

runs into the river. Don't you know the elm tree just over the bridge?"

"And what is your name, my little man?"

"My name's George Lindsay, Sir."

"Well, stay a moment, George, and I will go with you." So wrapping myself up as well as I could, and hanging my saddlebags over my arm, I set out with as little delay as possible to visit my patient. Who she might be it was impossible to say. It was plain, however, from the appearance of the boy, that his parents must be in poor circumstances, for although the keen cold wind of a winter's night made a thick overcoat no encumbrance, but rather an indispensable article of dress, walking as I was, yet there was nothing of the kind to shield the poor boy from the weather. From what I drew from him as we proceeded, I gathered that she had been ill for some days, and that on the afternoon she had become worse, and was seriously ill, that a neighbour was called in to assist in waiting on her. To obtain this information occupied only a few minutes, and although the intelligent answers of the boy invited farther conversation, I soon became silent, revolving in my mind the probable situation of my patient, and the awful responsibility which, as a young and inexperienced member of the profession, I could not but at that moment deeply feel. As we approached the house, the boy ran forward, and opened a small gate at a short distance from the house. Two or three dogs came from behind the building, barking as we approached; the boy, however, quickly quieted them, and as I advanced behind him, I heard some one exclaim from within: "Thank God! here is the Doctor at last."

I passed through a large and half-finished room, into a smaller, where I found my patient lying upon a bed, apparently a woman of thirty-five years of age, and with those evident marks of respectability, which, even in distress and poverty, do not entirely abandon their possessor. I approached the bed side, and without waiting to say more to the two females whom I found anxiously waiting my arrival than that I had come at the request of my little guide, I turned my attention to the sufferer. She was thin, indeed she seemed worn almost to a skeleton; but her heightened complexion, and her pulse, which was flying at a fearful rate, soon announced that the fever was doing its work, and that if unchecked it would at no distant day exhaust her strength, and lay her low in the repose of the narrow house, where "after life's fitful fever all sleep well."

I know not how it was, but it seemed to me, at that moment, as if I had never before entered a sick room, and that all the long hours spent in the wards of the Hospitals of S— with my worthy patron Dr. H. had not been of the slightest service. What would I not have given to have had his experience at my elbow, for a short minute, in order to devise some means to stop the painful disorder—to, restore

me to confidence, and to infuse into the sorrowful attendants a feeling of reliance on my skill. I continued, however, to watch her slightly laboring breath, and the changing colors which would at times appear to come and go upon her countenance, still holding her hand in mine, until at last turning to a girl apparently aged about seventeen, and whom I at once conjectured to be the Margaret my little guide had spoken of, I asked how long the patient had been ill, and succeeded in obtaining from her lips a recital of the circumstances which had thus reduced her mother.

Mrs. Lindsay had been ailing for some months, although not so as to create any alarm either to herself or the family, for, having never been strong, and indeed for some years in very feeble health, her illness had been considered, until within the last two weeks, as nothing but the effects of an ordinary cold. Since that time she had been confined to bed, gradually becoming worse, until at last the daughter becoming alarmed by symptoms of delirium which had made their appearance on the afternoon of the day on which I was sent for, had called in a neighbour, and in the absence of the older members of the family, had dispatched the little messenger to bring me down to see her afflicted parent.

It somehow or other happens, and it is well for the doctors, that it is so—that people, and especially the sick, are naturally inclined to rely completely upon the skill of their medical advisers. I found that it was in this spirit of unbounded confidence that the exclamation which had struck my ear as I entered the door, had been uttered by the sorrowing girl. She seemed almost to think all danger was gone now that I had arrived, and was prepared for as effectual, though not so sudden a restoration to health, as was the blind beggar whom the great Physician had bidden approach, in accents of divine compassion. Fortunately for my disordered faculties, the patient seemed to be disposed to rest, and I had time to collect my senses, before it was necessary to apply any thing in the shape of a remedy.

The younger children, who had probably been aroused by the increasing violence of the patient, and who, on my first entrance had been huddled together near the stove, apparently unnoticed, were now taken by Margaret to be led away to their beds. It was impossible for her, however, to satisfy them, without allowing them each to kiss the cheek of the pale but now slumbering mother. Silently they approached, and with something like awe mingled with the child-like simplicity and affection which a beloved mother never fails to inspire, each bent its head over the unconscious sufferer, and imprinted a kiss on her lips, while Margaret, with a tear on her cheek, strained them successively to her bosom, as she led them away. The heart of the kind neighbour was touched, and turning to me she remarked as if half to herself: