

Select Tale.  
THE DOCTOR'S YOUNG MAN.

BY KATE PUTNAM OSGOOD.

Ethel lay very quiet on her sofa, looking out of the window, and wondering in a dreamy kind of way, whether it might be April or July. To be sure, the almanacs said April; so did the tulips and lilies of the valley, beginning to glimmer in the prim stars and circles of the old-fashioned garden just under her eyes; so did the new-built nests peeping through the thin foliage of the trees against the wall, and the pale tinting of the fields beyond; but with all this, there was none of that stir that comes with the spring-time, when the sap in the leaf and the air in the heavens and the blood in the veins thrill together with the fitful pulse of new life. Here was the form and hue of April with the atmosphere of July; the buds stood out so many spots of painted color under the sunlight; the scanty foliage lay notched, leaf by leaf, against the unwinking blue above; the birds brooded motionless on their nests; everywhere, like an actual presence, was the absolute mid-summer stillness.

But if everything was still out of the house, everything was by no means still within it. Miss Theodosia was in what is vulgarly known as "the fidgets," and when Miss Theodosia's nerves were on the stretch, no one's else, outside of Ethel's sacred room, were allowed an instant's repose. She turned now in her restless trot from window to window, to say reproachfully, "I wonder, Maria, you can sit there so quiet, and that poor child dying under your eyes!"

"Dying!" Mrs. Oakes started up with a precipitation very unusual to her, then, reassured by long experience of Miss Theodosia, sank back again, murmuring, "How can you startle me so, Dossy?"

Miss Theodosia, little as she looked it, was the younger sister, and Mrs. Oakes had never learned to drop the nursery name, than which nothing could be more ludicrously inappropriate.

"Well," she returned, somewhat appeased by the sensation which she had caused, "at any rate, she might be dead and buried for all the doctor seems to care."

She might be, certainly, if time and mortality were as rapid as Miss Theodosia in their operations, as, very fortunately for Ethel, they were not.

Having gone already six times to the front door, the seventh, for variety, she went to the back; and now, as it happened, while she was walking down one path, what she was looking for walked up the other.

"I was requested by Dr. Wheeler," began the new-comer.

"Oh! then please to come in," ceremoniously interposed the servant who had answered his ring, and, leading him through the hall, she opened Ethel's door, and with the simple announcement, "the doctor's young man," closed it again behind him.

The only occupant he could perceive was a slight figure reclining on a sofa at the further end of the room. He advanced and began again gravely, "Dr. Wheeler requested—"

"Why do you ask?" suddenly interrupting himself with almost a start as she turned her face toward him.

"For what?" said she with a faint smile.

"For—my shortcomings in general," he answered, with seemingly no very clear idea of what he was saying.

"How very odd!" she said languidly. "Will you sit down?" motioning to a chair. Then, after a pause, during which her large eyes had rested on him with an abstraction which did not appear to take note of him, "You come from Doctor Wheeler?"

"Yes; the doctor's young man," he said, bowing with recovered self-possession. Then he proceeded to explain how the physician had been unable to come in person, arranged the medicines he had brought, with their written directions, and after one long, parting look at the pale patient lying back with half-dropped lids among her cushions, wished her good morning, and took his departure, exactly one minute before the entrance of Miss Theodosia, who had lingered at the garden gate to watch what she considered the suspicious movements of a man lounging about the hedge opposite.

Learning from the servant, on her return to the house, that the event she had been expecting had come and passed, she went with as soft a step as was possible to her, directly to Ethel's room, where she began turning over the medicines, complaining that the doctor might have come himself.

"He was called to Mile-End—a man with a broken leg—the assistant said," murmured Ethel, half-closing her eyes and speaking in little faint sentences.

features, marble-like both for their immobility and their utter bloodless pallor, the dilated, deep-blue eyes—glorious eyes, no thought—violets blossoming in the snow; and then with something very like a pang at his heart, he said to himself that the snow was melting fast.

"What is the matter with Miss Oakes?" he asked the doctor on his return.

