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Cured by an Incurable

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CURED
BY
An Incurable

By Crowquill
Pencilpoint.

LONDON
1887.

Ed Hazlewick

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CURED

BY AN

INCURABLE

BY

CROWQUILL AND PENCILPOINT

——

LONDON, 1887

Grub.—I like not thy history, 'tis motley; it makes me both laugh and cry—'twill never sell. I would thou hadst written sadly altogether.

Hack.—Ah! it hath reached thy miser's heart; it shall stir such a tempest in men's bosoms as shall break up the sealed fountain of their charity, till it fatten the ground they tread on.

Grub.—Have thy way, dreamer; the thing's none of mine.

MS.

CURED BY AN INCURABLE.

CHAPTER I.

I DON'T wonder in the least degree at Dr. Jacobus Smith being out of patience with his patients.

I am sorry to begin my little book with a piece of very bad composition, repeating the same sounds over again in so short a space; but it can't be helped.

The people *were* patients, and what the Doctor lost, or perhaps more properly, what he said he lost, *was* patience—that identical thing, and nothing else. So it is no good, for the sake of the sound of the thing—or to call it by a grand name, "euphony"—to try, and find out other words which will not answer my purpose nearly as well. The name "Jacobus," especially as associated with "Smith," is somewhat peculiar; and as we shall use it when we speak of the Doctor in the following pages, it may need to be explained.

Mr. Smith, senior—*i.e.* the father of the infant Smith, finally the Doctor—hoped for his son an eminent career, it might be in law, physic,

or divinity, but somewhere, or in something; and as the family of "Smith" was large, and a good deal before the public in one way or another, he thought it would be helpful to his son to have a distinctive title, so to speak—a handle in a small way to his name—and so he determined to call him "Jacobus."

So far as he knew, he was likely to have this name entirely to

himself. There had been James Smiths, father and son, for, he knew, a hundred years—possibly for a thousand, possibly as far back as the time of the mummies, one of which might have been a James Smith before it was tied up so tight; but he was sure of the hundred;—and so "Jacobus" answered a double purpose—it kept the old name, and would be helpful to its young owner in his progress in some department of life towards fortune, if not fame.

The Doctor had three patients in what I may call one family; but he was out of patience with only two of them. With the third he had no need to bear, or to forbear; but as to the first two! "If only," said Dr. Jacobus, "I could make up a pill and draught that would put them to sleep for six months, without doing them any harm; if only I could inject, hypodermically or otherwise, some common sense into them; if only I could perform any kind of operation on them that would extract——"

Bang went the knocker, ring went the bell; and in came Twells, the servant-man.

"Blest, sir, if there ain't two on 'em in the hall together! There's Mr. Anton's man, and there's Miss Gribble's maid, and the two on 'em looking cats and dogs at one another, to say nothin' of their spittin' fire and snappin' at each other like live alligators, and all to see which on 'em will get at you first. There's Mr. Anton's man calling out, 'My master's toe!' and there's Miss Gribble's maid scorning him tremendous, and sayin', '*Your*—master's—toe—indeed!' in that voice of aggravation that would make a man's whiskers stand up like porcupines' quills, or shoot out of him altogether; and then she's a-lookin' at him up and down, and down and up, from head to foot, and from foot to head, scornin' him all the time. And there's Mr. Anton's man sayin', 'Don't bother about your missus's 'stericks; we knows all about them: the pump's the best doctor for them;' and that sets Miss Gribble's maid off worse than ever, so she scorns him again, and says, 'You men!' and now the two of them's in the hall. Which shall I show in first?"

The Doctor knew, from experience, that neither was likely to be a very urgent case; but if Miss Martha Gribble was really "off" at that very moment, she must, of course, be brought to as quickly as possible; so the Doctor had her maid first of all into his study.

"Well," said the Doctor, "what is the matter?"

Now Miss Gribble's maid was wholly one with her mistress, and on these occasions felt strongly inclined, from sympathy, to go into "'stericks" herself, being restrained from so doing only by a sense of duty, and the consciousness that she was invaluable in such emergencies, and always got half-a-crown when her mistress came to. Being thus wholly one with her mistress, she duly impressed upon the Doctor that the present case was one of emergency. A split had suddenly occurred in the friendship of her mistress's dog and cat—a life-long and touching friendship, now unhappily interrupted by a difference of opinion as to their respective rights in a saucer of milk.

The one had bitten the other, and, shocked at the occurrence, Miss Gribble had "gone off."

The Doctor knew how to hit off her case to a nicety; so he scribbled a line or two, and told the maid to take it to the chemist over the way, and said that he himself would call in by and by.

It was an ineffable consolation to Miss Priscilla that she had an opportunity of scorning Mr. Anton's man again as she went out, and of coming very near indeed to treading on his toe. The consolation

would have been complete, if she had not missed it by about the eighth of an inch. She tried hard for a bull's-eye; and, but for the badness of the motive by which she was actuated, certainly deserved to get it.

