emphatically said he did not, that his determination was to carry his secret to the grave."

"I sat silent, thinking over this queer case."

"Are you frightfully busy just now?" asked Lumsden, abruptly.

"Well, I am not idle," I answered. "You could not possibly take a day off and come down to Derbyshire?"

"I cannot see your patients, Lumsden, unless they wish for my advice," I replied.

"Of course not, but I am on very friendly terms with Sir Robert. In fact, I dine at 'The Priory' every Sunday. Can you not come to Derbyshire with me to-morrow? As a matter of course, you would accompany me to 'The Priory.'"

"And act the detective?" I answered. "No, I fear it can't be done. If you can induce Captain Gascoigne to consult me I shall be very glad to give him my opinion. But I can't interfere in the case, except in the usual orthodox fashion."

Lumsden sighed somewhat impatiently, and did not pursue the subject any farther.

At an early hour the following morning he returned to Derbyshire, and I endeavored to cast the subject of the Gascoignes from my mind. Captain Gascoigne's case interested me, however, and I could not help thinking of it at odd moments. The fact of the man refusing to marry did not surprise me, but his strange determination to keep his illness a secret, even from his medical man, puzzles me a good deal.

"Shall I go with you now to see the patient?"

Dr. Lumsden turned at once, and I followed him into the house. The entrance-hall was very large and lofty, reaching up to the vaulted roof. A gallery ran round three sides of it, into which the principal bedrooms opened. The fourth side was occupied by a spacious and very beautiful marble staircase. This staircase of white marble was, I learned afterwards, one of the remarkable features of the house. Sir Robert had gone to great expense in having it put up, and it was invariably pointed out with pride to visitors. The splendid staircase was carpeted with the thickest Axminster, and my feet sank into the heavy pile as I followed Lumsden upstairs. We entered a spacious bedroom. A fourpost bedstead had been pulled almost into the middle of the room—the curtains had been drawn back for more air; in the centre of the bed lay the old man in a state of complete unconsciousness—he was lying on his back breathing stertorously. I hastened to the bedside and bent over him. Before I began my examination, Lumsden touched me on the arm. I raised my eyes and encountered the fixed gaze of a tall man, who looked about five-and-thirty years of age. He had the unmistakable air and bearing of a soldier as he came forward to meet me. This, of course, was Captain Gascoigne.

"I am glad you have been able to come," he said. "I shall anxiously await your verdict after you have consulted with Lumsden."

He held out his hand as he spoke. I shook it. I saw him wince as if in sudden pain, but quick as lightning he controlled himself, and slowly left the room. The nurse now came forward to assist us in our examination. My patient's face was pale, his eyes shut—his breath came fast and with effort. After a very careful examination I agreed with Lumsden that this attack, severe and dangerous as it was, was to be fatal, and that in all probability before very long the old baronet would make the usual partial recovery in mild cases of hemiplegia. I made some suggestions with regard to the treatment, and left the room with Lumsden. We consulted together for a few minutes, and then went downstairs. Captain Gascoigne was waiting for us in the breakfast-room, a splendid apartment lined from ceiling to floor with finely carved oak.

"Well," he said, when we entered the room. There was unmistakable solicitude in his tones.

"I take a favorable view of your father's condition," I replied, cheerily. "The attack is a somewhat severe one, but sensation is not completely lost, and he has some power in the paralyzed side. I am convinced from the present state of the case that there is no progressive hemorrhage going on. In short, in all probability Sir Robert will regain consciousness in the course of the day."

"Then the danger is past?" said the captain, with a quick, short sigh of relief.

"If our prognosis is correct," I replied, "the danger is past for the time being."

"What do you mean by 'the time being'?"

"Why, this," I replied, abruptly, and looking full at him. "In a case like the present, the blood centres are peculiarly susceptible to dilatation. Being diseased, they are soon affected by any change in the circulation—a slight shock of any kind may lead to more hemorrhage, which means a second attack of apoplexy. It will, therefore, be necessary to do everything in the future to keep Sir Robert Gascoigne's mind and body in a state of quietude."

