

A Voice from the Void.

By Marion J. Brunowe, in which even Margaret could object on this occasion! No, but the influence of a strong mind over a weaker one in the long run, spoken or unspoken by its opinions, invariably claims the mastery.

This was only one of many such Sunday morning scenes, though most sad to relate, all did not end as prophetically. Two weeks later on the pretext of a slight cold Rose remained at home, there might be a relapse, and there was none to counsel to the contrary.

We shall now beg leave to give the remainder of this story in the words of Dr. —, an eyewitness to the scene we are about to portray. I had been practicing some twenty-five or thirty years when this most strange occurrence was brought to my attention.

It was the 6th of November, 18—, and quite late at night, in fact I was preparing to retire, when my call-bell was pulled several times in succession. On answering it, my office boy brought me a note, a few words scrawled in my friend Dr. —'s familiar writing.

"My dear Doc.—Am laid up; have just slipped on the ice on my own door-step; result severe sprain, unable to move. Unfortunately was on my way to call on Mrs. Harper, 18— street. You remember consultation day before yesterday. She is in a critical condition; can you go there for me at once?"

"And, sir, the messenger is in a tearing hurry," said my lad; "he says the lady's dying." Hurrying on my overcoat, I set forth. I recalled the case instantly, for, as has been intimated, I had met Dr. — in consultation only the day before. It was a complicated form of pneumonia which we had agreed in pronouncing beyond the aid of medical skill.

No earthly power could have effected a cure; indeed my only wonder was that the patient was still alive. She was a young married lady, perhaps in reality, not more than thirty-five, but already the wreck of what once must have been a lovely girl.

We physicians see mankind at their worst, and can guess at many hidden springs, of which the world knows not. A long and severe illness is apt to give a care-worn and old look to even youthful faces late hours and dissipation will do the same, but there are lines and shadows which only anxiety can produce, and a practiced eye had noted these, and many of them, on the face of our patient. Being an old man, I may be indulged in a little sentiment, and I honestly confess to a pang in the regions where even medical men are supposed to have a heart, as I vaguely conjectured who could have been so unkind as to make life a trouble to that fragile creature. At present she seemed to be surrounded by all that love and extreme solicitude could do.

After rendering what temporary aid I could, I hurried away, and motioned the husband aside. I felt a pair of anxious eyes were following our movements as Miss Carrigan bent over the pillows. Stating her condition plainly, the hopelessness of her recovery, etc., I intimated to Mr. Harper that if his wife had any religious duties to perform, there was not a moment to spare, skillfully alluding to the soothing, quieting influence generally resulting. I said only a few words, yet I flatter myself that they made an impression.

"It shall be as you advise," was his laconic answer, and I noticed he made a slight gesture to Miss Carrigan. She was with us instantaneously. "Can a clergyman be procured at this hour?" His tone was cold and distant. But her voice came near breaking as she answered: "Certainly, Mr. Harper; I shall send for Father — at once," mentioning a venerable priest with whom I was well acquainted. A thought struck me. Perhaps it would not be so easy for this intrepid woman to get a messenger.

"As my way lies past the rectory, if you permit I shall be happy to call on Father — myself," I suggested. A grateful glance from Miss Carrigan's eyes rewarded me, as my offer was courteously accepted by Mr. Harper.

"Trouble there, deep trouble," was my mental colloquy as I hastened homeward. Calling at the rectory as I had promised, I saw Father — and in a few words stated the facts. "Now, God be praised!" exclaimed the zealous man; "a brave sister's prayers were not in vain. My dear Doctor, you bring me the best summons I have received in many a day. Not a moment to spare, you say? Then good-night, I thank you." And before I could well draw breath he was off. Had it been anybody but Father — I might have felt slighted, but Father — was Father —, odd, eccentric, but the most zealous man that ever lived. I went home and to bed.

Next morning, thinking that there might be just the slightest possible chance that Mrs. Harper still lived, I made my first call of the day there. But no, my prognostications had proved correct; she had expired in the early morning.

As I stood in the hall making my inquiries of a servant, there was the soft swish of a woman's dress, and I beheld Miss Carrigan descending the stairs. I stepped forward and met her half way.

As I took her extended hand, I endeavored to express my sympathy in a few appropriate words. I felt the tremor that shook her, saw the large eyes were swimming in tears and comprehended that she was unable to articulate a word. Instead with a quick gesture, full of poignant emotion, she bent her stately head and pressed her lips to my hand.

"My dear madam!" I protested. "O Doctor!" was the broken reply, "we owe you a thousand-thousand thanks. My sister was permitted to make peace with God. Will you come up?" In silence I followed her to the darkened death chamber. Only a maid servant was in the room, moving noiselessly around in preparations for the last sad services; my companion informed me, "and I have just succeeded in persuading Mr. Harper to lie down a while—O my darling!"

And she spoke she drew aside the sheet, revealing the marble features of the dead. Death is at times merciful, even tender; in this instance it was both. From the fair countenance the weary troubled look had vanished. Youthful, peaceful, calm, beautiful, it was the face of a sleeping child. The sister's voice was thick and choked; "Poor little Rose, she has never looked so since the happy days of long ago, when we were children together. But surely she must be happy!"

"The last words were half question, half assertion, and she turned her searching eyes full upon me, as if challenging me to reply. I essayed to speak, but a sudden chill seized me, and the words froze upon my lips, for mournfully like the wail of the wind in a winter storm came the words: "Yes—and no." At the same instant a shudder passed over the frame of the dead; there was a convulsive twitching of the features, the lips parted, the eyes opened, and a strong whisper bade: "Lift me."

