

On Wednesday night of last week two heavy explosions in the direction of Wilmington were heard at Newbern—A rebel paper announces a Federal Force advancing upon Kingston which on Sunday was within a mile of the enemy's works.

The United States Senate, by a vote of 31 to 8, adopted a resolution requiring the President to give a notice of the termination of the Reciprocity Treaty with Canada.

The steamer Melville from New York on the 6th, bound for Hilton Head, foundered at sea the second day out, and forty-six of the passengers and fourteen of the crew were lost, and only three persons belonging to the steamer were saved.

A late number of the Richmond *Enquirer* has the following—"A call is out for a Convention of the Confederate States. The intention of the authors of the call is to revolutionise the revolution, to dispose of Jeff. Davis, wipe out the Confederate Congress, and appoint a Dictator in his stead, and perhaps surrender to the enemy."

THE DOUBLE HOUSE.

(Continued).

It must be remembered that, forty years ago, the subject of insanity was viewed in a very different light from what it is at present. Instead of a mere disease, a mental instead of a bodily ailment—yet no less susceptible of remedy—it was looked upon as a visitation, a curse, almost a crime. Any family who owned a member thus suffering, hid the secret as if it had been absolute guilt. "Mad-house," "mad-doctor," were words which people shuddered at, or dared not utter. And no wonder! for in many instances they revealed abysses of ignorance, cruelty, and wickedness, horrible to contemplate. Since then more than one modern Howard has gone among those wretched prisons, cleared away insupportable evils, and made even such dark places of the earth to see a hopeful dawn.

Throughout his professional career, one of my husband's favorite "crotchets," as I called them, had been the investigation of insanity.

Commencing with the simple doctrine, startling but true, that every man and woman is mad on some one point—that is, has a certain weak corner of the mind or brain, which requires carefully watching like any other weak portion of the body, lest it should become the seat of rampant disease, he went on with a theory of possible cure—one that would take a wiser head than mine to explain, but which effectually removed the intolerable horror, misery and hopelessness of that great cloud overhanging the civilized and intellectual portion of the world—mental insanity. I do not mean the raving madness which is generally superinduced by violent passions, and which began as a storm to regard as a sort of demoniacal possession—which it may be, for aught I know—but that general state of unsoundness, unhealthiness of brain, which corresponds to unhealthiness of body, and like it, often required less a physician than a sanitary commissioner.

This may seem an unnecessary didactic interpolation, but I owe it to the natural course of my story, and as a tribute to my dear husband. Besides, it formed the subject of a conversation which, the question being voluntarily revived by Dr. Merchriston, he and James held together during the whole afternoon.

It was good and pleasant to hear those two men talk. I listened, pleased as a woman who is contented to appreciate and enjoy that to which herself can never attain. And once more, for the hundredth time, I noted with admiration the wonderfully strong and lucid intellect with which Dr. Merchriston could grasp any subject, handle it, view it on all points, and make his auditors see it too. Even on this matter, which still seemed to touch his sympathies deeply! especially when he alluded to the world's horror and cruel treatment of insane persons—insane, perhaps, only on some particular point, while the rest of the brain was clear and sound—even there his powers of reasoning and argument never failed.

"Well," said Mr. Rivers, smiling, as they shook hands at the door "I am glad to have found some one who can understand my hobby. You are certainly one of the clearest-headed men I ever knew."

"You truly think so? I thank you, Rivers," said the Doctor, earnestly, as he disappeared into the dark.

I remember this night's conversation vividly, because in Heaven's inscrutable mercy—ay, I will write "mercy"—it was the last time Dr. Merchriston entered our house.

The next morning he bowed to me at the window, riding past on his gaily curvetting horse, looking better and more cheerful than he had done for a long time.

That evening my husband was summoned to the Double House. His master had been thrown from his horse, his leg and his right arm fractured. If all went well, James told me, and I had rarely seen him so moved—the patient would be confined to his bed, beyond hand and foot, helpless as a child, for three or four months. Poor Dr. Merchriston!

"Is his wife with him?" was the first question I asked.

"Yes, thank God, yes!" cried James, fairly bursting into tears. I was so shocked, so amazed by his emotion, that I never inquired or learned to this day how it came about, or what strange scene my husband had that evening witnessed in the Double House.

There was a long crisis, in which the balance wavered between life and death. Life triumphed.

I went almost every day; but it was long before I saw Mrs. Merchriston: when I did, it was the strangest sight! Her looks were full of the deepest peace, the most seraphic joy. And yet she had been for weeks a nurse in that sick room. A close, tender, indefatigable nurse, such as none but a wife can be; as fondly watchful—ay, and as gratefully and adoringly watched, my husband told me, by the sick man's dim eyes, as if he had been a wife bound for years in near, continual household bonds, instead of having lived totally estranged from him since the first six months of union.

