## A STEP IN TIME.

Mrs. Britton was a chronic affliction to herself and to hor acquaintances, within which later class her friends and relatives could be easily included. Invalids generally exemplify the perfect work of patience in one or two ways—either through their own lives or through those of their attendants. Mrs. Britton had always had quite enough to attend to in living for herself; if any lessons of restraint were taught in her vicinity she w. more apt to be the goad than the model. As a disciplinary force she had worked much lasting good. Maids had gone forth into the world from her sickroom to meet the ills of life like long lost friends that had assumed some base disguise as a jost. Physicians had acquired a proper estimation of their services through frantic desires for some sort of revenge. Clergymon had been taught that trare ghostly consolation which reacts like a balm after having received a rebuff. What, then, ailed Mrs. Britton? She was fat, she was lazy, she was greedy, one of these emancipated maids have said. She ate to much, she would not excreise; and so she stored way irritability from very indulgence. Mrs. Britton comvery indulgence. Mrs. Britton was a chronic afflicti herself and to her acquaintance

greedy, one of these emaneipated maids have said. She ate to much, she larnk to much, she would not exorcise; und so she stored away irritability from very indulgence. Mrs. Britton comined exquisite sensibilities with musual physical development and plothora of blood, the physicians would have smillingly stated. She required rest and composure on one hand, while on the other her material demands had to be met by systematic and thorough nourishing. A difficult case, a peculiar case, fortunate only in the circumstance that great wealth premitted recourse to all known alleviations. And the olergymen, with grace acquired through her exactions, could they be expected to say what they really thought, or, indeed, to think what they knew? Should one of them in a moment of unrestraint have confessed: She is possessed by a legion, and their chief is solfishness. His remorseful prayer, "Lord, have mercy on me, a misorable sinner," would doubtless have been answered.

chief is selfishness. His remorseful prayer, "Lord, have mercy on me, a miserable sinner," would doubtless have been answered.

The maids went forth though the wages were liberal, and those friendly ills a myriad. The clergyman from time to time exchanged passible or were sent to Europe against an impending decline. And the physicians — well, they shrewdly recommended a change, now the mountains, now the woodland, and now the salt air, with minute directions as to diet, hygiene, medication, to be sent daily by mal; and then jingled their fees gayly in their pockets like schoolboys enjoying hard earned vacation. But though maids escaped, and clergymen became fatigued and physicians intrigued, Ruth remained in constant service; for Ruth was the invalid's deceased husband's only child.

It happened one Summer that Dr. Zance, the physician in charge—and he charged well, too—feating lest his strength would not be up to his needs, bethought himself of Nantakees as sigust the retreat for this intolerable yet invaluable patient. The island was remote, with but sparse communication by mail and with none by wire. It was healthful—that was a main point, for a golden egg is never so impossible as when the goose has been killed—and the heavy salt air was spoosed to be tranquilizing for—well, to speak plainly, for temper.

"Go, by all means, my dear Madam," urged the doctor. "I have

was sposed to be tranquitizing forwell, to speak plainly, for temper.

"Go, by all means, my dear
Madam," urged the doctor. "I have
here from the agent a description of
just the cottage you wish; ample, in
perfect order, with the latest sanitary
improvements, situated on the olift,
with view of the harbour and the
ocean unsurpassed. You may trust
me to send the most explicit directions
with such mediciones as the daily reports
from your daughter may indicate.

Dr. Ruggies, too, the local physician
and a graduate of my office, will ocoperate to the extent of his abilities,
which are by no means small. I
would recommend a generous diet of
course, yet moderate, with he attempt
at least once each day, say in the cool
of early evening, at a stroll on the
piazza."

piazza."

"What nonsense—what driveling nonsense!" screamed Mrs. Britton; "when you know that I can't put one foot in front of the other. If you can give me no wiser advice, doctor, you might as well stay at home and send the office boy, the cook, the scullion, the stableman—"

stableman—" 'Tut, tut," said the doctor, sooth-ly. "You are so impetuous, so id. You think so rapidly; your gination is so unconfined. I was inicturing one of the happy results ingly. "You are so impetuous, so vivid. You think so rapidly; your imagination is so unconfined. I was but picturing one of the happy results which I will secrue, from your visit. Meanwhile, any precipitate action would be highly imprudent. You have your wheel-chair and your two porters, Pomp and Jerry, and Mrs. Hurlbert, the nurse, and, above all, Rath."

