"I did not know you had one," she said. "Then remember, in future, that there is a skeleton in everybody's cupboard," he said; adding,

"But you have not told me yet what you think the best thing to be done."

"I think Gwendoline ought to write and tell Basil Crawford to come down, and be of some

"Why do you not write and invite him?" said the Doctor, with half a smile on his face; "there are no worries going on in your house."

"Why, you just said there was a skeleton in

every cupboard," she interrupted.

"True; but in this case it is locked up, and the key lost. Now, your father, a respectable middleaged country gentleman, who has retired from business, with nothing to trouble him, and nothing on his hands but a pair of pretty daughters, is just the man to entertain visitors, and his house just the one to be delightful to a young man to stayin: so why do you not invite him?"

"Perhaps the fact of the pair of pretty daughters and no sons makes it difficult to invite the young

men who would be so delighted to come.'

"Ah, depend upon it, the pair of pretty daughters are the skeleton in his cupboard, poor man, said the Doctor, with mock seriousness.

"Now, Dr. Majendia, just listen seriously to what I mean," she said. "We were talking about Cyril Egerton, and all these dreadful reports which surround him, and I suggested that Basil Crawford would be of the greatest use and comfort; he would know what was best to be done in every matter."

"And make Claude well, put an end to all unkind remarks, get the five hundred pounds-in fact, settle everything and everybody comfortably. Upon my word, you have a high opinion of him; it is well to be Basil Crawford!'

Naomi turned slightly red, and felt somewhat uncomfortable under the direct gaze of the Doctor's

sharp eyes. "I thought you always considered him peculiarly suited for the profession he had chosen," she began again, "and that he was very quick and clear sighted in getting hold of the real state of any case, and-

"And you fully agree with those sentiments of

"I think you are a very aggravating man." "By-the-bye," said Gwendoline—anxious to change the subject from Basil Crawford to anything which might first suggest itself-" have you heard that mamma knows the whole clue to the mystery about Claude's illness? It is said that she holds positive proofs as to who attacked and injured

ing playfulness with which he had address Naomi gave place to a startled, half-anxious air.

"I have heard this already twice since yester day afternoon," said Naomi, her dark earnest eyes now meeting the doctor's with more ease and

"What nonsense! But tell me what is said." Why, that Mrs. Majendie had in her own hands some unmistakable proof as to who did the deed, and that, although she intends to keep it a secret, she has spoken of it in confidence to some friends."

"Woman's logic, with a vengeance," said the doctor. "But hark I there she comes; we will tell her, it would amuse her to know how important she has become all at once, as the sole repository of

the 'great secret of the day!'" The study door was immediately at the foot of the stairs, and as the Doctor opened the door, Mrs. Majendie slowly and regally descended the three

last steps! dans di de sem Come in here, my dear, for one moment," he

"I have no time; I am very late. I have an ap-1. 2 1 2 2 2 CK said. pointment at my dressmaker's," she answered.

" My dear, I will not detain you for a moment, said the doctor ; "but I am sure you will be gratified to hear of the importance to which you have attained. It is said in the town that in your hands, alone and solely, lies the 'great secret of the day.

"What!" said Mrs. Majendie, sharply. "It is said that you you alone hold the clue to the mystery of the attack on poor Claude Edgerton, and that, if you would, you could throw a light

over things which would make everything clear.' Mrs. Majendie held her muff under her right arm and with her right hand began drawing on a pale

colored kid glove on her left hand, but never a word did she say.

"Well, my dear, and when did you acquire this knowledge?" said the Doctor, somewhat surprised at her utter silence.

"It is scarcely a matter to joke about," she said at length, with dignity; "and one which I should have thought good taste would have kept you from mentioning in that way.'

"Ah! I was never famous for tact," replied her husband; "and now I only want to know whether you hold the clue that can enlighten us?"

"I may know more about the matter than either of you do," she said, buttoning her glove "and certain facts may have come under my knowledge which have passed others by. You and Gwendoline have thought yourselves so all-important and clever that there was no necessity for consulting others; perhaps I think the same; at any rate, object to being questioned as to my plans."

To say that the Doctor was startled would be to give but a faint notion of what he felt; he conceived it quite possible that same idle report had been magnified into one of importance, and told to his wife with a certain degree of mystery, and which she had accordingly accepted as a fact; but out of this endless mischief might grow.

"Whatever reports have reached your ears, I trust you will remember the vital importance of spreading them no further. I have the greatest

dislike and horror of such things."

"So have I," she answered, putting on her glove; "and if my advice were followed, it would be that for the future, you and Gwendoline would be less guided by them. but follow my example and rely merely on facts. Good-bye, Naomi! You have been quite a stranger; you must come and dine with us soon. Good-bye!

As well try to stop a stream from flowing as to try to stop Mrs. Majendie, as she turned to go to to her carriage, which was waiting at the door; and as well try to get one of the stones in the stream to speak, as to try to get further information from her on the subject.

