

"Not at all. Everything is just as I thought."

Then he changed his serious voice to one of banter, and said—

"Can you guess what subject it was that kept my aunt talking so long?"

"I suppose she was so overjoyed at seeing you return to her that she could do nothing else than tell you so again and again. Her love for you is so great."

"But I suspect I have a rival!"

"Your suspicions, sir, are indeed groundless."

"I do not think so. There is a certain little person with modest speech and great talent who has now almost supplanted me."

I did not speak, so he continued.

"My aunt is strange. She likes few people, but those few she loves and she can find no fault in them. When she told me that she had lately found a maiden with a sweet mind, I thought she might speak truly; but when she told me that the lass was pretty, I said to myself love must indeed be blind!"

I was beginning to understand his banter,

and I could scarcely paint, my hand was trembling so.

"But," he continued, not sparing me, "as I issued forth from the darkness of the pines into the sunlit glory of the rose garden, I beheld it inhabited by a fairy in a soft pink gown, with downcast eyes and roses at her bosom. She looked so young and happy with the sunlight in her hair and the wind stirring the—"

"Oh, sir," I said, interrupting him, "do not, I pray, continue in this strain. To laugh at my personal defects is unkind, but I know you cannot speak truly when you praise that which is unworthy of praise."

"There are some flowers crushed and downtrodden that, with care and sunshine, may grow into very goodly blossoms."

"If tenderness and care could turn ugliness to beauty, then should I be all beautiful?" I said, in a burst of gratitude. "Madame your aunt has been so good to me, so utterly so unselfishly good, that I cannot find words to express my feelings. In her presence all darkness and sorrows are forgotten, for every-

thing she does, everything she touches, everything she says, is bright and beautiful. She has shown me how much good in the world a good woman can do, and from my heart I thank her."

He seemed pleased with my gratitude and also a little amused.

"You think then," said he, "that all the favour is on one side."

"Certainly. How could I possibly pay the debt I owe her?"

"By your speech, your manner, your companionship. Are these boons nothing?"

"Companionship," I admitted, "is truly a mighty boon which I would not disappreciate, and sometimes indeed the great and beautiful are content with humble friends. Beethoven's favourite playmate was a spider, and we are told in fairy history of a prince who loved a toad."

My speech was serious, but it made him laugh aloud, and later on, at dinner, he told madame that my pride was perfectly monstrous, for I had likened myself to a spider and a toad all in one breath.

(To be continued.)



RELIGION AND MEDICINE.

By "THE NEW DOCTOR."

PART I.

THE PASTOR AND THE PHYSICIAN.

THE struggle between theology and science has been long and bitter. Urged with unyielding obstinacy by the partisans of either side, it has exercised the minds of the greatest thinkers of the last three centuries. That a certain amount of harm accrued from the refusal of scientists to accept the dictations of theologians admits of no doubt; but that more good than harm has resulted is equally certain. Theologians have learnt that they are not infallible in all matters, and scientists have been shown that theory is not synonymous with fact, however probable or conclusive it may appear. They have learnt another lesson: that although their facts and definitions, when clearly proved, do not admit of dispute, they often explain but one face of a many-sided problem, and that science is incapable of explaining everything. Though one of the largest branches of philosophy, it is not the alpha and omega of knowledge.

One cannot help respecting this great controversy. If it has been bitter, it has nevertheless been sincere. But there is one petty off-shoot from it which has not been sincere, which has been simply a question of individual rivalry: I refer to the constant struggle between pastors and physicians in the sick room.

It is terrible to think that often at the last moments of a man's life his spiritual and physical healer cannot agree. And why cannot they agree? There is no necessity for one to yield to the other. There would be ample excuse for their obstinacy if this was required. We only ask them to work in unison where their interests are identical—the well-being of their patient. Yet, for some reason, they cannot agree.

I do not wish to teach either the pastor or

the physician his business, it is only my desire to point out to the general public that the fault is not on one side only, but that both parties are almost equally to blame in this unnecessary controversy.

The shortcomings of the physician at the bedside of a dying man are obvious. He has tried his best and has failed. The patient is sinking under his infirmity, and it is beyond the power of the physician to stem the tide of the rapidly ebbing life of his sick charge. The clergyman has his chief duties at this period. But is the physician to leave the bedside of a patient whose life he cannot hope to save? Most certainly not. It is his duty to remain to the last, to comfort and to relieve the pain and anxiety of his patient. But the physician should remain at the bedside for another reason. He does not know for certain that a malady will be fatal. In the most hopeless cases occasionally—very rarely it is true—when recovery has been pronounced by competent authorities to be impossible, a change for the better occurs and health may be completely restored. It is this fact that affords the great excuse of so many medical men for not rendering due regard to their brother healers the clergy. When a physician attends a sick person whose case is practically hopeless, his whole mind is given up to be in readiness if, by any fortunate chance, a turn for the better should occur in the condition of the patient.

There is of course no reason why the physician in such cases should be antagonistic to the clergyman, but many members of the medical profession have an unreasonable objection to any but themselves attending to the sick; and they have been deservedly censured on this account. It is not all physicians that act in this way. I am pleased to say that only a very small minority of the medical faculty behave in this wise.

Sometimes the behaviour of the clergyman

at the sick bed is open to criticism. Again I refer but to a small minority. My experience of religious ministers at the bedside tells me most forcibly that, in most cases, their conduct in the presence of the dying is deserving of the highest praise. But there are some pastors who, often unintentionally, are most irritating to the physician. Some I have met who seem to lose all sense at this critical time. I remember a case in which a clergyman wanted to attend to a woman who was under the influence of chloroform, and who rebuked the surgeon who told him that it was useless to speak to the patient, for she was unconscious. This scene was most unpleasant to witness, and I am happy to say that I know of no parallel in my own experience.

There is one other rebuke, not very serious it is true, that can be given to some clergymen of all denominations, when attending persons who are not dangerously ill—that is advising items of treatment other than those ordered by the physician. I am not going to say that pastors are anything like such great sinners in this respect as most people who visit the sick, but they ought to be especially careful, for their words carry more weight than do those of anyone else. This unqualified advice is injurious to the patient and unfair to the physician. It is most galling to have one's work criticised by another whose advice is worthless.

As you can see the feuds between the medical and spiritual attendants are not very formidable, but to the patient they are exceedingly distressing. The duties of the physician and pastor are in no way antagonistic, and if both do their duty and do not interfere with each other all would run smoothly, and the patient might receive the two greatest blessings that God has given His servants—health of soul and health of body.

(To be continued.)