

"She has no more heart than one of my instruments."

"She is so beautiful. I cannot quite accept your diagnosis. And the child appears to adore her."

"Yes, she does," he said grimly. "And that is the worst thing I know about her; that she does not appreciate it. I'll vow! the Chinese way of destroying them at birth is preferable. It is at least swifter and more painless than casting them out as women do."

"I think where children are concerned you may be prejudiced?" I urged. The speech sent him off into a reverie, from which he came with a long-drawn breath.

"I had a little sister once," he said slowly, "who one day when I was playing with her fell and hurt herself. My mother gave her life trying to save her. If we had had a doctor who knew more than a child she would have got well. Even if she had been let alone she might have done so. She went through tortures inflicted on her by a pedantic ignoramus, and died. Boy as I was, I thought it then and told him so. I know it now. I made up my mind then, that no other child who came within my reach should ever suffer as she had done; and that I would fight an unending battle against pedantry and pretence. And when I see a mother sacrificing her child to her pleasures I know just where to place her."

This ended the conversation. His face forbade further discussion. And when I saw him next time with his little patients, carefully examining first Miss Hazel and then Jane and Carolyn with a touch as deft as a mother's, I knew the secret of his success, and I slipped away.

My summer holiday ended before the Doctor felt inclined to leave his patient, and I left him there "keeping house" with Miss Hazel and the two young ladies, and waiting, as both Carolyn and Jane informed me, "to see how Miss Hazel's spine was coming on."

I learned afterwards from one of my friends, who was summering at Rock Lodge, that Mrs. Durer, towards September, about the end of the season at —,

where she had her villa, had run down to see her child and been wonderfully surprised and delighted at her improvement. "It's my opinion," said the lady who told me this, "that she was much more interested in that very good-looking and serious-minded doctor-friend of yours than she was in her little girl. She was always after him and he didn't care a button about her. In fact, he left as soon as she came down."

I learned also that an unfortunate misunderstanding had arisen with Mrs. Dow, and Mrs. Durer had taken the little girl back to town.

It seems that Mrs. Durer, however, much pleased with the improvement in her child's appearance, had very fixed views as to her social position and as to the children she should be permitted to play with. When she discovered that her child had been playing with Mrs. Dow's Jane, she threatened the governess with instant dismissal if it should ever occur again.

The result was natural. Both children wept bitterly and Elishy Dow's widow entered the lists. Mrs. Dow was calm to outward appearance; but the fire within burned deep. The grief of the children went to that member which she carefully guarded from public scrutiny; but which could be easily touched if one but knew the way to penetrate beneath the crust. And she nursed her smouldering wrath till Mrs. Durer crossed her path.

That lady drove up to her door the afternoon before she had arranged to return to her home, to explain that she would take her child away next day, and to raise some question about Mrs. Dow's account. She was dressed impressively, but it did not impress Mrs. Dow. Mrs. Durer always declared afterwards that the woman insulted her because she would not permit her to rob her. She as little knew how exact that careful and scrupulous house-wife was, as she knew the real cause of her sudden onslaught on her. A lioness whose den had been invaded and young injured would have been less ferocious.

Mrs. Durer began about the account that had been sent her; but the score Mrs. Dow had to settle was unwritten. She was simply distant and coldly hostile until Mrs. Durer referred to her as "My good woman." A flash from behind Mrs. Dow's glasses might have warned her; but when she failed to heed it and asked after her "daughter—the unfortunate one—Joan, isn't that her name?" Mrs. Dow opened the engagement.

"I have no daughter of that name," she said with a lift of her head, "and if I had, I don't know as it would matter to you whether she was unfortunate or not, seein' as you have one that appears a mite unfortunate herself, as you don't look after any too carefully."

Mrs. Durer was indiscreet enough to show temper and to reply in kind, and before the engagement was ended, Elishy Dow's widow and Jane's grandmother had told her some home truths about herself which the lady had never dreamed anyone would have been bold enough to hint at. She knew from that authoritative source that she was a cold-blooded, unnatural woman who left her sickly babe to a foreign woman to care for, and that a strange doctor had had to come and look after the child, and that when she herself had come, it was not to see the child, but the Doctor. And all this was told with a directness that had the piercing quality of cold steel.

How Mrs. Dow had come by this knowledge Mrs. Durer had no idea. She denied every part of it vehemently and furiously; but she knew, nevertheless, that it was true and that her enemy had the advantage of knowing it was the truth, and further, of knowing how to use that deadly weapon. So what could she do but take it out on the governess and even on little Carolyn.

Mrs. Dow's comment on the matter was that "Folks as ride in carriages don't hear the truth about themselves any too often, but if they come around Elishy Dow's widow puttin' on their airs, they'll get it."

When next day the little girl with tearful eyes turned up dressed for the journey, with "Miss Hazel" clasped to her breast as the pledge of Jane's undying affection, Mrs. Durer, notwithstanding

ing Carolyn's tears, insisted on the toy being immediately sent back, asserting angrily that it was "nothing but a horrid, old broken doll anyhow," and she would have nothing about her that reminded her of that outrageous creature.

"But, oh! it's Miss Hazel," wept the little girl, "and her spine hasn't gotten straight yet and I wanted to take her to the Doctor."

"Carolyn, don't be so silly. I will not have any more nonsense."



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