

The Straight Clear Road.

"That you, Miss Meade? Just come in?" the manager's voice over the house telephone tinged with relief. Dr. Stagg had said, "It must be Miss Meade." "You're wanted immediately, automobile accident; all dead but one, he's Dr. Stagg's patient."

"Very good. What's the address?" Ruth Meade, an utter how brief her sentences, never gave the impression of being out. Her tone was too rich and sweet not to please. Young, efficient, good to look at, the girl's voice was only one of the many gifts which made her the favorite nurse at the registry. She wrote the address to Dr. Stagg's patient upon a convenient pad as the manager repeated it.

"Thank you. Good-by."

With the quick, unobtrusive manner her training had accustomed, Ruth made some changes in the suit case she had fetched to her room (ten minutes earlier).

"I expected to go home over Sunday," she reflected, a trace of discontent showing her tranquil face, disconcerting to those who saw an eager worker of the forehead, a smiling and thinking of the full young lips.

"Oh, well—I'll do it with the current. Day can't be ignored. Effort, good will and your difficulties, Ruth; it's high anxiety and common sense, both."

She snatched the valise about with whimsical energy, and slipped up her hat and gloves.

Half an hour later, Ruth stood beside an improvised operating table in a very rich man's house. Dr. Stagg, greeting her by a fraternal nod, still had mental leisure sufficient to think, as many times before, that Ruth was a white-uniformed incarnation of quiet, unobtrusive capability and common sense, both. She worked hard and talked little.

"Just in time, Miss Meade, Dr. Bell will take the anæsthetic—it's trespassing."

They worked rapidly, almost in absolute silence. There is something eerie about approaching a man's brain with material instruments, even of twenty century manufactory. The patient was neither young nor old. He was a large man, probably handsome, although the disfigured head and face, partially concealed by the other ones, gave Ruth little definite idea of feature or contour. She instinctively fancied the countenance fine looking. Then by force of habit she put all curiosity, all imagination, everything except the alert attention to her duty, out of her mind.

He was back in the carved and canopied bed, desperately weak and ghastly looking, possessing no indication of triumphant resuscitation. The surgeons were conversing in low tones, out in the injured man's study.

"I have made him as comfortable as I could, thought Ruth, arranging bowls of solution upon the table. "But I'm afraid nothing will help him. His pulse and respiration are both alarming." She turned in a quick, overpowering sympathy and suggested the man lying on immediate floor, his head in clean white all its nervous system, but the individual evidently never beyond the power of comfort, luxury or knowledge to permanently assist him. The calm indefatigable nurse was a bit overwrought; there had been trials and struggles in her own life of late. Two paths stretched out before her and her heart quailed before the moment when she must declare her choice. Mr. Brewster, a few hours before unknown to her, was getting upon Ruth's nerve.

"Where's his wife?" she peevishly inquired of herself. "No doubt in Rome or Paris, as most husbands and wives are when I am called to nurse their honorable consorts in wealth like this. Why isn't she here? He's dying. I'm positive. Poor chap! I wonder if that's his picture—taken years ago?" She was meditatively studying a photograph upon a cabinet when Dr. Stagg beckoned her from the door. Ruth went in her silent fashion to join the two surgeons.

Mr. Brewster's condition is extremely critical. He may never come out of the ether. Do you think I'd better send for a second nurse to go on at seven?" Dr. Stagg knew what Ruth's answer would be.

"Oh, no! I like to see my patient through the night after an operation."

Dr. Stagg smiled at the solemn determination in Ruth's blue eyes. "Well, Mr. Brewster's man will help you if necessary. In the morning we shall see."

"What we shall see," gravely supplemented Dr. Bell. "Don't bury him till he's dead," snapped Dr. Stagg. He abhorred the precipitancy of youth. Dr. Bell bowed haughtily. Ruth turned to Dr. Stagg. "And Mrs. Brewster?" said she impulsively.

"Mr. Brewster is married. He has no near relatives whatever. Perhaps no really unselfish friend on the face of the globe."

Dr. Stagg returned to the bedside and bent once more over his patient. Ruth watched the physician's serious, sharply-cut face become a more unobtrusive society.

"How is he?" she breathed.

All Stuffed Up

That's the condition of many sufferers from catarrh, especially in the morning. Great difficulty is experienced in clearing the head and throat.

No wonder catarrh causes headache, impairs the taste, smell and hearing, pollutes the breath, deranges the stomach and affects the appetite. To cure catarrh, treatment must be constitutional—alterative and tonic.

Hood's Sarsaparilla

Cures catarrh—in motion and strength—the mucous membrane and builds up the whole system.

"Very low, indeed," Dr. Stagg answered frankly. "It was a nasty collision, two machine heads on at a time. Mr. Brewster was thrown twenty-five feet."

A few final directions jotted down, grave bows to Ruth, and she sat alone near the bed, listening to the struggling breaths of the strong man whose life was flickering out. A premature twilight pervaded the room, darkening blanchly in the corners. Ruth knew a window was open back of heavy shrouding curtains, but the fumes of ether lingered through all the house.

"It's a horrid day," Ruth thought, reaching for a limp periodical and fanning away the approach of unusual, unprofessional faintness.

A door was gently pushed open. Ruth stopped fanning and slightly started at the apparition presented. An old snow-headed darkey in white waistcoated evening clothes, holding by a combersome nail studded collar a huge Great Dane.

"How's Mass' G'gwine, missy?" he queried in the softest tones of his race. "Plato yo' ole fool, keep still!"

He sniffed the dog mildly with the fat hand that was free. Every tooth in his head showed a polite smile at the young lady, but his cheeks were frankly wet with abundant tears.

"He's quite sick," Ruth whispered.

"Are you Mr. Brewster's man? Oh, do's hold the dog so. He'll choke!" in alarm at the immense brute's efforts to break away from the delectable grip.

"It's his man Pompey, yes missy, I is. Plato, yo' sholy is de debil, I'lar lo' de Lawd! Don' yo' teach him, missy cose he sin' nebber like no one 'cep me and Mass' G'gwine. O, Lawd f' as with one heel wrooch and snail, Plato freed himself and darting across the room crawled under Mr. Brewster's bed. From that point of vantage he ominously growled as Pompey wot belligerently after him.

"Let him alone," Ruth urged. "I've seen dogs act that way before. Pompey, who had gone down upon all fours to peer under the bed, rose with panting difficulty.

"Lawd! Yo' don' gwine to say Massa G'gwine gwine die?" Pompey sniffed piously, abandoning all attempt at dignity.

"I hope not," was all Ruth could say.

"He done look pow'ful bad," said Pompey miserably. "Ain't dat jes' awful, do way he breathe?"

"That's mostly from the ether," Ruth consoled. She had her finger on Mr. Brewster's wrist. Plato growled forbiddingly as her skirts touched the bed.

"Fo' de lab o' Gawd," begged Pompey. "Ye' said Ruth tawfully. 'He intends to stay here, so I think, Pompey, I'll be obliged to keep you, too.'"

"Je' so, missy, I'm glad to stay. I is. Me an' Plato's de two passons dat lab Massa G'gwine be' in dis world. Ain' yo' gwine like him, too?" wistful.

"I like him immensely," Ruth assured the old man.

Pompey watched her wonderingly as she gave his master a hypodermic. A weird silence, disturbed only by Mr. Brewster's agitated respiration, settled upon the room. Slowly the minutes dragged by into hours. For an instant Ruth wondered which meal the butler brought her, when he entered with her dinner. Pompey waited upon her attentively. She swallowed what she could. The old servant, and the dog under the bed would touch neither food nor drink. Both grew so silent and motionless as the night wore on that Ruth believed they were asleep. They were not. The devoted human being and dumb, faithful brute alike waited intently alert misery for what would happen to their best friend.

