

The Hospital

CRITTENDEN MARRIOTT

THE man sitting in the darkened room at his bedside raised his bandaged eyes as the nurse entered. The month that he had been there had not served to change the habit of sight fixed by all the years that had gone before.

"It's for to-night, isn't it, Miss Lee?" he cried, recognizing her step; "to-night I'll get rid of these confounded bandages and see the light of day once more. Oh, you don't know how this month has dragged. It's for to-night, isn't it?"

"I believe so," returned the nurse gently. "But of course the doctor will have to decide. He'll be here soon."

"Gad! How glad I'll be to see once more!" cried the man. "I never could have stood it even for a month if it hadn't been for you. You've been an angel to me."

The nurse blushed softly and cast a very tender look at the man. She answered merrily, "All the nurses here would have been the same. Nine patients out of ten think we are angels—while they are in the hospital. They change their minds afterward."

"I never shall. Do you know, after all, despite all the pain and the anxiety, I am glad this thing happened."

"Why?"

"Because it has enabled me to know you. Oh, of course, I have known you to speak to for months, and by sight for years, but that isn't knowing how tender, how sweet, how long suffering you could be. Oh, Miss Lee—Gertrude—"

"Hush! The doctor said you must keep cool, you know. Excitement might injure your eyes."

The man sank back into his chair. "True," he said slowly, "I forgot that I haven't any right to speak now; I forget that the result of this operation isn't absolutely certain and that I may be blind—good God! blind—and that, in any case, I must mend my fortunes—there, is that the doctor coming?"

The nurse glanced out of the open door into the hall. "Yes," she said, "he's just down the corridor a-ways. You're not going back to your old position right away, are you, Mr.

Scott? You oughtn't to try your eyes for a year or you know."

"I suppose not. But needs must, you know, when a certain gentleman drives. I'll be dead broke when I get out of here, and I'll have to go to work. Ah! There's the doctor."

The doctor entered and stood for a few moments talking to the man. "Yes," he said, at last, "we'll take the bandages off to-night, I think."

"Thank God! And—and there's no doubt that everything will be all right, is there, doctor?"

"We'll hope for the best," returned the doctor cheerily, his tone a very comfort in itself, although his words were not especially so. He passed out of the door hurriedly, preventing further questions, and beckoning to the nurse as he did so to follow him. A few steps down the corridor he halted.

"Nurse," he said with a worried look on his face, "do you know whether your patient has any relatives near by?"

"I'm sure he has not," answered the girl readily. "I've talked with him repeatedly and learned all about him. He doesn't seem to have a relative in the world."

The doctor's face grew graver. "How is he off for money?"

"He just told me that he would be 'dead broke' when he got out of here. He said he must at once go back to work."

"Back to work at once! He'll be lucky if he ever gets to work again."

The nurse grew white. "Why?" she gasped. "I thought the operation was a certainty."

"A certainty! Yes, it is a certainty almost—but in the wrong direction. There isn't one chance in a hundred that he'll ever see again."

With a mighty effort the nurse mastered her emotion. "But, doctor," she gasped, "what will become of him?"

"Become of him?" echoed the doctor, irritably. "Become of him? What becomes of blind men who have no friends and no money? We'll keep him as long as we can, and then I suppose we'll have to go to the poorhouse for the rest of his life."

A flush of anger succeeded the pallor of Miss Lee's face. "Why have you deceived him?" she demanded indignantly, with utter disregard of the requirements of discipline. "He is sure that he will get well. He is building on it absolutely. If he doesn't—"

The doctor looked curiously at the

girl, then a sense of comprehension came over him. He sighed; he was an old man, but not a callous one. "If you want him to see again, Miss Lee," he said, "be sure to keep him thinking so. In that lies his one chance. Keep him cheerful at all hazards, and possibly—"

The doctor turned away, and the nurse slowly retraced her steps to Scott's room. She had known Henry Scott for a year or more and had liked and admired him from the first. In the month that they had been thrown together by the accident that had forced Scott to enter the hospital this



OH DARLING I LOVE YOU SO!
I LOVE YOU SO!
DO YOU LOVE ME?