It was now honest John Jones's turn to be admitted.

"Well, John, what's the matter now?" asked the Doctor.

"'Tisn't what is the matter, but what's *not* the matter," said honest John. "I think by what the master says, he has all the complaints in your books, and in the bottles yonder"—and Mr. Anton's servant pointed to the chemist's over the way. "To hear him talk, you'd think he was an hospital, and that he was incurable all over."

"Well!" said the doctor, laughing, "if that's the case, John, I know the very spot for him. I'm going down in a couple of days to a place that's called the 'Royal Hospital for Incurables'—only there," said the doctor sadly, "there, John, they are *really* incurable; and there, without make-believes, you may see the real thing in the way of suffering."

"And a good thing 'twould be, sir, if the master were taken there for a couple of weeks, anyhow. Are the people there quiet?"

"Aye, they keep still; and they bear pain without a sound—just a little sob now and again when 'tis very bad; and sometimes an arm thrown out over the counterpane, or a face turned toward the wall or something passing across their brow, or a little tremble in the eyelids, or a little twitch at the corner of the mouth."

"That's the place for my master," said honest John. "Whenever this gout is on, he hollers fit to crack all the china in the house, and he makes that faces that 'tis awful to look at. He's at it now," said John Jones, "he was at it when I left, and he'll be at it when I go back; and poor Miss Mary, though she's bad enough herself, she never makes a sound; and though she's on two crutches herself she's always pitying her father. She wouldn't pity him, perhaps, if she knew; but she would, though—she's an angel that would pity any one in trouble, no matter even if they brought it on themselves. She's like the good God Almighty in that. Bless her heart! she'd take his pains on with her own if she could; but I'm glad she can't. And he's brought this attack on himself. I knew how 'twould be when they made him Master of the Company. I said to him when he came home that day, 'Master, for the love of your toe, keep to plain roast and boiled,' but he said 'he must not disgrace the Honourable Company of Toothpickers;' and there he is in his chair, with his leg up, and his spirits down, and himself hollering as loud as he can; and if ever there was an angel on crutches Miss Mary's the one. There she is coaxing him to try this and that, and kissing his forehead and giving him her poor thin hand to squeeze, saying 'that does good to people in pain,' and he's snapping at her like a lobster before 'tis boiled."

"This will quiet him for the present," said the Doctor, and when the man had taken his departure the Doctor sat meditating awhile in his chair—meditating on the Anton family, and also upon his own ideas concerning it. "Poor Anton!" said the Doctor, "and poor Miss Gribble, and poor Mary!—all to be pitied in their own way; and

two to be blamed as well as pitied—their own enemies, poor things! and that, when they might not only not be so, but be other people's friends, and the friends of those who sorely need their friendship. And there's nothing, as we say, really bad in those two—nothing but what may be altered, nothing but what God has given a medicine for. Their bodies can be put all right if they will only give them the chance,

and their minds, which are much more important, can be put right too; and I'm very doubtful whether, if I can do something towards the last, I shan't be doing a good bit also towards the first: I'll see, at any rate. But Mary; her poor body can have little done for it. She's always talking of how soon she'll be off her crutches, and what she'll do then. Poor lambie! she's full of hope, like all of her age. Perhaps 'tis as well she should be. She's 'going to ride over the moors in the

autumn,' and 'to travel all over the world in the winter,' and 'to play lawn-tennis,' and 'go boating,' and this and that—everything but go up in a balloon; and—and," said the Doctor to himself, "if she live, *if* she do, 'tis not these things which are before her, but the operating-table (even if anything could be done for her there), and the bed—cripple-dom in some one, at any rate, of its various forms, and that—that for life: she is one of the 'Incurables.'"

The Doctor covered his face with his two hands and leant his elbows on the table; and, when he looked up again, his eyes were full. He had, in the course of a long practice, often had to pronounce the fatal word "Incurable," which was the declaration of almost as terrible a doom as was the fatal word of the priest of old when he said "Unclean." The strong man knew that it would take all his strength to utter that word when the time came—as, if Mary Anton lived, come it surely would—in which it must be said; and how could he contemplate, without a shudder, that knife-plunge into "hope"—the very heart of life itself!

Many a time when he met with these incurable cases in his practice had Dr. Jacobus said, "Who would be a doctor?" and then, when desperate cases were brought round, he used to make a little change about, and say, "Who would *not* be a doctor?" But there is no denying that cases like that of Mary Anton took it terribly out of the Doctor's feelings, and, perhaps, had something to do with the shade of melancholy which so often passed over his face. For who that thinks at all can feel otherwise than sad—very, very sad—when there comes before his mind the vision of young hopes extinguished, young life crushed, young expectations disappointed, young imaginations proved vain before their time, young yearnings, or aspirations, dropping blighted, as cankered buds falling from the tree!