"Yes, yes, that goes without saying," answered the son with enforced calm.

"Now, come to breakfast, doctor; you must want something badly."

As he spoke, he approached a well-filled board, and began to offer us hospitality in a very hearty manner. My account of his father had evidently relieved him a good deal, and his spirits rose as he ate and talked.

At Lumsden's earnest request I decided not to return to London that day, and Captain Gascoigne asked me to drive with him. I accepted with pleasure; my interest in the fine, soldierly fellow increased each moment. He went off to order the trap, and Lumsden turned eagerly to me.

"I look upon your arrival as a godsend," he exclaimed. "The opportunity which I have sought for has arrived. It has come about in the most natural manner possible. I am sincerely attached to my old patient, Sir Robert Gascoigne, and still more so, if possible to his son, whom I have known for many years. Of course, it goes without saying what is the primary cause of the old baronet's attack. Perhaps you can see your way to induce Captain Gascoigne to confide in you. If so, don't lose the opportunity. I beg of you."

"I am extremely unlikely to have such an opportunity," I replied. "You must not build up false hopes, Lumsden. If Captain Gascoigne likes to speak to me of his own free will, I shall be only too glad to listen to him, but in my present position I cannot possibly lead the way to a medical conference."

Lumsden sighed impatiently.

"Well, well," he said, "it seems a pity. The chance has most unexpectedly arrived, and you might find yourself in a position to solve a secret which worries me day and night, and has almost sent Sir Robert Gascoigne to his grave. I can, of course, say nothing farther, but before I hurry away to my patients, just tell me what you think of the Captain."

"As fine a man as I have ever met," I replied, with enthusiasm.

"Bless you, I don't mean his character; what do you think of his health?"

"I do not see much amiss with him, except—"

"Why do you make an exception?" interrupted Lumsden. "I have metaphorically speaking, a magnifying glass to search into his complaint, and can't get the most remote trace of it."

"I notice that his right hand is swollen," I answered; "I further observe that he winces when it is touched."

"Well, I never saw it," answered Lumsden. "What sharp eyes you have. The swollen state of the hand probably points to rheumatism."

"Possibly," I replied.

At that moment Captain Gascoigne returned to us. His dog-cart was at the door; we mounted, and were soon spinning over the ground at a fine rate. The mare the captain drove was a little too fresh, however; as we were going down hill, she became decidedly difficult to handle. We were driving under a railway-bridge, when a train suddenly went overhead, rushing past us with a crashing roar. The mare, already ner-

vous, lost her head at this juncture, and with a quick plunge, first to one side and then forward, bolted. I noticed at that moment that Gascoigne was losing his nerve—he turned to me and spoke abruptly.

"For goodness' sake, take the reins," he said.

I did so, and being an old hand, for in my youth it had been one of my favorite amusements to break-in horses, soon reduced the restive animal to order. I turned then to glance at the captain—his face was as white as a sheet—he took out his handkerchief and wiped some moisture from his forehead.

"It is this confounded hand," he said. "Thank you doctor, for coming to my aid at a pinch—the brute knew that I could not control her—it is wonderful what a system of telegraphy exists between a horse and its driver; in short, she completely lost her head."

"I notice that your hand is swollen," I answered. "Does it hurt you? Do you suffer from rheumatism?"

"This hand looks like rheumatism or gout, or something of that sort, does it not?" he retorted. "Yes, I have had some sharp twinges—never mind now—it is all right again. I will take the reins once more, if you have no objection."

"If your hand hurts you, shall I not drive?"

"No, no, my hand is all right now." He took the reins, and we drove forward without further parley.

The country through which we went was beautiful, and winter as it was, the exhilarating air and the grand shape of the land made the drive extremely pleasant.

"It is your honest conviction that my father will recover from his present attack?" said Captain Gascoigne, suddenly.