Ruth."

"Ruth," interrupted Mrs. Britton;

"I should say, least of all, Ruth; I'll
take my servants, yes, because I
choose. I pay them, and they do as
they are sold, or I get others. But
Ruth must go along; she's my daughter, however exasperatingly stupid she
may be. But, there I'll go—there's
no need of further talk. I can't be
more wretched or more neglected.
And, if thir new physician of yours
young, then he can't be old and pokythank goodness! Good morning."
And co Mrs. Britton did. And

And go Mrs. Britton did, And sen the chair had been safely stored the beggage car, and Pomp and ▲nd

Jerry assigned to seats in the ordinary coach, and the largest parlor compartment had been converted into a coach for the invalid, with a drug shop disposed atound, and Mrs. Hurlbert and Ruth equipped with fans and thermometers and atomizers, and instructed as to temeprature and stated draughts of stimulants, then, when the train rolled out and was absolutely gone beyond the recall of that pudgy hand or that cracked, imperative voice, Dr. Zanco wiped his brow and ejaculated "Thank God." and went home to enter an important item in his lodger. Perhaps the consciousness of a day well spont, despite of trials, moved his heart to pity; for as he composed himself to sleep that night he murmured, "Poor Ruth!"

sloop that night he murmured, "Poor Ruth!"

A few passengors for Nantakeso Island already aboard the Queen wero much interested in a little sense after the train had arrived at Cape station. Down the wharf in a rolling clair came a vast red-faced woman, wrapped and enwrapped in a multiplicity or costly shawls and propolled by two colored servants. At one side was an elderly woman in black, solicitions, with a fan, and behind a tall young girl bearing a vinaigrette with the impressive air of a Princess held in hopeless captivity. So at least thought a molancholy youth who was leaning against the rail on the upper deck, and who, as was his wont, immediately applied the reflection to his own personality. "She perfectly exemplifies my own feelings," he murmured, and then he sighed. sighed.
The gangway was stretched, but at the instant of the car's approach the

The gangway was strotened, but at the instant of the car's approach the crew were engaged in stowing some cargo within. The porters were evidently flurried, resenting the vehement and contradictory orders of their mistress on each other. To their frightened gaze the plank seemed too marrow and fragile, just as to impartial oyes it was sufficiently wide and strong The patient was arbitrary and obstinate, insisting on proceeding the more the men held back. Then it was, when the carriage was at the verge and required no strength to push, that the young girl calmly waved the porters away and assumed the handle. Then it was that these men in retreating souffied and stumbled. Then it was that the young man above, fearing lest the plank should slip, swung down and grasped one of its ropes. And the plank did begin to slip invery truth; but before a catastrophe could occur a dozen pairs of stout arms, outstretched from the channels, fairy lifted on board car, patient young girl, plank, and all. And so no one was harmed except the melancholy youth, and he clung so convulsively to the rope that he was twitched of his feet, his limbs barked, his clothing tran, and his hatirremediably emashed. "Tis ever thus," he muttered, as he tucked himself away in an obscure nock on the forward deck.

After the steamer was under way the young girl came on deck and accosted the recluse.

"You tried so hard to help us," she ssid. "I thank you so much, and trust you are not hurt. My name is Ruth Britton, and we are bound to Nantakees for the Summer, Perhaps we may have a chance—"

"Better not," replied the gloomy youth. "Better let ill enough alone. Of course, I tried, and consequently I failed. My name is Dawkins, and if this fatal appelation doesn't warn you why, nothing will." And he sighed as if there were a fog ahead, and he the cautionary horn.