Dr. Majendie watched her go out alone to the carriage. At one time he would on no account have allowed her to do this without his aid and help, but that was in times gone by. Now the servants were there, full of well-taught, well-paid attention, which she would appropriate more than

And well they did their duty. The whole performance could be seen from the open study-door. There were numberless little ceremonies and atten-There was a great change in the Doctor's voice tions which she exacted, and which she would never and whole appearance as he said this; the banter- allow to be omitted; accordingly, three servants were now going punctually through their usual performances : Corine in the background, nothing but bearing the huge fur rug, and waiting till the moment arrived when her turn should come and it would be laid over Mrs. Majendie's knees.

All this time the Doctor was thinking of what he had heard, and it disturbed him deeply to know that the rumour that shocked them was gaining ground daily, strengthened by the fact that Dr. Majendie's wife knew and countenanced the report. What she might, have heard, and what use she might make of it, was more than he knew or could

All at once there was a call for Gwendolineher mother had auddenly recollected an important message she wished to leave with here

When she had gone, and the Doctor was alon with Naomi, he made an effort to throw off his depression, and said, "Well, old friend Naomi, how does the world use you? How long is it since we had a serious talk together on things in general, ourselves in particular? Do you remember one night last summer, when I advised you to occupy your mind as much as possible, and to work steadily at some one thing? How has it answered? "Oh, pretty well," she said, recollecting her feelings at that time, and her conversation with Gwendeline of to-day. "I am not a philosopher, you know; I cannot make rules and standards, and you know; I cannot make rules and standards, and set unfailingly up to them. I try a little to walk along hard roads, but flesh is weak, and it is sometimes easier to endure what we find before us; than to walk steadily in an opposite direction." "Quite so. What is all this about Basil ?"

"I should rather ask you. Why does he not come here now?

The Doctor smiled. "It all lies between him and Gwendoline, though each would say they know nothing about it; the real reason of his absence lies in some absurd misunderstanding between those two. I take no notice of it to either of them, because I know that is the quickest way to bring things right again."

"I do not think there is anything serious between them "said Naomi, recollecting her conversation

with Gwendoline.

The Doctor smiled as he looked at her, and then he said, "You are like a person who has been stuffed for an examination. Perhaps to assist Claude would be the very last inducement to bring him to Atherton.'

Gwendoline at this point returned, and he said no more, and Naomi was left wondering.

The Doctor hurried up-stairs to Claude, and shortly afterwards Naomi went home.

After she was left alone, Gwendoline sat thinking over one knotty point, and trying to make up her mind on it, and wishing she had some one to do it for her. In her inmost heart she did desire to write to Basil Crawford, and that he should come to Atherton; therefore it is not very much to be wondered at that her final decision was to write to him. She had a great deal to do, and she fulfilled all her duties that afternoon and evening; but where there is a will there is a way; she managed to find time to write a letter to Basil.

It was a long circumstantial account of all that had happened on and since Christmas Eve. She omitted noting, and dwelt much upon the pain which the reports touching Cyril had given them, and she wound up by begging him to come and see if he could do anything to help them, that things were as bad as they could be, and that

Claude lay at the point of death,

She was not satisfied until she had seen this letter safely out of the house, and on its way to the post. And so it is in most of our dealings-we linger and delay too long in hesitation and uncertainty, but once our mind is made up we are all impatient for the fulfilment of our plans, and think every proceeding slow.

But the important step was taken, the letter was written; and once safely in the post and on its way to London, Gwendoline felt that prospects were already brighter. She was sure he would come when he had received her letter; already she felt as if Basil was on the road to help them and that brighter days were coming. If any one could bring right and wrong to light, it was Basil, who would clear away all clouds from ill-treated Cyril, and show them all whereabouts there was gold in the sky (To be continued.)

VALUE OF THE PRAYER BOOK.

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which appropriate to the

Here is an unconscious witness of the value of the Prayer Book, which is both touching and solemn. It is a letter about a funeral out in the Australian diggings—the funeral of a poor mine. There was no clergyman to be had, and t There was no clergyman to be had, and the growd of sympathising fellow-miners had to carry the committee we miles from the rocky camp, to find earth enough to cover it. Then the writer goes on to say. I inquired it anyone had a Prayer Book. The inquiry was passed around the crowd, and it found an affirmative response. It was an English Church Prayer Book. I scarcely knew how to conduct the service, but, having found the place. I knew there could be no harm in asking all to kneel. They did so, and the scene grew even more impressive than before. Englishmen, Scotchmen, Lrishmen, Americans, and men from every nation of Continental Europe, Negroes, Chinamen, Maories, Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Dissenters, of every hue and shade of opinion, together with infidels and pagans, knelt reverently, and listened in solema silence to the grand language of the Burial Service of the Church of earth shough to cover it. Then the writ to repeat it with me; they did so, all

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