Trembling like a leaf, strong man as I am, I placed one arm about her shoulders, and raised the body to a sitting posture. "Thank you, hold me," were the next words; "do not leave me, Margaret." And she extended both hands toward her sister, who with bated breath, and dilated eyes, had sunk on her knees at the bedside. "Margaret, send for George, send for my husband; bid him come; I have but a few moments—as mortals measure time."

The dazed woman tottered toward the door, stumbling over the maid who had fallen in a heap at the threshold. The noise of both must have come to the ears of the stricken husband, for he was in the room in a moment. Pausing one instant in his horror, he then attempted to rush to her side. I felt her whole form shake like an aspen leaf, as she motioned him back: "No nearer, my husband, no nearer."

There was an indescribable sadness in her voice. The man paused where he stood as if rooted to the spot, and all eyes were fixed in a strange fascination upon the face of the dead—the dead so miraculously come to life. As yet no one had uttered an articulate word. To do so was an impossibility if all experienced what a sensation, that of the tongue actually cleaving to the roof of the mouth. We were powerless and speechless.

For the space of about five seconds there was a heavy, awful silence in that room. Then in hollow, ringing tones, whose echoes I shall never forget, she gave forth her message: "For full one hundred years, as mortals measure time, I have been as one dead. In a dream I have been judged before an all-just God, and condemned—here she paused, and condemned—here she convulsively groaned, and buried her face in her hands. The next words were addressed directly to her, and there was a tender, softening in their accents; almost a tremble: "No, my sister, not to eternal perdition, which your conscience knows I so justly merited. Before coming to the Judgment Throne, I had an advocate—ah, me! the Mother of my God! When the accumulated sins of a careless, negligent life rose up before me, and I was tremblingly awaiting the final sentence on benched knees before the Throne of Thrones, the gentle mother pleaded that my purgatory might be shortened, God's minister on earth had been with me but a moment before. The waters of penance had washed my soul—but there was to be an expiation. "My Son," were the tender words, "in Thy bounteous clemency and

thy earthly body, to give thy message. "Then the heavens were shaken as with a thousand thunders, and some were the visions. Darkness and wandering had been my portion ever since, and a consuming fire of regret, Husband! husband! heed my prayer; I may not linger here. Nightly am I permitted to bend over the pillows of maidens who have plighted, or are about to plight their troth to unknown, their dreams. But to thee I may come no more. Farewell, my own one fare thee well. In mercy heed me, my husband." There was a flutter in the form I had been supporting, a faint sigh, the fair head fell back against my shoulder, My hand sought her wrist; the pulse had ceased. She was dead—quite dead.

"A case of suspended animation, Doctor, very unusual. I grant you, but still fairly possible. The moment of dissolution had not really come, all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding. The patient was in a trance, the past and future mingled in one strongly accentuated vision. How, science cannot yet explain, but a clear case of suspended animation. Make an interesting report of it for the next number of the Medical Journal."

Thirty-Eighth Annual Report TO JANUARY 1st, 1908, OF THE Mutual Life of Canada HEAD OFFICE - WATERLOO, ONT.

CASH ACCOUNT Table with columns for INCOME and DISBURSEMENTS. Includes items like NET LEDGER ASSETS, PREMIUMS, and EXPENSES, TAXES, ETC.

BALANCE SHEET Table with columns for ASSETS and LIABILITIES. Includes items like Mortgages, Debentures and Bonds, Loans on Policies, and Reserve, 4%, 3 1/2% and 3% standard.

Audited and found correct. J. M. SCULLY, F.C.A., Auditor. GEO. WEGENAST, Managing Director. WATERLOO, January 29th, 1908.

New Business written (gain over 1906, \$1,577,855) - - - \$7,081,402 Insurance in force (gain over 1906, \$4,179,440) - - - \$51,091,848 Surplus (gain over 1906, \$300,341) - - - \$1,503,719

Booklets containing full report of the Annual Meeting, held March 5th, 1908, are being published and will be distributed among Policyholders in due course.

MILBURN'S Heart and Nerve Pills. Are a specific for all diseases and disorders arising from a run-down condition of the heart or nerve system, such as Palpitation of the Heart, Nervous Prostration, Nervousness, Sleeplessness, Fatigue, Dizziness, Headache, etc. They are especially beneficial to women troubled with irregular menstruation. Price 25 cents per box, or 5 for \$1.25. All dealers, or THE T. MILBURN CO., LIMITED, Toronto, Ont.

MILBURN'S Heart and Nerve Pills advertisement featuring a heart illustration and detailed text about the product's benefits for various ailments.

CONSTITIPATION advertisement. Although generally described as a disease, can never exist unless some of the organs are deranged, which is generally found to be the liver. It consists of an inability to regularly evacuate the bowels, and as a regular action of the bowels is absolutely essential to general health, the least irregularity should never be neglected.

MILBURN'S LAXA-LIVER PILLS advertisement. have no equal for relieving and curing Constipation, Biliousness, Water Brash, Heartburn, and all Liver troubles. Mr. A. E. Bettes, Vancouver, B.C., writes:—For some years past I was troubled with chronic constipation and bilious headaches. I tried nearly everything, but only got temporary relief. A friend induced me to try Laxa-Liver Pills, and they cured me completely.

Vertical list of advertisements on the far left margin, including names like HATCHETT, MATHIEU, DUCLOS, and others with their respective addresses and services.