Ruth gazed in some perplexity as to what was the particular form of consolation required for so mysterious a case, At this juncture a man who had been seasted near by stepped for ward, and ad

service."
Ruth saw before her a tall, broadshouldered man of thirty, dressed rather carelessly, and in a certain conformity with the bluntness of his
speech. She saw an honest face,
shadowed by a close, heavy beard,
and lighted by frank, almost merry
brown eyes, and she felt that she had
found a friend. So she strended her
hand, and responded almost heartily

found a friend. So she extended her hand, and responded almost heartily to his greeting. Perhaps latent lone-liness insired the intuition, for youth is exigent in its demands for sympathy. "Mother is lying down in the cab in," she continued. "If you would like to see her now—" and then she stopped in sudden confusion, as she perceived that Dawkins had orept back into his nock, and there was displaying such sigual signs of disfort toward the new-comer, as could be indicated by soowle and furtive fist shakes.

Dr. Ruggles followed her glauce.
Did I drive your friend away?" he

asked.
"You seem to have driven that young man away," replied Ruth, rather pointedly, "but that need not keep you from your first, professional call on my mother. You will find it the pleasantest of the many you will doubtless make."

doubtless make."

"If your mother is resting, perhaps it would be as wall for me to talk with you about her general condition. Will you not sit with me about this hatchway? We will be out of the wind and away from that basilisk gaze overthere."

Ruth complied rather sullenly. I'm sure there's nothing I can tell nu about my mother," she rejoined; nothing at least which you would u about my mother," she rejoined; nothing at least which you would re to believe." " Why not?" " Because I think all dootors like to

look on the gloomy side; and, after all, I don't wonder, for all their shops are situated there."

"Miss Britton," said Ruggles, firmly, "I don't like any such speech any more than I admire the flippant way in which you refer to your invalid parent."

in which you refer to your invalid parent.

Perhaps not," retorted the girl, excitedly; "but I'm sick of dissimulation, and I do not crave your admiration. Let me tell you one thing—for all physicians seek an honest disqueess, do they not?—there is nothing in the world the matter with my mother, excepting—excepting—oh, I don't know what," and she hurried away.

As Ruggles sat and pondered over this singular statement, Dawkins came out from his nook and over to his side.

"If I thought you had intended to be rude," he began, "I'd teach you a lesson, Sir."

lesson, Sir."
"Areyou daft? Is everybody daft?"
interrupted Ruggles, irritably. "I
never met such a cranky lot of people.
I want nothing to do with you, young
man, and mark rue, I won't stand an
instant of insolence. As for any lessons you may have to teach, devote
them to yourself, there is ample
need—"

that Dr. Rugglos straight-way became compassionate.

"Come, now my good fellow," the doctor urgod, "I know nothing whatsever about you except that you seemed to misjudge a very business, the interview which I just had with that young lady. Sit down and let's see if we can't form more friendly relations over a social smoke."

Dr. Rugglos possessed a certain personal quality which was very winning. Likely in the pseudo-scientific jargon of to-day, it would be termed magnetism, but in simpler, truer spech it may be described as kindliness. Dawkins hesitated, gulped nervourly, sat down, as if determined not to be moved, and, lighting a cigar, paffed vigorously.

"My name is Dawkins," he said at

moved, and, lighting a eiger, resignously.

"My name is Dawkins," he said at length; "Ebenezer Dawkins, and now the truth is out."

"It tells me nothing, except your name, whichlyou may be sure I'll remember," rejoined Ruggles, pleasantly.

ly. "What! havn't you heard? Don't

"What I havn't you heard? Don't you read the newspapers?"
"Never. I'm a busy man."
"Then you see not aware that I made a wretched flasco of the public exhibition I gave two days since, since in the city, of an invention which has been my life work."
"No, indeed. Perhaps you exaggrate.

gerate.

At all events, won't you tell me of your disappointment? I—"

"And you won't laugh?"

"And you won't laugh?"

"I respect itelligent endeavor," said Ruggles heartily. "Success is only an incident like clothing to an honest man."

only an incident like ciocuing to an honest man."

