

neck, and her ear was at his breast. So absorbed was this charming creature in listening, that she held up a pretty plump little hand, in mute entreaty for silence. "Yes," she said, in clear, positive tones, "you confirm my diagnosis, Sir John; I persist in saying that your medical attendant has mistaken the case." Her bright resolute eyes, turning towards Otto, softened as they rested on his beautiful hair and his sensitive lips; a little increase of colour deepened the delicately ruddy tint of her cheeks. "Pray excuse me," she resumed, with a captivating smile; "I am, in a professional point of view, naturally interested in Sir John. His life is public property: if I make any mistake here, I disgrace myself—and my cause!—in the eyes of the nation." Otto's countenance preserved a gravity worthy of his valet. "Permit me to introduce myself," he said, "before I renew my apologies. I am Sir John's step-son, Otto Fitzmark." The charming Doctor bowed with a look of modest interest. Sir John did what he had done from the first—he sat in solemn silence, looking foolish. It was not everybody who remembered that he had once been Lord Mayor of London, and who attended to him as a famous personage. It was also the first occasion (for at least forty years past) on which he had felt the arm of a handsome young woman round his neck, and the head of a handsome young woman on his breast. And the fair physician had said, on the first day of her attendance, "It is a rule of mine never to accept fees from public characters"—and the catalogue of Sir John's overwhelming emotions will be complete.

"I can only atone for my intrusion in one way," Otto proceeded. "Permit me to hope for an early opportunity of improving our acquaintance—and to return to the garden."

"Not on my account, Mr. Fitzmark! In any other case, my visit would be at an end. But I am perhaps morbidly anxious to 'make assurance doubly sure' (the words of Shakespeare, I think?) in the case of Sir John. Besides, I have the prejudice of the world against me; always on the look-out for an opportunity of asserting that a woman is not fit to be a doctor."

This seemed to be the right place for a burst of enthusiasm: Otto did it with perfect tact and dexterity. "Miss Pillico, I sincerely sympathize with you in the battle you are fighting against ignorance and stupidity. The Woman-Movement, in all its departments, has my heartfelt admiration and good wishes!" His heavenly blue eye became irresistible as this expression of generous feeling escaped him.

Sophia was too proud and too grateful to be able to reply in words. She rewarded the friend of the Women by a look—and turned with a sigh to business and Sir John.

"May I try once more before I write my prescription?" she asked. "No, my dear sir, your back this time. Lean well forward—so—and now draw a long breath." Her pretty hand grasped his shoulder, and her little rosy ear pressed (medically pressed) Sir John's broad back.

At this interesting moment the library door opened. Lady Dowager appeared—and paused indignantly on the threshold. Otto advanced to salute his mother. Her ladyship waved him back with one hand, and pointed to the Doctor and the patient with the other. Sir John visibly trembled. Sophia kept her ear at his back as composedly as if nothing had happened.

"Look at her!" said Lady Dowager, addressing Otto in the muffled monotonous tones peculiar to the deaf. "Hugging my husband before my face—and he seventy-four years old, last birthday. You unnatural hussy, let go of him. You a doctor indeed? I know what you are. Fie! fie!"

"My dear mother!"
"I can't hear you, Otto."
"My dear mother!"

"Yes, yes; I'll kiss you directly. Look at that old fool, your step-father! He a knight; he an alderman? Ha! ha! a nasty, mangy, rusty old Tom-cat. I won't live with him any longer. You're a witness, Otto—you see what's going on in that chair—I'll have a divorce. Ha! look at her hair," said Lady Dowager, as Sir John's physician quietly lifted her head from Sir John's back—"look at her hair, all rumpled with her horrid passions. I blush for my sex. Fie, Miss Pillico—fie!"

Sophia sat down at the desk, and wrote her prescription. "Two tablespoonfuls, Sir John, by measure glass, three times in the twenty-four hours. Your lungs are as sound as mine. Suppressed gout—that's what is the matter with you—suppressed gout."

She put on her bonnet (laid aside in the interests of auscultation), and held out her hand to Otto, with modest frankness. "A friend to my cause, Mr. Fitzmark, is my friend. Your excellent mother," she continued, encountering the furious eyes of Lady Dowager with a little pleasant smile, "is naturally prejudiced against me. Early education—on the narrow stand-point of fifty years since—has much to answer for. I am sorry to have made this excellent lady angry; and I heartily forgive the hard words she has said to me. On the day after to-morrow, Sir John, I will look in, and see what my prescription has done for you. Thank you, Mr. Fitzmark, I have no carriage to call; I am not rich enough to keep a carriage. Besides, my next visit is only next door. Ah, you know the Skirtons? The daughter is indeed a sweet girl. And the dear old father," Miss Pillico added, demurely announcing the medical conquest of another elderly gentleman, "is my patient."