"It is," I replied.

"That is a relief. I could not leave the old man in danger, and yet it is necessary for me soon to join my regiment."

"Your father will probably be himself in the course of a few weeks," I replied. "It is essential to avoid all shocks in the future. I need not tell you that an attack of apoplexy is a very grave matter—that a man once affected by it is extremely subject to a recurrence; that such a recurrence is fraught with danger to life."

"You think, in short," continued Captain Gascoigne, "that a further shock would kill Sir Robert?"

"Yes, he must on no account be subjected to worry or any mental disquietude."

I looked at the man at my side as I spoke. He was sitting well upright, driving with vigor. His face expressed no more emotion than if it were cast in iron. Something, however, made him pull up abruptly, and I saw a dark flush mount swiftly to his cheek. A girl was coming down the road to meet us; she was accompanied by a couple of fox-terriers. When she saw us she came eagerly forward.

"Take the reins, will you doctor?" said Captain Gascoigne.

He sprang from the cart and went to meet the young lady. I guessed at once that she must be Miss Lynwood. She was a very slight, tall girl, with a quick, eager expression of face. Her eyes were dark and brilliant; the expression of her mouth was sweet but firm; her bearing was somewhat proud. I was too far away to hear what she said. Captain Gascoigne's interview with her was extremely brief. She turned to walk in the opposite direction; he remounted the dog-cart and suggested that we should go home. During our drive I hardly spoke. When we reached 'The Priory' I went at once to visit my patient, and did not see much of the captain for the remainder of the day. The sick man was making favorable progress, but I thought it well not to leave him until the following morning.

Towards evening, as I was standing by the bedside, I was surprised to see Sir Robert suddenly open his eyes and fix them upon my face. Lumsden and Captain Gascoigne were both in the room. The old man looked quickly from me to them. When he saw his son a queer mixture of anxiety and satisfaction crept into his face.

"Dick, come here," he said, in a feeble voice.

Captain Gascoigne went immediately to the bedside and bent over to his father.

"What's up, Dick? Who is that?" He glanced in my direction.

"I have come here to help to make you better," I said, taking the initiative at once. "I am a doctor, and your old friend Lumsden wished to consult me about you. I am glad to say you are on the mend, but you must stay very quiet, and not excite yourself in any way."

"No, no, I understand," said Sir Robert. "I have been very bad, I suppose? You have done it, Dick, you know you have."

"Pray rest, father, now," said the son; "don't think of any worries at present."

"Tut, boy, I can't rest—I'm a disappointed man, Dick—I'm a failure—this is a fine place, and it will go to the dogs—it is all your fault, Dick, and you know it. If you want to help me and have the marriage solemnized as quickly as possible. Oh, I know what I am saying, and I won't be silenced—there needn't be a fuss—everything is ready—the rooms furnished—the place in order. You can be married by special license—you know you can, Dick. I shan't rest in my grave until this thing is set right. You get Helen here and have the wedding by special license, yes, yes. There'll be no rest for me, Dick, until I know that you and Helen are—yes—that you and Helen are man and wife."

"Stay quiet, sir; stay quiet, I beg of you," said Captain Gascoigne, in a voice of distress.

by the bed to watch the effect. After a time the patient sank into a troubled sleep. His excitement and partial delirium, however, were the reverse of reassuring, and I felt much more anxiety about him than I cared to show when I presently went down stairs to dinner.

(To be Continued.)

ABOUT QUEEN VICTORIA.

Interesting Odds and Ends Concerning Great Britain's Ruler—Her Horoscope and the Figure 9.

An interesting evidence of the strong affection that existed between Queen Victoria and her Prince Consort is found in the Queen's boudoir at Windsor Castle, which remains to-day in the same state as when Prince Albert died. On the door is inscribed: "Every article in this room my lamented husband selected for me in the twenty-fourth year of my reign." The Queen's bridal wreath, with the first bouquet that Prince Albert presented to her, lies withered within a glass case, and, according to some specially favored visitors, who were recently allowed to enter the room, there are evidences on every side of the thoughtful devotion of the Prince Consort to Her Majesty.

