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Nujol
For Constipation

The Broken Circle!

CHAPTER LIV.

Dr. Griffiths placed a chair for his beautiful young patient, and, standing by the table, waited until she spoke. "Do people," she said abruptly, "ever die of a broken heart?"

"I have never known a case," answered the doctor, "though I have heard and read of such a thing."

"Some months since," she said, looking at him with calm, grave eyes, "I was as strong as any one could wish to be. I had splendid health and a perfect constitution. Now I have hardly strength to live, and every one thinks I am in danger."

"There must be a reason for it," remarked the doctor, quietly.

"There is a reason, which I will tell you, and I want you to judge if it will kill me. I have had within the last two months a trouble—a terrible trouble—one that I have had to bury in the depths of my heart. I could not speak of it, or hint it, or place confidence in any living creature concerning it, I have shut my secret in my heart, and it has been praying upon it. It has eaten my heart away. The constant repression, the desperate efforts I have made to seem as usual, have been too much for me; and now I feel sure that I have some affection of the heart which will soon put an end to my life."

He began to understand something of the case.

"Do you want to live?" he asked briefly.

"No, I want to die," she answered. Then came a string of questions, all which she answered candidly enough. The doctor knit his brows, and was silent for some time; then he listened to the action of the heart, and grew graver still.

"I think," he said, "that you have always had a great tendency to heart-disease; and now, I am sorry to say, it is a confirmed case."

Her face brightened, and she murmured a few words to herself which she did not hear.

"I wish," she said gravely, "to hear the plain truth. It is not to frighten me. I prefer death to life."

"It is a hard truth which I have to tell you," he answered, gently.

"I am ready to hear it," she said.

"It is this. I think it probable that you have always had a tendency to heart disease. Perhaps, had your life been happy and without trouble, it might never have developed itself; but the pain you have suffered and the repression have made it fatal. You understand the word fatal?"

"Yes, I understand," she said, "and I thank Heaven! I am very ill. At times my heart seems to stand still, it ceases almost to beat. A cold perspiration comes; my face, my hands, and lips grow cold; it seems to me that in another moment I shall die. Again it beats until I cannot bear the

travelling of my own body and my blood is all on fire."

"Yes; those are symptoms of disease," he said.

"Tell me doctor," she asked "how long do you think I have to live?"

"Not long," was the grave reply. "In a great measure it lies in your own hands. If you could get rid of this care, if you could prevent yourself from brooding over it, if you could rouse yourself, you might live a little longer."

"I could not," she said; "the restraint has been too great and too persistent. Will you tell me what the end will be like?"

"I wish you would not ask me," he answered, looking pitifully at the fair face.

"It will be the greatest service you can render me," she said. "It matters so little to me. If I have some months to live, I shall carry out an intention which I have formed; if not, I shall forego it! Tell me, doctor."

"You will not live for months," he said—"the greater the pity."

"The greater the joy!" she cried. "Will it be weeks?"

"Weeks in all probability," he replied.

"And the end?" she asked again.

"The end will be sudden and peaceful," he answered. "It may be at any time. Any sudden sorrow or joy might prove fatal. Calmness, peace, resignation, are your greatest helps. Poor child," he said, in an outburst of sudden, tender pity—"poor child! Life has been hard for you!"

"Very hard," she declared.

"I wish," he said, "that you would follow my advice. I could not save your life, but I might prolong it."

"No," she replied. "I am staying here at Mentone; I shall die here, and, when I die, they will be sure to send for you. You will not say that you have seen me?"

(To be continued.)

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Lord Cecil's Dilemma
—OR—
The Picnic
—IN—
Woodall Forest

CHAPTER II.

The earl's home-coming had been unexpected. There were no demonstrations among the villagers or the servants; no outward show of welcome. He even drove from the station in a hired carriage, accompanied only by his faithful valet, John Stirling.

If any one knew the secrets of my lord's movements it was John Stirling. He had clung to his master, in joy and sorrow, for twenty years or more.

Lady Marcia had met her brother with many strange forebodings. She was anxious, pleased, hopeful, doubtful. She prayed fervently that he would waken to the fact that it was time to discontinue his aimless wanderings—that it was his duty to live for his child. She was glad that he was coming home, though his telegram from London had completely taken her by surprise. She did not know that he was even in England. She was glad, yet she trembled for the result.

He came at an early hour, to avoid notice, and his sister sobbed on his breast. He looked so old, so careworn, and his glossy brown hair was streaked with lines of silver that glistened brightly in the summer sunshine.

"Marcia!" he said, simply. "I am glad to see you, dear."

"Edward, this is a joyful surprise. I thought that you were at the Azores. I hope that you have returned home to stay. We must make you happy."

Lady Marcia looked at him wistfully.

"I came hurriedly," replied the earl. "My lawyers advised me that efforts were being made by one of the great railway companies to run their trains through Swinford Park. I must resist this. I will not have an inch of my land disturbed."

He did not speak of his daughter, but said that he would retire for a few hours to his old rooms if they were ready.

"And then you will see Gladys, Edward. You have not asked me one question about her!" Lady Marcia looked at him reproachfully, and he started.

"Yes, she must be a big girl. I have not been anxious about her. Marcia, she has been in good hands."

He did not evince much interest in his child, and Lady Marcia planned a surprise for him. She instructed Lady Gladys's maid to bestow greater pains than usual when she dressed her young mistress. She must employ all the arts known to her profession to enhance the faintly beauty of the earl's daughter, in honour of the earl's return home.

Mademoiselle Lamartine was as devoted to her business as she was to her lovely mistress. She accepted the charge, with a sparkle in her black eyes and the result was entrancing. Lady Gladys Howard seemed too angelic for this world. She was like a peri just fresh from the portals of paradise. Her dress was of the palest blue, and floated about her like a child, and with rhythmic grace that will not permit of description. She had a necklace of pearls around her snowy white throat, a bunch of freshly cut panicles in the royal curls of her golden-brown hair, and when she was finished the French maid went into ecstasies of rapture. The simplest dresses were always the most becoming to my lady. And then Lady Marcia left Gladys in the blue drawing-room, to meet her father.

When the girl came in, he expected to see the five-year-old girl, and he remembered five years ago, older and bigger, of course, but when Lady Gladys rose to greet him, he clutched at his heart to still his mad leaping. This vision of loveliness was his dead wife in the spirit!

"Papa!" was the glad cry, and the girl's blushing face was hidden on his breast.

Then he realized that it was indeed his daughter, Gladys, and he looked at her many times, his natural affection growing and swelling with every glance. The love for his child that had so long lain dormant was blossoming in the sunshine of her presence, and he felt that he was a changed man. He had something to live for; he had the past to redeem. He told himself that her every wish should be gratified. She should go into society, and be the beauty of the season. She had a great future before her.

In the evening he sought Lady Marcia alone, and a weight seemed to fall from her heart when she saw the change in his speech and manner.

"Marcia," he said, gently, but earnestly, "you have been a faithful steward. I never can discharge the debt I owe to you. I have seen Gladys. I am charmed with her grace, her beauty, her intellect. I shall never go away again! My duty is here! My happiness is here!"

(To be continued.)

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