"Nothing," answered Dr. Wheeler composedly.

The young man stared at him incredulously. "She does not seem to have a very firm hold on life," he said.

"Precisely," said the doctor, "and I suppose she will quietly slip away from it one of these days. But it is as I tell you, there is no positive disease. I wish there were, for then there might be a fair battle at any rate. But you can't do anything with a negative—Miss Ethel has, as you say, no hold on life, no interest in it, no strength, no energy."

"But is not that a very singular case?" interposed the young man in an eager tone, as the physician paused thoughtfully.

"Not very, unfortunately. She is not the first woman I have seen ready for her grave before her time was ready for her. Only at her age it is rather remarkable. But she seems to have none of the tastes of the girls in general—not much like her little monkey of a sister. She will make the heads spin round when she gets to be Ethel's age! I tell you what, Lane," continued the doctor, suddenly excited, "I would give something to see that girl in an out-and-out flirtation! It would do more for her than all the drugs of the Materia Medica. But I might about as well wish to see her in the moon," he concluded, shaking his head; "she doesn't like society—doesn't want to see any one, only asks to be quiet, and dream day and night, and the end will be, before long, she will wake in another world."

The young man was silent awhile, then he drew his chair nearer the doctor's, and in an earnest and doubtless very learned discussion ensued.

Miss Theodosia's curiosity was speedily gratified, for the doctor's assistant made another visit the very next day. Nor then only; after that he came daily in Dr. Wheeler's stead, who had been called away elsewhere. It really seemed as if Miss Theodosia was right, and that the Mile-Endians were bent on doing their frames all the damage they could, also was there no accounting for this continual demand for the doctor.

He did manage to come at last, however, at the week's end; sat awhile with Ethel, commended her perceptible improvement, and observed that a little careful daily exercise in the fresh air would do her a world of good. Then he pulled the curls of Miss Dot, perched on his knee, looked at his watch, and declared it was time for him to be going.

"Doctor," said Miss Theodosia abruptly, at this juncture, "are you growing old?"

"Dossy!" murmured Mrs. Oakes, mildly sneaked.

"My dear man," returned Dr. Wheeler, "we are all of us growing old, yes, even Miss Maakey here; but I not more than another, at least I hope not. Why do you ask?"

"You have set up an assistant," said Miss Theodosia uncompromisingly.

"An assistant! Oh! yes, to be sure, my assistant," repeated the doctor. "A very peculiar young man, too; I dare say he will astonish you some of these days; but the twinkle in the doctor's eyes made it hard to say whether he was in jest or earnest.

"Peculiar!" repeated Miss Theodosia, whose notions of peculiarity had some occult connection with a desire to appropriate other people's spoons, "I do hope he is respectable, doctor?"

"My dear Miss Theodosia, would he be to me else?" rejoined the doctor blandly.

Miss Theodosia shook her head solemnly, with what meaning was not clear.

A telegram from Lerwick, Shetland, Scotland, reports that a great eruption of the Skaftar Yökul, a volcano in Iceland, had taken place. It lasted over four days, and the magnificent sight it presented was visible from most parts of the country. The Yökul, or enormous ice mountains, are among the greatest elevations in Iceland. The most extensive of these is the Kiofa Yökul, in the east; it lies behind the heights which line the south-east coast, and forms, with little or no interruption, a vast chain of ice or snow mountains, covering a surface of perhaps 3,000 square miles. The most extensive and devastating eruption ever experienced in the island happened in 1783 from the Skaftar Yökul. This eruption did not entirely cease for about two years. It destroyed no fewer than twenty villages and 9,000 human beings, or more than one-fifth part of the then population of the island.