And, on a bit in life, who can feel but sad to see those who should be strong and in their prime, fighting life's battle, winning life's victories, bearing life's burdens, now nought save problems as to why they were sent on earth; and why, having come to this great grief, they are left on earth: problems at which the sceptic scoffs, at which the philosopher is puzzled, which the divine accepts with reverence as solved in heaven though insoluble on earth!

And yet, on a bit farther still on life's road of suffering, who can see the cheerless old age of pain with its weariness, and tossings, and loneliness, and desertions; the anguish of the body being answered only by the anguish of the mind—deep calling unto deep; the waves and billows not going over and mercifully flooding out life, but rising slowly, a cold and cheerless tide, numbing away inch by inch, until at last the heart in mercy feels the icy touch, and stops its beat! Who

can see all this, and much more than this, and not feel that Heaven has some work for him to do on earth; taking on its behalf some of this misery in hand, until Heaven shall take earth to its bosom once again, and such misery shall be no more!

Doctor Jacobus, I reverence the shade which passed across your face as you thought of Mary Anton's fate in life. I reverence the wincings of every nerve that shrinks at the thought of suffering in all its forms of mind, body, or estate. I reverence the outstretching of every hand, be it brown and horned, or white and jewelled, which opens for its relief.

Doctor Jacobus, in all this you, and, I hope, the reader, and I are one.

CHAPTER II.

There are three little lines which contain in them an immense amount of truth in the way of accounting for many of the evils which man inflicts on his fellow-creatures, and for his leaving undone much of the good which he might have done to them—

"More evil is wrought
By want of thought,
Than is wrought by want of heart."

And these lines—true all round—are, perhaps, so far as extent goes, more exemplified in the "leavings undone," than in the "doings" of life.

We need not go far to find plenty of instances of this; indeed, for the matter of that, need go no farther than the gentleman whom we have before us—grievously afflicted in his toe. Mr. Anton left good undone solely from want of thought. He was not an unkind man, he was not a vicious man; but he was a very busy man, too busy to think of anything but business, and—give him his due—of his little Mary. Mary, money, and his great toe—that terrible toe! that instrument of torture!—formed Mr. Anton's life.

Now Mr. Anton had not what we commonly call "a bad heart," nor was he what we commonly call a bad man. He had a large-print prayer-book and Bible in his pew in church, and Mary found his places for him every Sunday, and he always said "Amen" at the right time; and he followed the services as well as the rise and

fall of certain stocks would allow him. He gave ten solid sovereigns to the ten main charities of the church (out of some £7,000 a year). He wished in the main to do right, and be right; he never wronged a man of a sixpence in his life; but, by reason of his absorption in business, and of the all-engrossing nature of his money thoughts, he was out of touch with humanity, he knew little of his kind; and who can tell how much being "out of touch with humanity" is not also being out of touch with heaven! "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" And so it came to pass that, I will not say there was an amazing mass of misery outside Mr. Anton's range of thought and knowledge—for so is it with us all: none of us know a tithe of life's sorrows even within but a little way of our homes—but that Mr. Anton really knew nothing of life's miseries at all. His little Mary's crutches, his own great toe, were all he knew of human woe.

Mr. Anton was fond of money. There was excitement in getting it, there was a consciousness of power in having it; but as to the real worth of money this man of money was as ignorant as a child. In it he had a book which he could not read; a painting, full of life and art, which was all dust-encrusted, and which he could not see; a vast domain in which he could not walk; immense potentialities of enjoyment for which he had no capacity. A new sense must be woke up in him, before he could really understand anything about that which he thought he understood so well, viz., the *value* of money.

And here I stand up for money; it is one of the grandest things in the world. It is the expression of power, it is its concentration. No doubt there is that (and oh! how much, many a poor heart knows only too well) which it cannot do; but there is much which it can.

It cannot restore the widow's dead, but it can feed her, as the dead would have fed her had he lived. It cannot relax the fingers stiff and cold, so that they should run again through the little one's golden locks, and pat its rosy cheeks; but it can provide that that head be filled with what is wise, and those cheeks pillowed on what is soft!

It cannot open the lips closed for "earthly ever" for all teachings, and guidings, and fatherly restrainings; but it can provide that the orphan be shielded and taught, and brought up for the better life.

It cannot cure the incurable, and untwist his gnarled and knotted destiny, and unrivet the chain, which, forged and welded it may be in former generations, has, by terrible inheritance, crippled the limb, or distorted the spine, or diseased the lung, or deranged the chemistry of life, or broken some cog in its complicated wheels, or taken the strength from some one of its curled springs, making all its machinery

go wrong, because some one rivet has gone loose—turning the body's harmony into a discord, because one string will not answer to the tuner's key.