Every building which the Queen occupies is fitted with elevators for her express accommodation. A suggestion was recently made that these elevators be moved by electric power instead of the old-fashioned steam. The Queen, however, would have none of it. So determined is her opposition to the use of electricity that she has forbidden its employment in any of the royal palaces, so far as any rate, as the apartments frequented by herself are concerned. The hope that was once entertained by those in charge of the Queen's household that electricity might be adopted for ventilating fans and electrical motors has been abandoned.

The figure 9 plays an important part in Queen Victoria's affairs. The Duke of Kent, her father, was one of nine sons. Her Majesty is the ninth sovereign since the revolution of 1688. Born in 1819 (1-8-19-19), she came to the throne in 1837, (1-8-3-7-19), in her nineteenth year. Her husband was born in 1819; she has had nine children; her eldest son, born on the 9th of November, married the daughter of Christian IX. of Denmark, who was then in her nineteenth year.

The horoscope of Queen Victoria, as given in "Modern Astrology," is as follows:

"Born at four minutes past 4 a.m. on Aug. 24, 1819, in London. If a photo of the heavens had been taken at this time the planets would have been found in the position given in the Union Jack horoscope. The second degree of the celestial sign Gemini ascends and the sun and moon are just rising in conjunction; the benefic planet Jupiter is elevated over all the planets in the mid-heaven, entirely free from affliction. Mercury is the ruling planet of Her Majesty. November of the present year is in this life a critical period. The position of the Significator, or Lord of the Ascendant, in the fixed sign Taurus will give her much determination. It is not well placed in the twelfth house, and this indicates that she will be the producer of her own troubles and sorrows. The grand position of the Sun and Moon in the ascendant will give her the dignity needed to uphold her position as head of the Constitution."

GREAT LONDON.

Least Efficient and Least Influential People On The Globe.

London is perhaps the most eccentric wonder in the history of the world. Its vast extent of sordid, inartistic buildings, and its enormous migratory lodger population; its abundant evidence of wealth, and yet its widespread areas of local poverty; its feeble-minded native occupants, and the energy of its foreign and provincial immigrants; the sumptuousness of its western mansions, and its unlimited extent of squalid homes; its ill-arranged, ill-kept, and dirty streets, and its polluted atmosphere, are all exceptional, and most of them are in their various ways superlative. Moreover, London, all its gifts considered, is perhaps the least efficient and least influential aggregate of people on the globe.

A population so enormous and condensed is, from sheer incapacity of apprehension, led to take the facts of its condition absolutely and without comparison, and to suppose that in its special sphere the actual condition is at once natural and necessary. London so completely fills the eyes of Londoners that they become incapable of measuring that great community or of estimating its condition and its worth by any other standard. Hence it is that the chief city in the world falls frequently behind those less important places which are not completely overwhelmed by their own greatness. Petty capitals and large provincial towns compare themselves with one another, to their mutual benefit. They thus acquire self-consciousness, modesty, and are not left to the assumption that in their respective areas and communities whatever is, or is determined, must be natural and right.

Nothing Else.

A tourist had arrived unannounced at a crowded village inn.

It was already late in the evening, and there was no spare bed.

The traveller grew impatient. "Haven't you at least a bundle of hay you can give me?" he demanded of the landlady.

"That 'worthy' was also getting impatient."

"There isn't a thing left, she answered, except a bit of cold roast beef."

A Touch of Nature.

Mr. Meek (on street car)—I find that I have no money to pay my fare this morning. I have had my pocket picked.

Conductor (bluntly)—That old story won't go here. Pay or git.

Mr. Meek—It wasn't a pickpocket. My wife went through my clothes before I got up.

Conductor (sympathetically)—All right. Pay next time.