Don't avoid the society of "superior" young women because you fancy they realize their superiority; you will find that really intelligent women, who possess the most desirable qualities, are uniformly modest, and hold their charms in modest estimation. What such women most admire in men is gallantry; not the gallantry of courts and fops, but boldness, courage, devotion and refined civility. A man's bearing wins ten superior women where his boots and brains win one. If a man stands before a woman with respect for himself and fearlessness for her, his suit is half won. The rest may safely be left to the parties most interested. Therefore never be afraid of a woman. Women are the most harmless and agreeable creatures in the world to a man who shows that he has got a man's soul in him. If you have not got the spirit to come up to a test like this, you have not got that in you which most pleases a high-souled woman, and you will be obliged to content yourself with a simple girl who, in a quiet way, is endeavoring to attract and fasten you; and one year's possession of the heart and hand of a really noble specimen of her sex is worth nine hundred and ninety-nine years' possession of a sweet creature with two ideas in her head, and nothing new to say about either of them.

The Average Pickpocket.

It is generally presumed by a majority of our citizens, that pickpockets possess some indescribable peculiarity, in their personal appearance, by which they can readily be distinguished from honest folk. Many people entertain the idea that this kind of thieves must necessarily have a low forehead, a villainous countenance, and wear a large cloak to conceal false hands, and a kit of pickpocket's instruments. This mistaken supposition accounts, in a large measure, for the ease with which so many robbers are committed. In many cases the caution of the victims assists the operations of the thieves.

While the over-cautions are engaged in casting suspicious glances around, with the intention of avoiding some one who corresponds with their mental picture of a rascal, some gentlemanly appearing personage, whom they do not for a moment suspect, relieves them of their valuables. The appearance of a tastefully attired lady, with the modest countenance and delicately formed hands, who apologizes so gracefully for her rudeness and haste in leaving a car, does not suggest the fact that she has just picked a pocket. The plain, honest-looking old gentleman, who wears an expression as benignant as Decebel's and assists an old lady across the street with a solicitude that excites admiration, does not conform with the general impression of English Bill, the notorious English pickpocket. There are some suspicious looking faces among these people; just as there are among lawyers, doctors, merchants, or any other class of the community, but they will compare favorably in personal appearance with any body of honest citizens, phonologists to the contrary notwithstanding.

Items for Housekeepers.

Do everything at the proper time. Keep everything in its place. Always mend your clothes before washing them.

Blum or vinegar is good to set colors, red, green or yellow.

Sal soda will bleach; one spoonful is sufficient for a kettle of clothes.

Save your suds for the garden and plants, or to harden yards when sandy.

A hot shovel held over varnished furniture will take out spots.

A bit of glue, dissolved in skim milk and water, will restore old rusty craps.

Ribbons of any kind should be washed in cold suds and not rinsed.

If flat irons are rough, rub them well with fine salt, and it will make them smooth.

If you are going buy a carpet for durability, you must choose small figures.

A bit of soap rubbed on the hinges of doors will prevent them from creaking.

Scotch snuff, if put in the holes where crickets run out, will destroy them.

Wood ashes and common salt wet with water, will stop the cracks of the stove, and prevent the smoke from escaping.

Hair.

The Creator covered the human skull with hair. It is a very important protector of the brain. The Creator covered a part of man's face with hair. It is an important protector of the throat and lungs. The eyes likewise, say some physiologists.

Did you ever observe that curious protuberance in a man's neck? They call it "Adam's apple," from the old notion that when Eve gave the apple to Adam, he was so frightened that, instead of masticating it thoroughly, as he should have done, he swallowed it whole, and it stuck in his throat. His descendants have inherited the lump.

This peculiar projection in a man's throat gives extra length to his vocal chords, so that his voice may be deep and low. His vocal box is thus all out-doors, and requires the protection of the hair. In a woman's throat there is no such prominence. Her vocal box is buried in the soft parts, and requires no extra covering. Then there is no doubt that it was designed that man should do the rough, outside, dusty work of the world, while in the main woman should stay at home to take care of her little on's.

The beard about the mouth and nose among men engaged in dusty work catches and holds a vast amount of dust which would otherwise enter and irritate the lungs.

Men become bald! Why? Because they wear close hats and caps. Women are never bald. Sometimes, from long-continued headache, heat in the scalp, bad hair-dressing and some other causes, women may have bare spots here and there; but with all these causes combined, you never see a woman with a bare, shiny, bald head. And you never see a man lose a hair below where the hat touches his skull. It will take it off as clean as you can shave it down to exactly that line, but never a hair below, not if he has been bald fifty years.