In the home, in the body, in the heart, you may show the impotence of money, but in all these you may also find its power; and though it owns its impotence in being unable to cure, it asserts its power in being able to relieve.

And so, it pads with cunning skill the iron chain which is riveted on

"the Incurable" for life, that its fetter should less gall the skin; it feeds, with food "convenient for it," the appetite not jaded with satiety, but squeamish with distaste; it lays on the water-bed the aching bones; it rolls out into the sunshine those who, but for it, must have remained always unsunny and unsunned; it says to those who are a heavy burden to others, and themselves, "You shall be drawn aside in peace from the wincings and shrinkings of being unwanted, of being ever in the way."

These things, and the like of these, money can do; and happy is that man who has it, to do with it such things as these—to make it work as it can work, and is willing to work for blessing; happy he whom it makes not the miserable pamperer of self, but the large-handed almoner of God.

This worth of money Mr. Anton knew not—even as many an one knows it not; but his doctor knew it well, and it was a good thing for the patient that he did.

And now Dr. Jacobus Smith's day's work brought him to Mr. Anton's door, and very shortly into the august presence of his great toe.

"Sir," said the Doctor to his patient, after he had listened to a long string of vituperation of that offending member, "you should think sometimes not how bad you are *with* that toe, but how bad you would be *without* it. There are two sides to everything."

"Indeed, Doctor, I don't care to think at all."

"Ah! if you did," said Dr. Jacobus, "you would be much better off than you are; for instance, you would not have taken that turtle and that Madeira at your Company's feast, which have given you this attack of the gout. And you wouldn't worry yourself over your business as you do, as if 'money,' 'money,' were everything; and 'worry,' 'worry'—which is a bad thing, and brings on the gout as much as the turtle, which no doubt you consider a good thing—were nothing. You have more money than you know how to make use of—a deal more than you get money's *worth* for. What good is money to you? There it lies, shut up in mortgages, and debentures, and bonds. It just means so many figures, more or less, in your banker's book, and to be put down in your will, to be left behind you, because you can't take it with you; and no thanks to you for leaving it behind you, for you would take it with you if you could."

"I know the value of money, Doctor, well; if I had not known it I should never have got together as much of it as I have."

"You know one side of it, my friend, and that the poorest side: the 'this world' side, the side that never gave a man happiness; the side that is never seen in heaven, the side that, I am persuaded, will be only too well seen in hell. What do you know of its capacity in your hands, for instance, to alleviate suffering, to bring happiness, to provide for those in want, to bless the unblest, to do what Christ did, to be like Christ? You are 'money-*blind*,' my friend. Look here," said the Doctor, taking two sovereigns out of his pocket, "I can show it to you by a very simple operation, which will not hurt you in the least, and which may do you a great deal of good. Put one of these

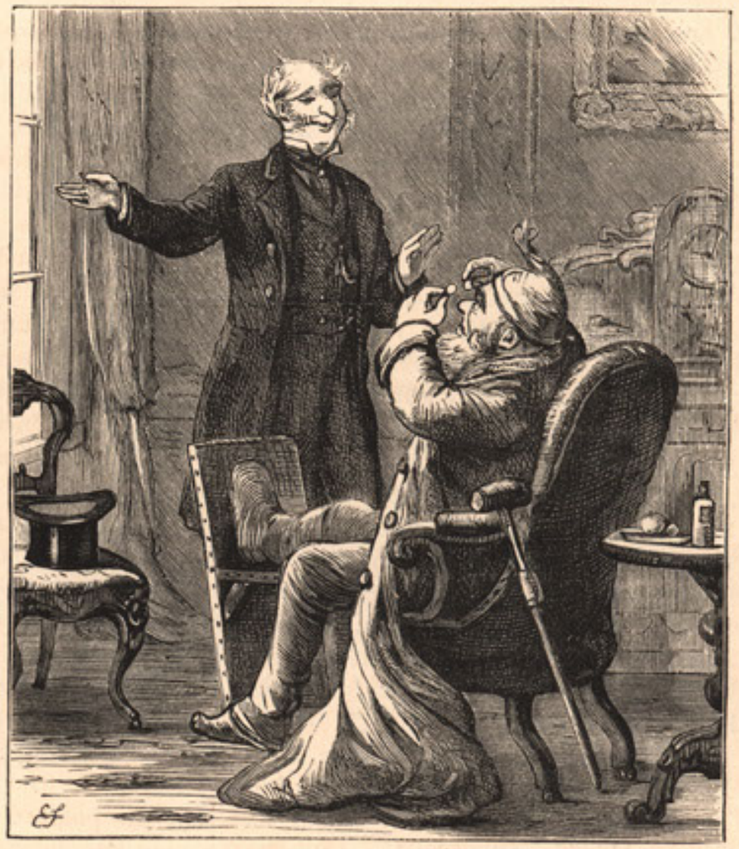
sovereigns in each eye, just like an eyeglass, only quite close. Now what do you see?"