Neuralgia, ignorantly treated as pure rheumatism. Good morning, my lady."

She bowed respectfully to the formidable enemy of the Rights of Women—posted at the doorway, and following her with glaring eyes as she glided out.

"Ha! she's going to the other old fool now," said Lady Dowager. "Susannah and the Elders! Do you hear, Miss Pillico? I call you Susannah and the Elders!" She turned to her guilty husband (rising to retreat), with a look which threw him back into his chair. "Now, Sir John!"

Otto was too wise to remain in the room. He slipped into the garden.

After taking a turn or two, reflection convinced him that it was his duty to pay a visit next door. He had an opportunity of comparing two different orders of beauty, as represented by Sophia and Salome, which it would be injudicious on his part to neglect. A man of his tastes would be naturally interested in comparing the two girls together. At the same time, he had not ceased to feel the attraction that had lured him back to London; he was true to his young lady. When he entered Mr. Skirton's house, it was with a loyal conviction that Salome's superiority would be proved by comparison.

VI.

In ten days' time events had made a great advance. Miss Pillico's patients felt the powerful influence of Miss Pillico's treatment. Sir John's improved health bore witness to the capacity of his new doctor; Mr. Skirton was well enough to give a small musical party at his house; Mr. Otto Fitzmark, false to Mrs. Wholebrook and Hydropathy, was entered triumphantly on Miss Pillico's sick list. Last, but by no means least, Lady Dowager had anticipated her divorce by retiring to the seaside.

The case of Mr. Fitzmark was, not sufficiently formidable, in the opinion of his new physician, to seclude him from the pleasures of Society. He was allowed to accept an invitation to Mr. and Mrs. Skirton's musical entertainment—and, by a happy combination of circumstances, he and his medical adviser entered the drawing-room together.

The primitive little party began at eight o'clock. By half-past eleven, the guests had retired, the master and mistress of the house had gone to bed—and Mr. and Mrs. Crossmichael and Salome were left together in an empty room.

Mrs. Crossmichael issued her orders to her husband. "Go to the club, and return in half-an-hour. You needn't come in again. Wait for me in the cab."

The one person in the way having been disposed of, the conference between the sisters began.

"Now, Salome, we can have a little talk. You have been wretchedly out of spirits all the evening."

"You would have been out of spirits, Lois, in my place, if you had seen them come into the room together, as if they were man and wife already!"

"Aggravating," Mrs. Crossmichael admitted; "but you might have controlled yourself when you went to the piano; I never heard you play so badly. Let us go back to Mr. Fitzmark. My opinion of him doesn't matter—I may, and do, think him a poor effeminate creature, quite unworthy of such a girl as you are. The question is, what do you think? Are you, or are you not, seriously in love with him?"

"I know it's weak of me," Salome answered piteously; "and I haven't got any reasons to give. Oh, Lois, I do love him!"

"Stop!" said Mrs. Crossmichael. "If you begin to cry, I leave you to your fate. Stop it! stop it! I won't have your eyes dim; I won't have your nose red. I want your eyes, and I want your nose, for my argument."

This extraordinary announcement effectually controlled the flow of Salome's tears.

"Now look at me," the resolute lady resumed. "Yes, you will do. You see the glass, at the other end of the room. Go, and look at yourself. I mean what I say. Go!"

Salome obeyed, and contemplated the style of beauty, immortalized by Byron in one line: "A kind of sleeping Venus was Dudd." The glass drew a pretty picture, presenting soft, drowsy, languishing grey eyes—plentiful hair, bright with the true golden color, as distinguished from the hideous counterfeit—a pure, pale complexion, a mild smile, and a weak little chin, made to be fondled and kissed. A more complete contrast to the brown and brisk beauty of Sophia Pillico could not have been found, through the whole range of female humanity.

"Well," said Mrs. Crossmichael, "are you quite satisfied that you have no reason to be afraid of Sophia, on personal grounds? Yes! yes! I know it's his opinion that is of importance to us—but I want you to be confident. Sophia is confident; and humility is thrown away upon the molly-coddle who has taken your foolish fancy. Come, and sit down by me. There was a fat guest in my way, when Mr. Fitzmark said good-night. Did he squeeze your hand; and did he look at you—like this?"

Mrs. Crossmichael's eyes assumed an amorous expression.