But no one ever spoke or thought of that now. Dr. Merchriston slowly improved; though he was still totally helpless and his weakness remained that of a very infant.

In this state he was when I was first admitted to his sick chamber. Mrs. Merchriston sat at the window, sewing. The room was bright and pleasant; she had brought into it all those cheerfulness which can alleviate the long-to-be-endured suffering from which all danger is past. When I thought of the former aspect and atmosphere of the house, it did not seem in the least sad now; for Barbara's eyes had a permanent, mild, satisfied light; and her husband's, which were ever dwelling on her face and form, were full of the calmest, most entire happiness.

I sat with them a good while, and did not marvel at his saying ere I left—"that he thoroughly enjoyed being ill."

With what a solemn, sublime evenness life melted out! Barbara has told me since that those five months following her husband's accident were the most truly happy her life had ever known.

"Look at him," she whispered to me one evening when he lay by the window, half dozing, having been for the first time allowed a faint attempt at locomotion, though he was still obliged to be waited upon hand and foot—"Mrs. Rivers, did you ever see so beautiful a smile! Yet it is nothing compared to that he wore when he was very, very ill, when I first began to nurse and tend him; and he did nothing but watch me about the room, and call me his Barbara. I am here, Evan!—did you want me?"

She was at his side in a moment, smoothing his pillow, leaning over and caressing him. I think he was not aware of there being any one in the room but their two selves, for he fondled her curls and her soft cheeks.

"My Barbara, we have had a little ray of comfort in our sad life. How happy we have been in this sick room!"

"We have been, Evan!"

"Ay; but nothing lasts in this world—nothing!"

"Husband, that is like one of your morbid sayings when we were first married. But I will not have it now—I will not, indeed." And she closed his mouth with a pretty peal. He lifted his hand to remove hers, then sunk back.

"I am growing strong again; I can use my right arm. Oh Heaven, my right arm. I am not helpless any longer."

"No, thank God! But you speak as if you were shocked and terrified."

"I am—I am. With strength comes—Oh, my Barbara!"

His wife, alarmed at the anguish of his tone, called out my name. Dr. Merchriston caught at it. "Is Mrs. Rivers there? Bid her come in; bid any body come in. Ah! yes, that is well."

After a pause, which seemed more of mental than physical exhaustion, he looked himself again for the rest of the evening. The next day he sent for me, and in Mrs. Merchriston's absence, talked with me a long while about her. He feared her health would give way; he wished her to be more with me; he hoped I would impress upon her that it made him miserable to see her spending all her days and nights in his sick room.

"What! in the only place in the world where she has real happiness! Do you think so? Is she never happy but with me? Then Heaven forgive me! Heaven have pity on me!" he groaned.

Dr. Merchriston! you surely do not intend to send your wife from you again—your forgiving, loving wife?"

Before he could answer she came in. I went away thoroughly angry and miserable. That evening I indulged James with such a long harangue on the heartlessness of his sex, that, as I said, he must have been less a man than an angel to have borne it. When I told him the cause, he ceased all general arguments, sat a long time thoughtfully, turning his Hessians against the bars of the grate, finally sent me to bed and did not himself follow until midnight.

Dr. Merchriston's cure progressed; in the same ratio his wife's cheerfulness declined. He grew day by day more melancholy, irritable, and cold. By the time he was released from his helpless condition, the icy barrier had risen up again. She made no complaint, but the facts were evident.

Advertisements.



ON AND AFTER THURSDAY NEXT, the 12th inst., Places of Deposit for the reception of Letters pre-paid by stamp, will be established at the undermentioned places of business in this city, viz:

- No. 1.—At John Hanan's, corner of Pleasant street and Gas Lane.
- No. 2.—At Loneragan's & McDonald's, No. 89 (head of Lawson's Wharf) Lower Water Street.
- No. 3.—At Robert Urquhart's, corner of Birmingham Street and Spring Garden Road.
- No. 4.—Henry Tully's, No. 180 Upper Water Street.
- No. 5.—At James C. Crawford's, No. 294 Upper Water Street.
- No. 6.—At Dr. McFarbridge's, No. 52 Cornwallis St.

Letters to be forwarded by the Mid-day and Evening Mails must be posted prior to the hours specified below:

- No. 1.—At 1 P.M. and 7 P.M.
- No. 2.—At 1.15 P.M. and 7.15 P.M.
- No. 3.—At 1.30 P.M. and 7.30 P.M.
- No. 4.—At 1.30 P.M. and 7.30 P.M.
- No. 5.—At 1.15 P.M. and 7.15 P.M.
- No. 6.—At 1 P.M. and 7 P.M.

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