"Nothing," said Mr. Anton.

"What! not the sun streaming into the room?"

"No."

"Nor anything about?"



"No. All is dark nothingness, blackness. If I kept them, gold though they be, long enough in my eyes—if I kept them there, if they were fixed there for ever, they would drive me mad, drive me to despair."

"Hold them there," said the Doctor; "don't stir them until I tell you. Now you see how gold, even a little gold, hugged close to a man, put as the chief thing before his eyes, brought near enough to

him, and kept near enough to him, can shut out heaven and earth from him. You see nothing up there, you see nothing down here. And the man blind with gold is likely to have it thus with him for ever."

"Heaven forbid!" said the Doctor's patient, dropping the sovereigns with horror on the floor.

"Aye, Heaven indeed forbid; but Heaven won't forbid unless you yourself forbid too."

"Well, Doctor, how is a man to see?"

"Why, by looking, of course—by opening his eyes; and, if he wants to see anything particular, or if it is good for him to see anything particular, by going where it is to be seen."

"Have I far to go to see what you think I ought to see?" said Mr. Anton, somewhat alarmed. "You know most of my neighbours here, living in this class of house, must be well off."

"Well, there's misery enough nearer you than you suppose; but I'll tell you what it is. You come to me on Thursday next and I'll drive you to where you'll see plenty of it. I'm going down to Putney, to the Hospital for Incurables, where you'll see misery enough to do you for a good while. The toe will be able to do all the walking you need do there by that time. There's a young person there in whom I am interested, and 'tis a pleasure to me to do, now and again, what I get nothing for. I go to see her, to do myself good as well as her."

And so the Doctor took his leave and proceeded next door to see Miss Gribble.

CHAPTER III.

"Mistress at home?" asked the Doctor of the maid who had flouted Mr. Anton's servant-man in the morning, and who looked as if she had been saying "Them men!" ever since.

"Mistress, sir, you'll remember had the 'stericks this morning," answered the maid.

"But she's well out of them by this time I hope," said the Doctor.

"Well, sir, the medicine, I suppose, did her good; but I think the nursing afterwards——"

"Oh, yes," said the doctor, who knew whom he had to deal with; "I'll go up and see her."

Miss Gribble knew the Doctor's knock, and arranged herself be-

comingly to receive him. It would not do to be seen eating the little bit of lamb chop with peas like small beads which she had been persuaded to allow to be brought up to the drawing-room on a tray, as she was far too ill to go down. The Doctor might not be appreciative enough of her troubles, so she put her knife and fork together on her plate—the way that good little children do their boots when they go

to bed—and she leaned back in her chair, and looked as unlike lamb chop and green peas as she could.

Miss Gribble faintly put out her hand to the Doctor—rather let me say the tips of her fingers—as if she could not bear the whole palm to be touched. Then, with suitable intervals, which were filled up with little gaspings and pantings, she told the Doctor the morning's sad catastrophe.

"Here," said Miss Gribble sadly, "here Doctor, is a melancholy sight—a sight I should have never thought that I should have lived to see," and the lady showed the physician a lock of hair pulled by the dog Fido out of the cat Jenny's tail. "It was cruel, it was ungallant, it was ungentlemanlike," said Miss Gribble. "Ah, Doctor, the world's full of troubles. I'm sure I have my share at any rate. Every day brings its trials, and often but little strength to bear them; little strength, Doctor: the pulse weak, the spirits low, the appetite but poor, there's not much in this world, Doctor, to live for. If only one had something to live for. There's my housemaid going to be married. She's been with me ten years, and she's been engaged to the man she's marrying five; and my maid, Priscilla, says 'tis a shame. She says she wonders people haven't more self-respect. She only wishes one of 'them men,' as she calls them, would give *her* the chance, and she knows what she'd say to them. 'Tis hard, Doctor, that I should be left. And I can't sleep after half-past nine in the morning. I wake, also, and turn a couple of times every night—broken rest, Doctor, which means shattered nerves. And that new coachman! He was late with the brougham yesterday, full three minutes I should say, and the same thing happened last week; and sometimes life seems weary, with no one to care for and nothing to do."

There is an old saying which speaks of "giving a man rope enough and he'll hang himself," and that was precisely what Dr. Jacobus was giving his patient on the present occasion.

He allowed Miss Martha to ramble along on her path of troubles.

The Doctor had long ago diagnosed Miss Martha Gribble; but he had never had such a good chance as the present for administering to her what would be a real medicine for her disease. Here he saw, what, in one form and another and in various degrees, was the curse of so many in the world. Limitation to the small and miserable circle of "self;" the magnifying of small trials, because there were no great ones to overshadow them, and brace up the energies to healthy resolution, and healthy action, and the interest of effort, and the consciousness of a noble out-put of strength and vigour. Here were petulance, always degrading in itself; ingratitude for mercies enjoyed, inappreciation of those mercies in themselves, and as compared with what others have; want of sympathy, because there was no outgoing of self, and from self; it may be, too, partly from ignorance of others' wants, because one's own petty troubles were considered enough.