Salome blushed, and said, "Yes, he did."

"Now another question. When you got up from the piano (Chopin would have twisted your neck, and you would have deserved it, for murdering his music) Mr. Fitzmark followed you into a corner. I saw that he was tender and

confidential—did he come to the point? How stupid you are, Salome! Did he make a proposal?"

"Not exactly in words, dear. But if you had seen how he looked at me—"

"Nonsense! He must be made to speak out—and I will help you to do it. I want a perfect bonnet for the flower-show next month; and I have ordered my husband to take me to Paris. For your sake, I will put it off for a week; and we will come and stay here, instead—so that I may be ready on the spot for anything that happens. No; you needn't kiss me—you will do infinitely better if you listen to what I have to say. I have been carefully watching Sophia and your young man, and I have arrived at the conclusion that his doctor is certainly in love with him. (Haven't I told you to listen?) Then why don't you let me go on? I am equally certain, Salome, that he is not in love with her. (Will you listen?) But she flatters his conceit—and many a woman has caught her man in that way. Besides this danger she has one terrible advantage over you: she is his doctor. And she has had the devil's own luck—I am too excited to choose my language—with papa and Sir John. Otto is disposed to believe in her; and papa and that wretched Alderman just get well enough to encourage him. Did you notice, at supper, that she ordered him to take this, and forbade him to take that—and treated the poor creature like a child? Oh, I can tell you, we have no time to lose!"

"What are we to do, Lois?"

"Will you listen? This is the second of the month. Give my love to the dear old people upstairs, and say that we must have another party, a garden-party, on the fifth. It is the safest way of getting at Pillico. If I call on her, she's quite sharp enough to suspect that I have a reason for it. What's the matter now?"

Salome looked towards the door. "Don't I hear the cab? Oh, dear, your husband has come back already!"

"Haven't I told him to wait? They say marriage strengthens girls' minds—and I sincerely hope they are right! In all probability Mr. Fitzmark will call to-morrow, to make polite inquiries. You must not be at home. What do you mean by saying, 'Oh!' If you don't take my advice, I shall go to Paris."

"I beg your pardon, Lois; I'll do whatever you tell me."

Mrs. Crossmichael rose, and rang for her cloak. There's one thing more you must do—provoke his jealousy. The mother of that other young fellow who is dangling after you is just the person you want for the purpose. I heard her ask you to fix a day for visiting them at Windsor. You promised to write. Write to-morrow; and propose the day after, for your visit—returning the next morning, of course, for the garden-party. Leave word where you have gone, when the beautiful Otto calls again. In the language of Miss Pillico, my dear, he wants a stimulant. I know what I am about. Good night."

VII.

Mr. Fitzmark called the next day, as Mrs. Crossmichael had anticipated, and returned to his quarters at St. John's a disappointed man. An hour later his doctor arrived, and found him in the garden, consoling himself with a cigarette. She took it out of his mouth with a fascinating familiarity, and threw it away.

"I find I must speak seriously, Mr. Fitzmark. There's nobody in the garden. Suppose we sit down in the summer-house."

They took their chairs, and Miss Pillico produced her stethoscope.

"Open your waistcoat, please. Thank you—that will do." She used her stethoscope, and then she used her ear; and then she took his hand. Not to press it! Only to put him into the right position to have his pulse felt. "I have already told you that there is really no danger," she said. "The action of your heart is irregular—and I find I have underrated the necessity of taking certain precautions. But I have no doubt of being able to restore you to health, if—" she let go his hand, and looked at him tenderly—"if you will believe in your doctor, and do your best to help me."

Otto only waited for his instructions. "I am careful about my diet," he said; "I never hurry myself in going upstairs; and, now I know you object to it, I won't smoke. Is there anything more?"

"One thing more," said Sophia softly. "After what I saw last night, I cannot conceal from myself that Society is bad for you. You were excited—oh, you were! Your doctor thought of your heart, and had her eye on you when you were talking to that lovely girl. Of course you are invited to the garden-party? Do me a favor (in my medical capacity)—help your poor heart; write an excuse."

Otto consented, not very willingly, to make a sacrifice to the necessities, as distinguished from the inclinations, of his heart. Sophia's pretty brown eyes stole a look at him—a gentle, appealing look. "I am afraid you hate me for keeping you away from Miss Salome," she said.

This demand on Otto's gallantry only admitted of one reply.

"Miss Pillico, the man doesn't live who could hate you."

