

'Yes,' Sir David put in kindly, 'were you ever under me in St. Mark's Hospital? And have you come to consult me again?'

There was no trace of impatience in the deep voice, no sign of hurry; no one would have guessed that, from the moment he had seen the Duchess out of his door, every minute of this man's time had been mapped out. He listened patiently to the woman before him, as though the whole day were at his disposal.

'I were in your ward, sir,' Mrs. Denham said, eagerly. 'O' course, you wouldn't remember me, seein' as it's four year and more ago; and it's not myself I've a' come about, it's my little boy what's bad.'

'Yes? And is he in St. Mark's, too? Or do you, perhaps, want him to come to St. Marks?'

'Oh, no, sir, 'e ain't in the 'orspital, and we don't live near St. Mark's—not now, sir. I've a-tramped all the way from Shoreditch this mornin' to find you, 'cos I remembered as they said in the 'orspital—in St. Mark's, sir—as there wasn't no doctor like you. And I thought—I thought, maybe if you could see my pore little chap you could cure 'im.'

Her voice had grown sharp and eager, her eyes watched the grave face before her hungrily, intensely. What hope she had built upon this man's wonderful powers of healing, only she herself knew! All through the weary hours of last night she had been making up her mind to come and seek out the great doctor; throughout the long, long tramp from her tiny back room in Shoreditch the one thing that had borne her up was the thought that with this man lay the safety of her boy.

Sir David's keen eyes looked full into the hungry ones that eagerly scanned his face; he did not speak for a moment. Then he said slowly:

'You want me to see your little boy, Mrs. Denham? Is he very ill—too ill for you to bring here?'

The eyes that met his filled with tears; Lizer Denham put out her hand blindly to help herself up by the table; she fancied that her mission had failed. There was a sob in her voice as she said:

'He's as bad as can be, doctor. I couldn't bring 'im 'ere, pore little chap. I thought—I thought as maybe you'd—you'd come and see 'im, but—I didn't ought to a' troubled yer.'

She rose heavily as she spoke; her eyes were blinded by tears, but she tried valiantly to check the sobs that nearly choked her.

'I am very glad you came, Mrs. Denham, and you have not troubled me at all. I only asked whether you could bring your little boy here, because I happen to have a good many things to do to-day. But if he is so ill—I shall go back with you at once to see him.'

The color swept over the poor woman's white face; but no words would come; she was speechless with sheer joy.

'If you will sit down and wait just a few minutes,' the doctor went on, 'I will drive you back, and we will see what can be done for the little chap.'

Still there were no signs of hurry or impatience in the kind voice; no hint that the busy physician's whole day was being upset for the sake of one little child in a back room of Shoreditch.

Telegrams were dispatched, the brougham was ordered to come round at once,

and the orthodox butler felt an inclination to weep as his master courteously helped the ill-dressed woman into his carriage and drove away with her rapidly towards the East-end.

'And me sittin' there beside 'im like the Queen 'erself,' Lizer explained rapturously afterwards to an open-mouthed neighbor; 'there, you ain't go no idea what a kerridge like that is; seats as soft as soft. and goes as smooth as if the wheels was runnin' in oil, and as if there wasn't a stone in the road. My! it was a fair treat.'

It was a very tiny back room, into which the doctor stepped softly, nearly an hour later. There hardly seemed room for him as he moved amongst a medley of furniture towards the little cot against the wall, beside which a man watched with hopeless eyes.

Upon the pillow lay a small, flushed face, and as the doctor looked down at it and asked a few questions a little smile flickered over the baby lips, and two tiny arms were outstretched towards the physician. A great tenderness was in Sir David's eyes as he stooped over the cot, and lifting the child up gently, sat down with it beside the table, on which a lamp burnt dimly in the foggy atmosphere. The small boy nestled into the strong arms that held him, as though something in their strength and tenderness comforted him; his eyes closed, and in a few minutes his breathing showed that he was asleep.

'Bless 'is 'eart,' his mother whispered tearfully, 'and 'e 'aven't a-slept all last night, nor the night before, pore little chap. Seems to know as you've come to do 'im good; don't 'e, doctor?'

Sir David asked more questions in a low voice, whilst his fingers felt the little pulse, and his keen eyes watched the sleeping child closely, and Lizer Denham and her husband never took their eyes from his strong, kind face.

'D' yer think 'e'll get better, sir?' the woman whispered, after a long pause. 'Me and Jem, we're terrible set on the little chap; d' yer think 'e'll get better?'

'I think he is very ill,' the doctor said, 'but I hope we shall be able to pull him through. This sleep is the very best thing possible for him,' and the arm that held the sleeping child tightened its hold a little.

Down in the narrow street below Sir David's coachman wondered, as the afternoon sped on, what in the wide world could be keeping his distinguished master so long in the grimy little house into which he had vanished. The street was narrow and dirty; the houses were black and forbidding of aspect; the whole neighborhood spoke of abject poverty and squalor. Surely, the coachman thought, his master's errand here could not be a long one. But the afternoon passed away and still Sir David did not come.

Upstairs in that small back room a little child slept through the hours that crept by—slept quietly in the arms of one of London's greatest physicians, whose time, so every one said, was money! Several times the poor father and mother begged him to give the child to them, but he only shook his head with a smile. 'We must let him sleep,' he whispered; 'this sleep may be the saving of his life.'

And the great man sat on in the small squalid room, as though he had no business in the world to do except the healing of

this one little child. When at last the baby's eyes opened the room was almost in darkness, save for that dim light upon the table. The doctor rose softly and laid the child in the cot. 'Give him some warm milk now,' he said, 'and then let him sleep again. I think he will do now. I will come and see him to-morrow.' And with a few more minute directions Sir David turned to go.

The child's father held out his hand in dumb gratitude and wrung the doctor's hand in a mighty grip; the mother followed him to the door.

'Eh, sir,' she said, 'whatever can I do to thank yer? We're pore folk, sir—and—and—I reckon we can't pay yer what we oughter pay yer—but—but—will yer tike this?' And Sir David found pressed into his palm two sixpences and a shilling.

'Jem bein' out o' work, we ain't done very well lately,' she went on, apologetically, 'else I wouldn't a' arst yer to tike so little. But will ye tike this, sir, fer us to show we're grateful like?'

Sir David took the worn hand in his and shook it warmly, then gently put the money back into it.

'No, no, Mrs. Denham,' he said, 'I can't take your money, although I very much appreciate your kind thought in giving it to me. Supposing you spend it on getting something nice for the little lad. I am very pleased to have been able to come and see him, and I think he will do now, but I came to please myself, and to help you. It was not a matter of fees.'

A Hymn for the Home.

(J. S. Kennard, D.D., in 'American Messenger'.)

Around our home, O Father, God,
Let Thy bright angels watch and ward;
Above it spread Thy mighty wing,
Shield it from every hurtful thing.

Here let Thine Ark for ever rest,
The bright Shekinah be our guest,
While, gathered round the Mercy-seat,
Our prayers and praises we repeat.

Here let Thy holy precepts sway
Our social duties day by day;
Let helpful sympathy prevail
And gentle patience never fail.

Let wise parental love ensure
Sweet filial reverence, high and pure,
If selfish tempers e'er arise,
Let Christ's own Spirit harmonize.

Thus may our happy home-life prove
A prelude to the home above;
Parents and children, Lord, prepare
For endless, joyful home-life there.

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