Miss Gribble had never given Dr. Jacobus such a good opportunity

for really prescribing for her "mind diseased" as she did now, so he availed himself of it; for, for a long time he had earnestly desired to do her good.

"My dear madam," said Dr. Jacobus, "you can be cured of all your troubles—every one—if you will take my advice. But I shan't give it to you, unless you promise to follow it."

"Well, Doctor, that's a serious thing," said Miss Martha, becoming rather "wax"—I will not be so ungallant as to say "tallow-candle" looking; let us say pale, and that will leave room for the imagination. "Suppose, Doctor, you were to propose an operation. I don't mind what stuff I take—but an operation!"

"Well, it is an operation, and a very serious and difficult one; but won't hurt you—at least, not your body. I must take you out of yourself."

A little scream was the proper thing at this juncture, and Miss Gribble made it—a neat little scream which would not have frightened any one, not even Miss Gribble's maid; and which, having come into the world at all, seemed as though it ought to be immediately wrapped in cotton-wool.

"You must be taken out of yourself, my dear madam; you must, for a few hours, at any rate, be taken out of that, and to a hospital——There! there! don't scream again—not to have anything done to you with knife or splint."

"What then, Doctor; can't whatever has to be done, be done here? You see I am calm, for you've promised it won't hurt."

"Will you promise me not to scream, if I tell you?"

"Oh, yes; as you promise it won't hurt me."

"Well, I know it won't hurt your body, for it can't; but I don't know about your mind—your feelings."

"Oh, Doctor, I am so sensitive."

"Yes, for yourself," said Dr. Jacobus, "but the operation is going, I hope, to make you sensitive for others too; and that's what will do you good."

"Well, what are you going to do to me?"

"I'm going to take a cataract off each eye, and I'm going to cure you of double convergent *strabismus*—a frightful kind of squint, by which the two eyes are as one, as it were, turning inward, and always, or mostly always, looking in on one's self. And I am going to cure you of induration—ossification of the heart. I am going to bore holes in each of your ears; and I'm going to stimulate the brain, which is now inclined to coma, in a certain direction. The whole tone of the nervous system I mean to look into, and generally improve; and

when I've done with you—if the hospital has done all it can do, all I hope it will do for you—you'll be quite another woman."

"I should think so," murmured Miss Gribble, mentally and rapidly running over in her mind all the parts of her organism which were about to be treated. "I should think so."

"Your nearest friends will scarcely know you," said the Doctor.

"I should think not," said Miss Gribble dreamily.

"You won't know yourself," said the Doctor. "If there were any looking-glasses which could show people what they are like inside, and if you had one, and looked in it all day, you would never say 'that's Miss Martha Gribble;' you would say, 'Dear me! what a change for the better; what an improvement; who'd have thought it.' You'll *feel different inside*, and things will look *different outside*. The operation will tell all round. I'll come for you in my carriage and take you to the Hospital, and I pledge you my word no one shall touch you."

"Your word is sacred, Doctor?" said the lady inquiringly.

"It has been up to the present," said the Doctor somewhat drily, "and my present intention is that it should continue so. I'll give you a day's notice, and meanwhile I'll just write you a prescription. There, that's only a gentle tonic; but 'twill keep you together until we go to the hospital." And Doctor Jacobus took his leave.

"Now," said the Doctor, as he rolled away in his brougham, "Now I'll do two of my fellow-creatures good, at any rate. There are those two—Mr. Anton and Miss Gribble—always finding fault with one another; and the latter with everybody and everything besides, when they don't fall in with her own whims and fancies for the time. They are both shut up in themselves, only in different ways; and all, because they don't know anything of the keen sufferings and the daily gnawing sufferings of others. There is nothing like a knowledge of these for taking people out of themselves, and blessing them in making them bless others. To the Incurables shall they go, and by the Incurables I hope they will be healed."

Had Mr. Anton realised that his little Mary was herself an Incurable, it may be that his heart would have been opened without the need of seeing misery more acute; perhaps then he would have felt for others, when the sorrow of the Incurable was brought home to himself; but he had to learn—well! we shall see; but at present life was to him his little Mary, his banker's book, and occasionally, but only occasionally, his toe. For as yet Dr. Jacobus had given no hint that his child's disease was incurable. The crutches had only come on within the last week, and were supposed to be merely temporary. Mr.

Anton had unlimited faith in the power of money, and money could cure his Mary in the end. The father would have no gloomy thoughts. Why need he? His child was young, she should have all the skill, and every advantage, that money could get her. But we shall see.

CHAPTER IV.