"But perhaps you may question in intelligence? However, I'm beginning to like you, and I'm so forlorn, it will be a comfort for me to talk. Know then, that since boyhood I have devoted myself to electricity, and its generation and use through the conservation of natural force. You, as a plysiologist, know that every time you lift your finger, for instance, a certain force is exerted, and expended, you would probably add. But dissipated would be the more correct term. Nothing is ever, wasted, except alas! my career, my life! But to resume, with the resolve, too, of keeping separate the practical from the emotional I have held the theory that the adjuncts of living from the emotional I have held the theory that the adjuncts of living heretofore deemed absolutely essential like sating and walking, are such a drain on the vital resources that the energies are well-nigh moribund for more, spiritual undertaking. Hence, I reasoned, if I can make one muscular movement do for two, I shall be a greater benefactor than he who causes two blades to sprout in the place of one. Do you apprehend me? Alas! I sometimes feel that I should be apprehended and incarcerated with the mentally unsound. Yet, believe me, there is virtue in my theory. I have proved it even in my defeat. Infamed, then, with is smibition, I set my rattention on the attempt to make the lifting of a fort do the work of putting it forward. That would make walking easier, wouldn's it? And see how the simple idea develops itself. I magine a storage of such force under perfect control, and whither might it not lead? To an entrancing gide certainly: to flying in all probability. Well, then, with infinite pains I constructed a pair of electric shoes, not differing in appearance from the shoes of commerce, but containing such a reservior for energy, that them the original of the purpose of steadying. Does not such a conception and ruch an execution indicate trained intellect, if not genius? And yet, which I vainly thought all things that the adjuncts of living ore deemed absolutely essential

ready, then had I neglected the most important detail of all. In the first flush of success I announced a public exhibition of my wonderful invention in the City Park two days ago. There was an immense crowd present, with a hundred Thomases to one Peter; but I needed not their doubts. I donned shoes; I leaped, I kicked; and then I airly flitted over the lawn. Ah, it was hautiful to see mo. The people rose as hone man, and burst into tumultuous applause, while faster and faster I sped, and less and less did my feet depend on the ground for support. To say that I felt like an archenged; is to use the most moderate simile that occurs to my humility. Yet even as I coared, of a sudden the fearful thought came to me, how was I ever going to stop? My limbs shot out with such impetus that a large portion of the power was conserved and thus kent. cart. to me, now was I ever going to stop? My limbs shot out with such impetus that a large portion of the powor was conserved and thus kept exerting and re-exerting itself. Besides, I had forgot to provide a brake. Of course, I might fall could—but the wings prevented me from reaching them. "Speech!" "Stop and make a speech! "Hoe predators shouted; and then they evidently appreciated my predicement, for they laughed as heartlossly as over did Roman populace while holding down their thumbs ever some poor defeated gladiator imploring for life. They did not need of my peril, which was imminent, I assure you. For They did not reck of my peril, which was imminent, I assure you. For aught I know, I might have been carried high into the air, and even now be treading the firmanent, had not a lucky impluse directed me toward the lake, into which I plunged head first. I am an expert swimmer, and by persistently sticking my feet out of the water I managed to induce some bystanders to hold my legs and take off those fatal, fatal shoes. And thus I escaped, but to receive as the meed of ceaseless altruistic offort the universal contumely from which I am even now

ceaseless altruistic offort the universal contumely from which I am even now deeling. 'His zeal ran away with him,' commented one newspaper; 'The only kind of a brake the inventor seemd to have was a bad break,' jeered another, and every one re-celoed the taunts. Can you wonder that I seemed somewhat abrupthand churlish to you'. "Dr. Ruggles, indeed I have suffered."

somewhat abruptland churlish to you?

"Dr. Ruggles, indeed I have suffered."

"Oh, nover despair," said Ruggles.

"Oh never despair," said Ruggles.

"You have surely made great progress in your marveloue design. Your exhibition was rather promature, that is all. A few days' rest at the island will so recuperate you that the island will so recuperate you that the idea for a brake will flash across your mind when you least expect it. Here is my card. I do hope to see as much of you as my leisure will permit."

"The brake isn't all," continued Dawkins, gloomily. "The machine to twitchy. What comfort could any cone find in going by fits and starts? No, no; I fear the idea is impracticable; but I assure you I'm grateful to you for your sympathy, and shall availinyself of your invitation—
if—if—well, to be frank, that young lady, Miss Britton, has awakened a strong, very strong sentiment in my stricken beast.

similar avalumy sets of your intestonical in-it—well, to be frank, that young lady, Miss Britton, has awakened a strong, very strong sentiment in my stricken breast. She spoke to me so sweetly that her image is impressed indelibly impressed. Now, if, as I fear, you also are nourishing the same flame, it is better that we should be open and distinct. A frank rivalry is better than a hollow truce."

