

THE CALLING OF DAN MATTHEWS

or anything, and that is because he is so big and rough on the outside: but every one in trouble goes to him, and that is because he is so big and kind on the inside. It is a common saying that in cases of trying illness or serious accident a patient would rather "hear the Doctor cuss, than listen to the parson pray." Other physicians there are in Corinth, but every one understands when his neighbor says: "The Doctor." Nor does anyone ever, ever call him "Doc"!

After all, who knows the people of a community so well as the physician who lives among them? To the world the Doctor's patients were laborers, bankers, dressmakers, scrub-women, farmers, servants, teachers, preachers; to the Doctor they were men and women. Others knew their occupations—he knew their lives. The preachers knew what they professed—he knew what they practiced. Society saw them dressed up—he saw them—in bed. Why, the Doctor has spent more hours in the homes of his neighbors than ever he passed under his own roof, and there is not a skeleton closet in the whole town to which he has not the key.

On Strong Avenue, across from the monument, is a tiny four-roomed cottage. In the time of this story it wanted paint badly, and was not in the best of repair. But the place was neat and clean, with a big lilac bush just inside the gate, giving it an air of home-like privacy; and on the side directly opposite the Doctor's a fair-sized, well-kept garden, giving it an air of honest thrift. Here the widow Mulhall lived with her crippled son, Denny. Denny was to have