The first to visit the Hospital for Incurables was the lady patient. Miss Martha Gribble, strong in the assurances of the Doctor's good faith; yet having, it must be confessed, the shadow of the shade of a quaver in some remote nerve of her being, resigned herself to her physician's hands to be taken by him to the hospital.

The vision of high brick walls, and something of the nature of a prison was in her imagination, but this was dispelled as she found herself leaving London behind; and, as she got more and more into the country, even the one gently quaking far-off nerve began to get still. Miss Martha was resigned; moreover, she had faith—faith in the Doctor; and resignation and faith are fine things for the nerves.

At last the doctor's carriage turned aside from an extensive common along which it had been rolling, went down a shady road, and, hard by a church, was pulled up at what appeared to be the entrance gates of a gentleman's place of some pretensions.

In it rolled, and Miss Gribble soon saw before her what appeared to be a palace; and in truth by that name had it been called—"The Palace of Pain."

In front of it stood two huge trees on the lawn, like sentinels on duty, and around it were other trees, the abode of rooks, which, at the moment of Miss Gribble's visit, appeared to be engaged in a contested election; but, in point of fact, they were engaged in a much more peaceful occupation, the truth being that various nursery duties were being performed—the papa rook arriving with grubs, and mamma rook dividing the dainties, share and share alike, as evenly as she could. Perhaps the paterfamilias was also, with his most insinuating caw, offering the daintiest grub to his mate, who had chanced the greatest of all risks, and taken him (for that season, at any rate), "for better or worse." Let us have faith that he was doing this, and faith in the flavour of the selected grub, and believe that it was for the better. I believe in the daintiest grub being kept for

mamma rook. Alas! how many papa rooks in the world gobble it up themselves!

"Now, my friend," said Dr. Jacobus to Miss Gribble, as they drew up at the door of the great building, which, as I have already said, has been aptly called "The Palace of Pain"—"now you are going to enter an hospital where you will see *real* suffering—an hospital, different from others; for whereas they are for the cure of disease, this is for those who cannot be cured: it is the 'Hospital for

Incurables.' In one sense, in so far as the body is concerned, the inscription over these doors might be, in the words of the poet—

'Hope comes not here, which comes to all beside.'

I want you particularly to mark all you see, and by-and-by I will tell you why. And you must remember that, although you can see to-day but a very little of the misery which these walls contain; even the whole, supposing you could see it, would be but a part of what

it has to do with, for its pensioners of pain are all over the kingdom. Therefore, when you see one and another, and mark their sufferings, and, I may joyfully add, their alleviations here, so far as these are possible, say to yourself, 'And these are to be multiplied many hundred times over'—yes, many times, by what the hospital relieves out of doors, and by what it *would* relieve if it had the means."

Had there lingered in Miss Gribble's mind any fear of any bodily operation, it would have been quite dispelled by the appearance of the place she now found herself in.

All around bore the impress of a "home"—all seemed peace. The Honourable Rook might not only now be returned and Rookstown have settled down into quiet again, after his having congratulated his fellow rooks upon their joint victory, and acknowledged

the gentlerooklike fashion in which his opponent had carried on the contest; but might even have been returned without a contest at all; so quiet, so peaceful was everything around.

And not only around, but outside. The Doctor had asked Miss Gribble to excuse him for ten minutes, while he departed with the Matron to have a professional look at his patient in the hospital; and the lady was left in the home-like sitting-room alone.

She looked out of the window, and there, under the trees, she saw couches, and semi-perambulators, and demi-semi ones, and contrivances of all sorts for locomotion and for rest; and living beings in them, and on them, and attached to them, and clinging to them. Then she saw crutches, and sticks, and loaned stout arms; and painfully, and wearily, she saw some creep, and some hobble, and some waddle along.

She could not but think how briskly she herself was able to walk; how for whole hours she had been able to go about the Academy, and this exhibition and that; how her company was not that of fellow-sufferers, but of folk strong and well. And the thought came into her mind, what should *she* do, if she were tied and bound, even amid these pleasant surroundings of grass, and trees, and walks, with the sight and companionship of suffering all day long, all weeks long, all months long, all years long—to her, so far as this life was concerned, "world without end"?

Miss Gribble shivered. The first touch of the lancet had pricked her skin, the Doctor's operation had begun.

But now the Doctor himself appeared, and with him the Matron, a lady who evidently knew not only "what's what," but, if I might so speak, "how's how,"—*i.e.*, what should be done, and how it should be done, too; and by reason of the head being thus right, the various members of the body were kept right too.

"Now, Miss Gribble, I am at your service; and I am anxious that you should see some of the sad family, who inhabit this Palace of Pain: sad in one respect, in that they have suffering continually, and never can be cured of it; but happy in another sense, in that they have such alleviations as their case admits of, and in that they are drawn aside from the pushings and turmoilings of life, in which they must have been neglected, and, perhaps, injured and crushed."