"No, no," laughed Dr. Ruggles;
"I shall not contest you claim. It is prior for one thing, and tastes differ for another. And so, good luck tr you, and come soon to my bachelor quarters." And on the steamer's arrival the two parted, with mutual ast reaces of esteem.

Yas, testes differ, Dr. Ruggles continued to think, and somewhat bitterly. He made daily calls on Mrs. Britton, but failed to detect the slightest sign of that unpleasantness which Ruth had inferentially predicted. On the contrary, the patient seemed to grow in gentleness, forbearance, and all those womanly virtues which can convert a sickroom into a shrine. Never before had the young doctor bear methed with such thoughtful, almost motherly, consideration. Ruth, on the other hand, avoided him, as if before had the young doctor been treated with such thoughtful, almost motherly, consideration. Buth, on the other hand, avoided him, as if sahamed, as she might well be, of her burst of temper against the poor sufferer. Though at times Ruggles surmised that the invalid might possibly walk a few steps, should she make a supreme effort, still in those obscure malidies such as those which afflicted her, it was dangerous to urge a sudden output of strength. Perhaps, after all, she was the best judge; she doubtless did for herself all that could be done, and the rest she endured with the fortitude of a martyr.

One evening, when the doctor was resting on his piazza, a woman, dressed in black, whom he recognized as Mrs. Hurbert, the nurse, came up the steps to his side.

"Is your mistress worse?" he asked in slarm.

" Is your mistress wosre?" he asked

"Her temper is," answered the woman as she drew up a chair in a confidential, eager way. "Now, listen to me, doctor, for I'm no idle, gossiping servant, but a true friend to poor Miss Ruth. If I can stand the tentrums of the devil, that's my business. Perhapr my pay is unusually large. But she, poor child, is worn out."

"I don't see that she 'oes any more than a dutiful daughter should be glad to do for her own mother," said the doctor cold!y.

"Not mother, stepmother." raturned

ctor coldly. "Not mother, stepmother," returned "notmouser, separation," if like you in the first place; you are young and simple, and then people speak well of you. Oh, I've made inquiries, never lear.

The Register

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TO LOMBARD STREET.

ITELEPHONE 1480.

So I'm going to confide in you. When Mr. Britton married this woman Ruth was a little child, and he a silly old man. An assident occurred wherein Mrs. Britton showed some bravery and received some hurt, both of which her husqand greatly exaggerated. He be lived that she had saved his life almost at the expence of her own; that her nervous system had received such a such shook that for the future she would be an absolutely helpless invalid. Was it surprising, then that when he died—which he did in the very height of his infatuation—his will provided that while she remained his wildow and was totally incapacitated by her injury, she should have the use of his vast property with power of disposal, but that in default of either of these conditions one-half should vest at once in Ruth, with the remainder after the stepmother's death. Was it strange too, that this woman should have immediately determined that through no act or admission would she deprive herself of this estate? After all, her part has not been difficult. Her very appetites have tended to gratify every caprice at the simple cost of nover taking a step. But her poters, her servants, her poor step-daughter!"

"Miss Britton always speaks of Mrs. Britton as mother," interposed the doctor.

"Yes, by her father's express direction."

ctor. "Yes, by her father's express direc-

senses."
Does Miss Britton know of this

"Does Miss Britton know of this imposition?"
"Octainly she does, and has steadily resisted all attempts of her own mother's rolatives at interference. But there is no remedy except in some way for Mrs. Britten to so openly violate the condition of total disability that she would not have the face to withstand. I've noticed, Dr. Ruggles how you have misjudged my young lady; now is a change for you to make amends."

amends."

"I'll walk by the grove to-morrow afternoon, at any rate," said the irre solute doctor.

"I'll walk by the grove to-morrow afternoon, at any rate," said the irresolute doctor.