THE Rev. Mr. DINSMORE

By Rob. McCheyne

THE Rev. Mr. Dinsmore was a young man, but that isn't knowing how tender, how sweet, how long suffering you could be. Oh, Miss Lee—Gertrude—"

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Grandview Hotel," she continued, "and, what's more, she's been throwing them back."

The deacon looked pained, and refused to believe it; but, at the first corner, he was stopped by the village postmaster.

"Huh!" says he, "that's a nice kind of a minister you've picked up. He's jes' won five dollars off Barney Miller on a dog fight."

The deacon turned to go.

"He says he'll save that church from bein' struck off the face of the airth with a thunderbolt," called the postmaster.

"They told me Rev. Mr. Dinsmore had original methods," mused the deacon, "but bettin' on dog fights an' sparkin' with the girls in public's too original."

At Brother Andrews' he met three members of the Ladies' Aid Society, all talking at once. From the medley of voices he learned that the new minister had been seen to drink five whisky high-balls within a half-hour; that he had tipped the barber ten cents and that he had asked the buxom widow Carewe to go driving with him.

The ladies were still talking when the good deacon made his escape and set out for the house of another committeeman, when Brother Andrews had already preceded him.

The brethren met him with reproachful silence. Brother Andrews was the first to speak.

"Well, deacon," he said, "you see what your progressive ways has cometa' to."

The deacon shook his head in solemn self-reproach. "Well, Brother Andrews," he said finally, "I'm afraid this young Dinsmore's too progressive for Scroggsfield, but we'll have a chance to sound him. He's asked me to gather the committee at the church this afternoon. That's what I came around for."

The three old deacons started solemnly off for the church. In the street there was a great commotion, as two teams went dashing up and down the main thoroughfare, neck and neck, the drivers hallooing in lusty tones and brandishing their whips.

As the foremost team passed the two deacons Brother Andrews recognized the widow Carewe, smiling gaily from her place beside the dauntless Dinsmore. In another instant the sporting parson had turned his horses and was drawing up at the church door.

"Hi!" he exclaimed, slapping the deacons one by one upon the shoulder. "I'm just in time, I see. Fine church this!"—he waved his hand affably. "Come in, come in; I'll not detain you a minute." He led the way into the little anteroom, where the rest of the committee sat awaiting an opportunity to pass on Rev. Mr. Dinsmore.

"Now, gentlemen," he said, turning and waving his hat to the back of his head, "I called you out here to talk to you about the salvation of this church. I tell you, gentlemen, you're to be commended and congratulated in having built so fine an edifice to the glory of Scroggsfield. But, I tell you, gentlemen, you've built this church in defiance of eternal laws—laws that are not to be defied by man. I wonder, gentlemen, that our magnificent building hasn't been struck down by a thunderbolt from heaven. I—"

A meek mannered stranger, wearing thick glasses and carrying a badly scuffed grip-sack, had entered the door and was approaching timidly. The speaker stopped in the midst of his harangue and the newcomer stood looking from one to another.

"I am the Rev. Mr. Dinsmore," he said apologetically; "can you tell me—"

"What!" cried the six, starting to their feet.

"Dinsmore," said the stranger faintly.

"Who are you?" demanded Deacon Williams of the first stranger.

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen—my card," and the speaker graciously presented one to each of the committee.

"J. F. Rowser, Esquire," he went on, proudly, "representing the greatest lightning rod establishment in the world. I tell you, gentlemen, your magnificent building is in eternal danger from the fierce and vengeful ravages of—"

But the committee were busily engaged shaking hands with each other and with the Rev. Mr. Dinsmore.

AS ONE OF THE FAMILY

By James K. Hearne

EVERYBODY in Greenville regarded Manning as "one of the family." He was the confidant, adviser and friend of man, woman and child, from old Grandfather Pennel (who declared himself to be a hundred and two, though he was born in 1817) to little Robert Sefton Browne, who had arrived in Greenville only three months before, under the guidance of a friendly stork.

On envelopes and billheads he was "Mr. William Manning." At all other times he was "Bill," or "Uncle Bill," according to the age of the speaker. Manning had no particular business to occupy his time. His father had left him an independent income, and he had only the affairs of others in which to take an interest. It was the universality of his knowledge that made him so good an adviser; he could indulge both sides instead of only one.

