

"Poor soul, poor soul! Do not mind if her death is terrible. She must go through it, and drink the cup of repentance to the very dregs. She must suffer. Death-beds after all are not meant for the lookers-on. They are realities, played out between the soul and its Maker. Our human interference is over, except in the way of intercession. And that last new treatment of yours, does it not succeed?"

A look of care crossed the young man's brow. "It ought to succeed," he said. "Anyhow, it seems to alleviate pain, but who can recover in an atmosphere like this? Every breath you breathe is pestilential! They die and they die! If only a great storm would come; nothing else will break the spell. But one must try to be patient. In the hospitals they are almost in despair."

"It is fearfully hot to-night," said Father Nicholas, wiping his brow. "There is not a breath of air, and the smell of the streets is horrible."

"Thanks for your hospitality, my friend," said Dr. André rising to his feet, "I must be off now. I must look in on one or two people as I go home, but I promise myself a few hours in bed. I shall be at Antoinette Lacarte's house by five to-morrow morning. Good-night, sleep well."

An hour later, his last visits over, Dr. André was slowly mounting the stairs to his own room when a door opened, and Nanon looked out wildly.

"Oh, *docteur*!" she exclaimed, "thank God it is you. Come in, it has come, the last of them!"

"Poor Nanon," said Dr. André softly. "Poor Nanon. Remember that God is good."

"So you say, *docteur*, but the good God has forgotten me!"

"That can never be, my friend," said Dr. André. "Let me come in."

"But you also need rest! You have had that breathlessness again? You ought to sleep. Oh! what shall I do?"

"What you shall do is very simple *ma bonne*. Take me to my little Fifine."

He went through the little room and opened a rickety door into another apartment. On a little low pallet Fifine was lying, the half-starved cat beside her. When she saw Dr. André she leapt up, and threw her arms round him,

falling back again with a choking cry of pain.

He laid her down and covered her carefully while he took the burning little hand into his.

"How long has this been going on?" he said gently to her mother.

"Since mid-day, and I knew that you were at the hospital and could not come."

"I wish we could get this little one into the hospital," said Dr. André, but Nanon shrank back with a shuddering cry—

"Oh no, no, dear *docteur*, no one ever comes out alive now!"

"Do not be afraid, Nanon; she cannot go there, for there is not a single vacant bed."

"Ah, that is well," said the poor woman breathing freely.

All this time Dr. André was trying the child's temperature. When he glanced at his clinical thermometer he did not betray his consternation; the fever was raging.

Presently he got up, went to the table and wrote out some directions on a leaf of his pocket-book.

"Here, Nanon," he said. "Quick, take this round to the hospital. Give it to the night-porter, and if you wait a few minutes he will give you all these things. Go quietly, it is very hot and there is no use in hurrying."

Nanon hastily put on her ragged bonnet and went out, not trusting herself to glance at little Fifine, who was tossing and moaning pitifully.

After a few moments had passed Dr. André was startled by hearing the child's voice saying with great difficulty—

"Monsieur."

"My child." He came close to her. "Now mother has gone, tell me—am I going to die?"

"Yes, Fifine."

"Will it hurt?"

"For a very little while, Fifine, and then never again, child, never again!"

"Do not tell mother."

"We need not tell her, Fifine."

"When it hurts, will you hold my hand?"

"For a little while, Fifine, yes—and then—"

"Then, monsieur?"

"You will see Jesus."

"And will He love me, monsieur? I am so naughty, so ugly, they say."

"He will love you, Fifine, nothing can separate you from His love. There will be no more tears, no more sorrow there, no more naughtiness."

"You know it, monsieur?"

"I know it, Fifine."

"And will you come soon, monsieur. I love you so."

"I don't know, my child. Perhaps, but there is so much still to do."

"You will come when you are tired then, and cannot work any more?"

"Yes, Fifine, and rest."

The child dozed a little while, then he made a slight movement to rise, but the little hot fingers clenched tightly on his hand.

"Don't go! don't go! You promised to hold my hand, for it hurts! it hurts!"

And André sat down quietly.

Presently Nanon hurried in with the medicines and remedies from the hospital, and she held up the little dark tangled head while Dr. André tried to pour the medicine down her throat, but it was of no use, she could not swallow.

"Oh, try again, try again, dear *docteur*!" cried the poor mother, but the next trial failed also, and Nanon looked up at him with dumb despair in her eyes.

They tried all the resources of science through the night, but nothing seemed to avail. Dr. André could not leave the child, but as daylight streamed in message after message came for him. To some he was able to send directions written down, to others a verbal message that he would come presently.

About eight o'clock a twisted note was brought to him by a little street urchin.

"Do not waste time coming to Antoinette Lacarte, it is over. I was with her at the end."

"NICHOLAS."

Nanon suddenly uttered a low cry. "*Docteur! Docteur!*"

The change had come. Dr. André remembered his promise and held the little hand fast. But perhaps it did not hurt, for when the last fluttering breath had ceased, little Fifine's face wore a still, rapt expression. It must have been so with the little children of yore, when Jesus took them up in His arms and blessed them.

(To be continued.)

HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

Prune Mould.—Half a pound of good prunes stewed in a pint of cold water until thoroughly tender, when carefully remove the stones. Add to them the juice of half a lemon, a little more water, four ounces of loaf sugar and an ounce of gelatine. Put all into a stewpan together, let it stand for an hour, then simmer on the stove for half-an-hour; when it has boiled up once, put into a mould, and when quite set turn out and serve with a whipped cream around it.

Other stewing fruits to our hand in winter

are pears, dates, dried apricots and Normandy pippins. The two last-named require soaking in cold water previous to cooking.

Almond Cheesecakes.—Pound two ounces and a half of sweet and bitter almonds mixed, and add to them a quarter of a pound of butter, beaten to a cream, a quarter of a pound of powdered sugar and the grated rind of one lemon. Beat together the yolks and whites of three eggs well, and mix the ingredients thoroughly together. Make some light pastry with a quarter of a pound of flour and a quarter

of a pound of butter, and line some patty pans with it, pouring the mixture in the centre. Place strips of blanched almonds on each cheesecake and bake a light brown. These are delicious.

A Fours Salad.—Slice evenly and thinly one cold boiled Spanish onion, a small boiled beetroot, a large potato, also boiled and cold, and a cucumber. Lay the slices alternately in a shallow dish, garnish the edge with picked watercress, and dress with pepper, salt, oil, and vinegar.