And the next afternoon Dr. Buggles did walk by the grove, in an unconspicuous, hesitating way. He would'nt listen; oh, no; but no one could have helped bearing the strident abuse, the vituperation, the screams which shot from that chair as a centre, and swept over the porters, the nurse, and the calm, disclainful stepdaughter. He wouldn't watch; oh, no; but no one could have helped seeing that great red face, those suffused eyes, that writhing from, and the feet kicking against the rungs in impotent rage.

The doctor did hear and watch, and the last detail of what he saw furnished him with an idea of what he might do.

Then he approached and accosted his patient, and the amaning change unto gentleness convinced him through certain vague apprehensions of what he should do. Besides, he now looked on Ruth with eyes open to her loveliness. He felt that he had wrongedher, that the least he could do was to add in restoring her to her rightful position, and then—wall, any sudden entrancing hope must wait; was there not another whose help he was about to invoke, who had a prior claim!

One afternoon, a few days later, Mrs. Britton, under her usual escort, was borne to the grove. She was nervous, frestul, exasperating beyond all expression. Everything she wore irritated her to the very jumping out of her skim. Her shoes especially pinched and chafed, though her favorite pair. That stupid old Mrs. Hurlbert must have done something to them; she knew she must. She was always doing something. There were no two ways about it, they were simply

beyond endurance. The ridiculous old-thing must go back to the house and bring me others.

Very well; Mrs. Hurlbert fairly flew on her mission, itseemed, she returned so quickly with another pair. These were donned and laced, but p. ved no more to the invalid's liking. Her fury culminated; she raved, she howled, she roared, beating her feet together and against the rung of the chair. Then a strange were occurred. Despite of all resistance of her will, Mrs. Britton suddenly sprang to her feet and began to circle through the trees. At first she gyrated slowly: but gradually so increased in speed as to scarcely touch the sward. Her stendards touch the sward. Her attendants stood bowildered; all, except Mrs. Hurlbert, who drew a kodak out from her shirts and leveled it with the accuracy of a reporter. When it seemed that the invalid was about to soar to heights unknown, then from a thicket, Dr. Ruggles and Dawkins emerged, and firmly held her, until Mrs. Hurlbert, had defly cast off the electric shoes. These latter straightway bounded forward and sway into the sear riccohetting far over the waves.

"It's base conspiracy," vociferated Mrs. Britton, so wild with anger as to see no one near her except Mrs. Hurlbert. "You did something to my shoes, you know you did."

"That's a likely story," retorted Mrs. Hurlbert, "when opposed to what we all can testify to. You simply were so ugley that you forgot to control yourself, and that's the truth. How would you like the pletter I just snapped exhibited in court? Why, a skirt-dancer isn't a circumstance to it. You fancied I was a poor, down-trodden menial, now, didn't you; too spiriless to ever leave you? Ughl you old devil: I're been in the employ of Miss Rath's friends for years. You might as well yield. Here's Dr. Ruggles himself saw you capering in a way most shamefully for a woman of your age."

Then, for jithe first, Mrs. Britton perceived that the young doctor whose genial countenance had awakened within her todurate broased within her for mastery, at length she threw

ing. "I have done wrong; but I'll repent; I'll be good, if you only won't desert me."

And at the same juncture, Mrs. Hurlbert breathened in the young man's car, "I should have warned you more definitely; now you know why she was so amiable."

Poor Dr. Ruggles; he was so umbarrassed; so uncertain. At world; but, then, hadn't he just begun to nourish other hopes; and of all things did he want to marry an elderly, discredited widow? A las, for fatal kindliness! He made an evasive answer, and suffered himself to be led back to the house like a highly intelligent lamb prepared for a protracted slaughter. There should be some special protective law for tender-hearted young men who can't say No.

And, following slowly, Dawkins triumphantly explained to Ruth the details of his wonderful invention. "I couldn't have managed it," he confessed, "had it not been for her balloon sleeves. They nawered for wings, you know."

And if Ruth and Ruggles each made at length the choice which to the worldly seemed nuwies that merely proved that the Divine economy is not subject to the limitations of human judgment —N. Y. Weekly Times.

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