This had continued for some years, when suddenly Miss Amanda Penrose came to Greenville. She was a distant cousin of Grandfather Pennel's stepdaughter, and this she considered sufficient reason why the Pennels should take her under their roof tree. Mrs. Pennel III declared hotly that considering the fact that Lillian Douglas, who had been the daughter of Pennel's second wife by her first husband, had been dead for three years, Miss Penrose had no right to claim relationship.

Grandfather Pennel smiled amiably at the disputants, but in the end always decided in favor of Miss Amanda, inclined thereto by the fact that she was willing to admit that he was a hundred and two, even though she knew better.

In the course of time the pitched battles between Susan Pennel and Miss Amanda ceased. Miss Amanda, silent

and smiling, was far too much for blunt, outspoken Susan. In the end she bowed her head to the affliction and suffered, if not in silence, at least without direct opposition to the intruder.

Having gained her victory Miss Amanda wisely proceeded to make life as unbearable to Susan as possible only to a woman. In a short while Miss Amanda had driven Susan to revolt.

She sought out Manning and found in him a ready sympathizer. He was already beginning to feel that this assertive spinster threatened his domain. She had subdued the family of Pennel, and from certain little indications it seemed to him that she thought to dominate the domestic affairs of the rest of the village.

"I wouldn't complain," said the weeping Mrs. Pennel, "but you see, William, you're like one of the family, and I feel that I must tell some one."

"That's all right, Susan," he said, cheerily. "I'll look in in the morning and see what can be done."

She took her departure, still sniffing, but visibly comforted. Manning sat down to look over the situation. Here he met a foeman worthy of his steel. From all accounts she was energetic, resourceful, somewhat domineering, but for all that well balanced and alert. It appealed to Manning as a case of strategy.

He decided that it would be wise to first ascertain the position of the enemy, observing the probable force he would have to encounter. He put on his hat and strolled over to Grandfather Pennel's for dinner. He was used to dropping in anywhere for dinner. Miss Amanda met him at the door, for Susan had not returned. She was somewhat flushed, for she had been arguing with Grandfather Pennel, who insisted that the War of 1812 did not happen, since he did not remember it. He had figured that he must have been ten or eleven years

feeling had grown to something stronger than liking. For some days she had known what he would say as soon as he could see again, and had known what she would say in answer. In common with the rest of the world around her, she had never doubted that she would be well with his sight. Now came this blow.

Never to see again! To go to the poorhouse and there drag out his days! Never! He shall not! He shall not!

But what could she do? Too well she knew Scott's spirit to suppose that he would accept anything from her; that he would ever say the words she longed to hear; the words that would give her the right to care for him; unless his sight was restored. She must get that right before the bandages were removed. She must lead him on to speak—but no, what good would that do? If he were to be really blind, she knew he would repudiate the bargain.

She must marry him that very day, before the bandages were removed.

Her heart stood still at the thought. All that was womanly in her revolted. But then—the poorhouse! Ah! she would be so proud to work for him, to care for him! She had no one dependent on her and she earned enough to maintain them both. She must do it! There was no other way.

Her thoughts had traveled like lightning. In the few steps between the doctor and the door of Scott's room she had thought it all out. Steadily she entered and went close to him. "What was it you were saying a moment ago, Mr. Scott?" she asked softly.

"Saying?" The man was puzzled for the instant.

"About me?"

"Oh!" with instant comprehension. "Oh, Gertrude, do you really want to hear it?" He groped for her hand, caught it and drew it to him. "Gertrude, it isn't right for me to speak yet, but I must, I must. Oh, darling, I love you so! I love you so! Do you love me?"

The girl bowed her head on his breast. "Yes, yes," she sobbed, "more than anything else in the world."

"Thank God!" The man grasped the bandages around his head and recklessly tore them off. "I must see you!" he cried. "I must see you! Oh, Gertrude, how beautiful you are!"

But the nurse flung up her hands in horror and strove to cover his eyes. "Oh, oh, oh!" she wailed. "Don't! You'll ruin your last chance."

But the man clasped her wrists and held her from him. "I see you! I see you!" he cried.

Neither noticed the doctor standing at the door, but at the last words he advanced into the room. "You see, do you?" he asked.