Dr. Stagg lingered long at the next visit. But Ruth knew that he lingered more because he thought the end was very near than because he anticipated any result from his new directions.

"There may still be some chance in the morning," the doctor forced himself to murmur at the door.

Advertisement for Scott's Emulsion, featuring an image of a man carrying a large fish on his back. Text: "SCOTT'S EMULSION. In spring and summer, it's the natural time to store up health and vitality for the year."

The Open Mind.

Age and life are very relative terms. Many men are old at thirty and youth smiles from the eyes of others who have passed the eventful milestone. The real distinction is between the open and the closed mind.

The average man easily becomes indifferent and case hardened. He falls into ruts and does not take the trouble to get out of them. He is convinced that it is of no use to spend time on anything that is not of immediate use and has to do with the personal money problem. He reverts to type.

Comparatively few men who succeed markedly or exhibit high qualities of resource in a crisis are groove men. Of course success is not to be taken as a synonym for money-making, which after all is a crude affair. Nor is resource to be interpreted as the faculty of doing an ordinary act at a critical time. Success and resource come from the open mind.

The great benefactors of mankind were enabled to accomplish much by virtue of close observation of man and things and an intelligence that accepted each new phenomenon as having a bearing on their work.

Creative ability in literature comes to the men who have it and utilize it to nothing escape them in the world in which they live. The smallest traits of individuals, the tricks of physiognomy, the moving effects of passion and conscience are all pigeon-holed almost unconsciously and every day adds to the collection and changes it. The masters of fiction are of necessity men whose minds are as sensitive as cameras.

The great inventors have been all their lives wide awake to every small happening in inanimate Nature. They who gave us the steam engine and the electrical dynamo, communication by wire and wireless and all that long list of appliances that are to day a house-hold word solved their great problems and perfected their machines because they were ever alert for something new in their chosen fields.

The journeyman mechanic toils at his place mechanically; the inventor is ceaselessly expectant. He may have done a bit of work a thousand times, yet he is on the watch for the next time when a slight deviation will unlock to him a secret.

The masters of souls, the men by whose instrumentality miracles of grace have been performed were men to whom each new soul was a book newly opened. Average spiritual advisers divide people into groups as one would grade vegetables but the eyes of the spiritual life know that each soul is a distinct entity and demands a minute inspection.

The attitude in each case is the same, one of vigilant expectancy. The conclusion of yesterday may at any moment be modified by the developments of today. Any other position is indicative of mental laziness and means the loss of valuable material and knowledge. One has said that genius consists in seeing what others are looking at. With certain modifications, every character of literature, every important discovery of mechanics and science, every great truth of the higher life was passed on heeded by myriads until the right man came and made it his own.

We are often bored by the insatiable curiosity of children. In a measure it is a faculty we all had, but killed by neglect. We go through life increasingly grouping experiences. The alert mind does indeed group them also but always on the watch for something that cannot rightly be grouped in the allotted places prepared. A certain Oriental diplomat who sojourned long among us was celebrated for his ceaseless questions. Reporters went to interview him and instead were subjected to analytic examination. Personages called to see him and met the same fate. That man has been able to do wonders for his own country by reason of the searching examination he gave to every detail of the Western Hemisphere who ever met him. He was the personification of the open mind, and he may be the benevolent porter of "The Open Door."

A singular acquaintance who recently called upon me stated that the great mystery is "that which is called life." It was his opinion that three books were worthy of study—White's "Soliloquies," Thoreau's "Walden Pond" and Walton's "Angler." He said that these three men had given life real study. He also remarked that nothing in the world was without interest, and that a really wise man could write volumes on the tuning of a worm.

But the boon of the open mind to the ordinary man is its honesty to himself. In earnest melancholy, selfish monotony and makes each new day a progress through some wonderful museum or a ticket to an enthralling drama. Humanity in the mass is a sleeping world. The wonderful pagan sweeps by and they see it not. But there are a few, who remain awake, and in the intervals of our slumber they tell us what we have missed. They are the men of the open mind.—The Pilot.

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