

DR. FISHER-TO-BE

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her, and fancied the disguise was clever and complete. And it was with the triumph of victory she recognized her smile only as a distorted substitute among the maze of hideous lines. Altogether she was pleased with the protective disguise.

She then resumed her study in an effort to eat up in the usual way the foreign terms and complex sentences of Gray's Anatomy; "During this period of growth the articular end, or epiphysis, remains for some time entirely cartilaginous; then a bony centre appears in it, and it commences the same process of intracartilaginous ossification; but this process never extends to any great distance. The epiphysis remains separated from the shaft by a narrow cartilaginous layer for a definite time (Fig. 8)."

She closed the book angrily. The power to study had completely vanished. It had gone with the beautiful features. There was an agonizing spell of mental inactivity. She could not pronounce the anatomical terms, nor could she memorize the difficult sentences. There was a picture of Dick Bamfield dancing before her rebellious eyes.

"Poor Dick!" she found herself saying.

The words escaped her lips as though some person, or medium, from somewhere which was not herself, had prompted the sympathy. It may have been an appeal from a chained or imprisoned instinct.

"He is so determined—so—so good!"

It was a battle royal of the artificial against the natural. Miss Fisher, in the illusive atmosphere of dry text-books had forgotten that she was a woman first before all things. In the domestic economy of things she had herself classified as a machine for the dispensing of antidotes for human ills. For this engine her brain was to supply the vital spark and her blood-flow the gasoline power. Constitutionally she was composed of cogs, pulleys, belts, couplings, governors, bearings, wrist-pins, and drive-shafts, rather than heart, lungs, kidneys, flesh, blood, skin and bone.

Nevertheless the machine was seized with human alarm when the gift for study ceased to fire on all four. She remembered the disfigurement to the face. Perhaps this was the cause of the mental derangement. The drying process of the ink seemed to pucker and draw the skin painfully. She fancied a number of clawy fingers massaging her fragile beauty into some ogreish substitute that might remain for all time. Oh what a horrible thought! Could the ink be obliterated? Was it not indelible? She remembered how difficult it was to remove ink stains from clothing that had become spotted. Her feminine conscience rebelled notwithstanding the artificial veneering. How criminally cruel she had been to her inoffensive face.

She hurried back to the mirror, and the sight which greeted her frightened even the austere "Doctor Fisher." And it proved an arduous task to remove the clownish lines from the delicate skin. She had to employ hot water and soap, and rub, rub, rub.

The natural beauty appealed to her in a new light now. Had she attempted to destroy something that did not belong to her, but belonged to the whole world in general? Was it not common arson? Yes, for her face was the property of Nature even as the apple blossom was Nature's property. It was one of those rare and beautiful things with which Nature had beautified the world. It was a thing which she possessed for a time only, and which, in due course, would be passed on to posterity. Was she not trying to repudiate something over which the individual had no jurisdiction? Did she not belong to some one man according to Nature's plans for the future? Was woman of this generation not beautiful so that those of the next might be more beautiful? Was a lovely woman of any more importance to the world than a lovely flower? Was she not simply a link in a long chain that was

leading to some glorious but mysterious end? Was it not a crime to weaken the strength of that link? Was Miss Fisher's beauty not the strength of her individual link? Dick Bamfield loved that beauty. Was it not her duty as a woman of the mortal human race to let him have it in order to assist in the mysterious scheme which Nature had in hand? Was it not woman's weakness to love as it was man's? Moreover, could she not love and study at the same time? Did she love Dick Bamfield?

But, what would a woman doctor do with a husband? Ah, there was the real rub! Where would she keep him? Would he do the house-work while she diagnosed patients and prescribed for their ailments. Would he take care of the.....?

Doctor-Fisher-to-be rubbed, and rubbed, and rubbed, and in due course, with time and a great deal of patience and perseverance, the last trace of the horrid disfigurement had disappeared. The normal smile appeared as well as the rich and healthy color of the skin.

The masculine make-up has no spirit of independence when it comes to its association with the fair sex. It will bear all manner of insults, rebukes, discouragements without as much as ruffling the edges of its optimism. Dick Bamfield, in the face of almost certain death, had gone to Vancouver for the sole purpose of forcing Miss Fisher to show her hand. He was sure she loved him, but there was always a suspicion of doubt. He could never be certain. This time he would put his case so strong that she would be compelled to lay her cards on the table.

He lied, like most young men do, when he said he had two tickets for the Empress, for he went direct to the theatre from the girl's home and purchased the two. Dick was Scotch and canny. Besides, this was love, and all's fair in love and war.

In the home town Miss Fisher had failed to "shake" Dick, for Dick would not be shaken. He stuck to her like a leech, for he knew that the reward of victory would be grand and glorious. The relentless bombardment was not barren of results, for Miss Fisher, before her departure for the Coast, often caught herself dreaming about Dick in the ordinary, natural way. The going to college had a double purpose. It was an opportunity to study along lines of love and devotion, as well as a last stand against the enemy man. Out of his way she might forget Dick, and he might forget her in the lure of other society.

But there was something behind all this over which even Doctor-Fisher-to-be had no control. Nature was behind it and had plans of its own. There was hereditary instinct as well as the frailness of her sex for the animal man. Miss Fisher was hanging hopelessly undecided between two alternatives, love, marriage, children on the one hand, and a professional career on the other. Which would win? Miss Fisher's heart chose the former, but Doctor-Fisher-to-be determined upon the latter.

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