

health was suffering and the whole atmosphere of the home was one of tension and anxiety. The mother had told me about the unmerciful beatings that the poor girl had received from her father, but I had not mentioned this to the Doctor. The father seemed to have preserved just enough of the religion of his forefathers to believe that everyone had a right to propagate their kind, no matter how debased or marred the offspring might be.

"And besides," he said, "I cannot bear to think of Katie being hurt."

I wanted to break in there, but I was afraid he would take it out on the defenceless and distracted mother so I held my peace. The Doctor assured him that Katie would be given the best medical care and would feel no pain.

"But it's against Nature," Katie's father protested.

Katie was not in the room during this discussion. She and the mother had gone out while the Doctor and I were working on the father, but at this place in the conversation, Katie came in quietly. Her father had his back to the door so he didn't know that she had entered. I saw her unfastening her blouse, then she pulled one arm out, exposing her shoulder. She moved across the room and stood in front of the Doctor. Across her shoulder lay an angry welt like a burn.

Her father stared at her with eyes full of guilt and shame and for some time no one spoke. The Doctor looked from the daughter to the father and his eyes were full of pity for both of them.

"I think this settles it," he said slowly.

Then he laid a paper on the table and handed the father his fountain pen.

"Sign here," he said. "Your wife has already signed."

Then he reached out his hand and shook hands with Katie's father.

"I give you my word," he said, "we will not hurt Katie."