The nurse turned with clasped hands. "Doctor! Doctor!" she cried. "Is it a success? Will he see?"

"Why, of course he will!" answered that gentleman briskly. "The operation was evidently been an entire success."

HER INSPIRATION

By Troy Allison

MISS SEVIER was worried.

She sat at the front bedroom window impatiently tapping the arm of her wicker rocker with one hand and using a finger of the other to keep place in the book that hung the length of a listless arm on the other side of the chair.

She was tired of teas. She had amused herself calculating just how many gallons she had drunk in the ten years of her social career. At 20 it had seemed highly elating to put on her newest gown and drink tea with a crowd of people.

But at 30 she forgot to pin on the violets, even when there was a huge bunch in front of her on the dresser, unless her maid suggested that it would improve madame's toilette.

She sighed in recognition of the fact that real life doesn't work out like novels.

Some of her energy finally communicated itself to the other hand. She threw the book on the table near and commenced an energetic rocking that kept pace with her thoughts.

"Money is the root of all evil, and I've always had too much of it. I wonder which is the worse, a deficit or an excess. I believe that as a child it was a pleasanter feeling to want more candy than to have eaten too much."

"The worst feature of this money is that it has always attracted a crowd of flatterers and worthless friends, and has caused so many that I really cared for to let their pride come between me and them. I have known John Carrington for five years, and would catalogue his possessions—one estate in Virginia, yielding an uncertain income; one fine tenor voice, and enough proud reticence to supply all the F. F. V.'s ever heard of."

When she mentioned Carrington's name the hero of the discarded novel gracefully acknowledged the better man, and accepted her lack of interest in him with a humility uncommon to a star of a second edition.

Miss Sevier's restless glance took in the novel.

"The fool in the novel had a tenor voice, too; but he wasn't handicapped by a lack of self-appreciation."

"If I had asked him to sing 'For you it is a rose, for me—it is my heart,' at least 300 times in the last three years; if I had played his accompaniment and put in it all the feeling a longing heart could possibly show when supplemented by my poor technique, that hero would have understood the hint, would have forgotten all about my money and asked me to marry him."

There was a tap at the door, and Miss Sevier's young niece came rushing in.

"Esther always rushed, so her immediate family were never much startled by her sudden entrances and exits."

"Auntie," she tried to make her request and explain her plan all at once, "may I write and ask Tom Carter to take me to the party to-morrow night, the girls are all going to ask, and I wanted to know if I might."

"What's the cause of Mr. Carter's sudden popularity," her aunt asked,

with a decided amount of astonishment in her eyes.

"Now, auntie, you know we are not all going to ask him, but any one we would like to take. It's a leap year party, you know."

"I returned Miss Sevier slowly, "and you simply want me to understand that one Mr. Thomas Carter is the—very nicest boy among your acquaintances, eh?"

"It's really nice, the very nicest," Esther answered, a red flush spreading to the roots of her fair hair. "May I, auntie, please?"

"If all the other girls are of the same opinion, perhaps you would be wise to get your note written at once," teased her aunt.

The girl gave her an impulsive kiss and then looked at her with a twinkle in her eye.

"I would like awfully to write it on a sheet of your best paper," she coaxed.

After her 16-year-old niece had disappeared, having taken some of the best paper and the sealing wax to match, Miss Sevier went back to his window and stood gazing abstractedly at the house across the street.

The house had been there for years, but she seemed to study it with intense interest.

"John loves me," she murmured, and she may or may not have referred to the grocery boy that was just then ringing the bell of the house opposite.

She went to her writing desk and cut out a very creditable heart out of a piece of the best paper that had been the object of Esther's admiration. Across the face of the heart she printed in faint scrawling letters, "To you it is a rose," and then rang for her maid and stood gazing abstractedly at the house across the street.

When John Carrington reached home after a trying day in his downtown law office he found that his landlady had put a long florist's box on the window ledge, where it would keep cool. He opened the box with an expression of curiosity that the masculine countenance often wears when its owner is sure there is no one to see it. There was one long-stemmed American Beauty, and Carrington's sensitive face turned crimson when he saw that its stem was thrust through a hastily cut paper heart.

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