The Doctor blushed. "I wonder whether I may put a bold question," she murmured—"entirely in the interest of your health?" She hesitated, and toyed confusedly with her stethoscope. "I hardly know how to put it. Pray remember what I have already told you about

your heart! Pleasurable excitement is just as bad for it as painful excitement. Bear that in mind and let me suppose something quite likely—an event in which all your friends must feel the deepest interest. Let me suppose (professionally) that you are going to be married."

Otto denied it, without stopping to think first. The effect he produced on Miss Pillico rather alarmed him. She clasped her hands, and exclaimed fervently, "What a relief!"

She was a strong-minded woman, and she followed a man's profession. Would she take a man's privilege, and make him an offer of marriage? Otto's weak heart began to flutter. Sophia still played with her stethoscope.

"I was thinking of my medical responsibility," she explained. "Please let me listen again."

Otto submitted. There was prolonged examination. "Yes," she said, "under present conditions there can be no doubt of it. You mustn't! Indeed, you mustn't!"

"Mustn't—what?" Otto asked.

"Marry!" Miss Pillico answered sternly.

"Never?" Otto persisted, piteously.

Sophia informed him that it depended on the treatment. "What I have said to you," she proceeded, not unmindful of the future in her own interests, "refers to the present time. If you had been engaged to marry some young lady, for instance, I should have said, Put it off. Or, if you only contemplated such a thing, I should say, Pause. In one word, we have an interval to pass: long or short, is more than I can tell." She rose, and laid her hand persuasively on his arm. "Pray be regular with your medicine," she pleaded; "and let me know directly if you if you feel any change in your heart." They passed a flower-bed on their way back to the house. Miss Pillico admired the roses. Otto instantly presented her with a rose. She put it in her bosom—and sighed—and gave him a farewell look. For the first time he left the look unreturned. He had accidentally picked the rose which bore Salome's favorite color; he was thinking of the grey-eyed girl with the golden hair. Before Sophia could win back his attention to herself, young John, with his pipe in his mouth, appeared at a turn in the path. The Doctor took her leave in depressed spirits.

Otto hesitated about giving up the garden-party. It was only on the next day that he decided on staying at home. He wrote his excuses to Salome.

In the meanwhile young John advanced lazily towards the summer-house, and discovered his sister in ambush at the back of the building. Sour Bess was in such a state of excitement that she actually forgot her quarrel with her brother. "I've heard every word they said to each other!" she burst out. "That hateful wretch is sweet on Otto, and means to make him marry her. Oh, Johnny! how can I stop it? Who can I speak to first?"

Young John's sympathy with his sister—when she happened to be in an especially malicious mood—expressed itself in a broad grin. United by their mutual interest in making mischief, these amiable young people met, in reconciliation, on common ground. "It's no use speaking to Otto," Johnny remarked, "he's such a fool. And, as for my father, he'd sooner believe Pillico than either of us. The girl next door is fond of Otto. How would it be if you told her?"

Bess refused even to consider the suggestion. "No," she said; "it might be doing a service to Salome, and we are not on speaking terms."

Young John, under these circumstances counselled patience. "Don't throw away a good chance, Bess, by being in a hurry. It won't hurt to wait for the Skirton's garden-party. Miss Pillico will be there; she'll give you another opportunity."

Bess was struck with this last suggestion. "I didn't intend to go to the party," she said. "You're quite right; I'll accept the invitation."

(To be continued.)

THE ORIGIN OF THE "PRINTER'S DEVIL."

Everybody knows who is the "Printer's Devil," but there are comparatively few who know how he came to be so dubbed. We may therefore, be pardoned for giving a brief account of the origin of so worthy a personage. Printing used to be called the "Black art," and the boys who assisted the pressmen were called the imps. According to legend, Aldus Manutius, a printer of Venice, took a little negro boy, left behind by a merchant vessel, to assist him in his business. It soon got wind that Aldus was assisted by a little black imp, and to dispel the rumour, he showed the boy to the assembled crowd, and said, "Be it known to Venice that I, Aldus Manutius, printer to the Holy Church, and the dogs, have this day made a public exposure of the 'printer's devil!'" All who think he is not flesh and blood, may come and pinch him. The people were satisfied, and no longer molested the negro lad.

The recent election of M. Edouard Pailleron to the Academie Française raises the total number of dramatists among the "Immortals" to nine. The other eight are MM. Augier, Dumas, Sardou, Labiche, Doucet, Feuilleton, Sandeau and Legouvé. Some of these, no doubt, are more than dramatists; but if any curious person were to compile a list of the forty living Englishmen of letters whom he thought most eminent, how many playwrights would he include!