The common black stiff hat, as imperious as sheet iron, retains the heat and perspiration. The little hair-glands, which bear the same relation to the hair that the seed wheat does to the plant above ground, become weak from the presence of the moisture and heat, and finally become too weak to sustain the hair. It falls out, and baldness exists. A fur cap I have known to produce complete baldness in a single winter.

A man with a good head of hair needs very little protection where the hair grows. Women who live much within doors, and who are therefore peculiarly susceptible to the cold, oil their hair and plaster it down hard and flit upon their skulls, so as to destroy nine tenths of its power as a non-conductor, have worn for years postage stamps of bonnets stuck on the back of their heads, exposing the whole tops of their skulls, and then going out of furnace-heated parlors, have ridden for hours in a very cold temperature without taking cold and without complaint.

Man, with his greater vigor and habits of out-door life, and with his hair not plastered down, but thrown up loose and light, could no doubt go to the north pole, so far as that part of his person is concerned, without any artificial covering. And yet we see men wearing immensely thick fur caps, and what amounts to sheet-iron hats, and do not dare step out in a chilly atmosphere a moment lest we take cold. It is silly, weak, and really a serious error. The Creator knew what his work was about when he covered a man's skull with hair. It has a very important function in protecting the brain. Baldness is a serious misfortune. It will never occur in any man who will wear such a hat as I do—a common black high silk hat with five hundred holes through the top, so that there will be more hole than hat. This costs nothing; the latter will do it for you when you purchase your hat. If the nap be combed back the wrong way, and if after the holes are made it is combed the right way, no one will ever observe the peculiarity. The hat will wear quite as long—the hat-toppers may considerably longer—because it is dry instead of moist; in brief, there is not a single objection to it, while it will certainly prevent baldness and keep the top of the head cool and prevent much headache.

While discussing the subject of our hair, I would remark that the back of the neck should be protected in the winter against cold and in the summer against great heat. Nothing can accomplish this uniformly and perfectly but the hair. The custom of shingling off the hair from the back of the neck is unphysiological, and it should in both sexes be allowed to fall low enough to cover the nape or meet the usual dress.

The present fashion of ladies, of drawing and straining the hair away from the nape of the neck and pulling it on top of the head with an indescribable mass of dead people's hair, and bark, etc., is mischievous and monstrous. Dio Lewis.

Preparing for Summer.

Hong-Kong must be a perfect paradise for ladies who affect elaborate costumes in summer, as the following account by an American lady now residing there will show. She says, "Finding I must prepare for the hot season, when every man, woman and child wears white, I sent for a Chinese tailor. He came, a horrid specimen of an opium-eater, bringing along his sewing-machine, and planted himself, cross-legged, in my sewing-room. He fitted me, and made lovely dresses of their grass linen and muslin, all for two dollars and fifty cents per week in gold. The lovely dresses he turned out were fitted, tucked and flounced, and fitted elegantly. The two skirts and waist could be done up in exquisite style for two cents a piece, regardless of number of flounces or tucks—priced the same as if perfectly plain—and my dresses only cost six cents for the 'getting-up,' which in America would at least cost five dollars."

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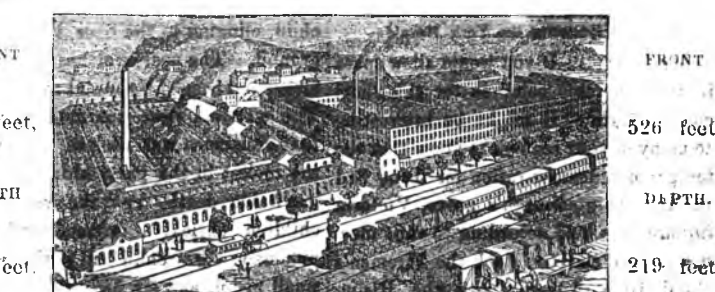
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