Then the Doctor and Miss Gribble, under the Matron's guidance, started for their little tour through as much of the hospital as time would admit of their seeing.

Tap, tap, at a door. "Come in," said a cheery voice, and the Doctor and Miss Gribble entered. The room was the comfortable

apartment of one who might be supposed to have had a competency, a sufficiency, for all reasonable needs of respectable life. There was one what I shall call *full-length* bed in it, and in the window was a child's crib or cot, and in it a portion at least of a full-grown woman. Around were many little knick-knacks, cheap but tasteful, the gift of one and another of the friends who visited the occupant of the crib

from time to time. But the crib proprietor was the one point of interest. She might have been said to live up amongst the rooks, for her room was in the topmost part of the house; and possibly she might have caught a little of her liveliness from them. But 'twixt her and them there was a great difference indeed. Away they flew in the wide expanse of heaven, she was bound down to the four corners of her little crib—she, *i.e.*, her body, but not herself; for away sped her

spirit in flights farther than feathered fowl could reach. The crib was the crib of her body, but it was not the prison-house of her soul. This was a case of spinal contraction, and the mystery of where the rest of the body below the trunk was to be found was solved by the patient herself, who told her visitors that one leg was laid at right-angles across the body, and the other one was doubled up under her.

"But not much pain, I hope," said Miss Gribble.

"Ah! pain—the pain of a tooth coming out of the back."

Now, whatever view you choose to take of this expression, good reader—whether you take the view of the tooth being cut as in infancy, or drawn as in mature age—the idea is one suggestive of acute suffering. But the idea intended to be conveyed was that of the tooth being *drawn*, and that, not under the influence of an anæsthetic, but with the full consciousness of pain.

I remember an eminent divine describing his pain as "the tooth-ache in his back:" but this was like the tooth being taken out.

Our friend in the cot is now thirty-four, and since the age of seventeen has been one of the inhabitants of the Palace of Pain.

"But you get to sleep at night," said Miss Gribble, "and I daresay feel nothing of it again until the morning: that must be a blessing."

"It would be a blessing if I had it, but I am often awake *all* night."

"All night!" echoed Miss Gribble, throwing up her hands, and this time making her little scream entirely internally.

"All night," again said the invalid cheerfully, and it was true.

"Tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," was not for her, and the tooth was ever coming out of the back, ever coming all the live-long night, but would never come.

The noisy rooks hard by slept their sleep, resting their folded wings; the labouring man slept his sleep, resting his weary muscles; and the man of the pen slept his sleep, resting his wearier brain; but all night long this watcher with her pain counted the hours as they went by, coming and going, and bringing no rest to her. And Miss Gribble thought of herself, how that almost to turn in her bed seemed a grievance; and she might have followed out still further her line of thought had it not been that the little bit of a woman in the crib began to make some chirpy sounds as if she had been a lark just up, and washed and dressed for the day after a good night's rest and a first-class breakfast besides. Our little friend did not want much egging on—she was a self-winding musical-box, always wound up and ready to start off with some cheerful tune, with variations, as soon as anyone touched the spring.

"I couldn't tell you how kind they are. I wish you could see my dear mother, as I call her—the head nurse on this floor. I love her more and more every day."

And in truth our little friend had good reason to do so, for that good nurse treated her as a little bantling to be dealt with very tenderly. Whether she ever punished her if she were naughty, and whether she ever were naughty, and in what such naughtiness could consist, and how she was to be punished—for it was manifest she could not be put in the corner, or come to any such-like extremities—I never could find out. She looked to me, when I saw her, as if she were always good; and if the nurse—the good mother—did keep a rod in pickle, why, in pickle it might remain.

Miss Gribble was a great reader. Light literature was what she generally affected—literature which touched the feelings, and pointed frequently in the direction of the "'stericks" of which her maid was the special guardian—so now she suggested to our demi-semi woman in the cot that, she must no doubt while away much of her time with reading.

"Ah! many a day I can't read."

"And what do you do then? How do you get through the time?"

"I just lie still and think—think of all God's mercies."

To think at all, to think in pain, to think under such circumstances of "mercies," was all a complete puzzle to the little woman's visitor. Mercies, mercies! with the toothache in one's back, with one's legs twisted up before one, and behind one, and corkscrewing about in every direction but the right one! "Mercies," indeed! while one is lying awake, too, all night; and with a rush there came sweeping into Miss Gribble's mind what *she* had and what this fellow-creature had not—the freedom from pain, the sleep, the power to read (though that was not often well employed), the power to go about and enjoy life. And never had she thought of helping such sufferers as this; indeed, never had she taken the trouble to think of sufferers at all. All the world might have been playing leap-frog for what she knew. Of sufferers "cribbed, cabined, and confined," like the one now before her, she had known nothing; and the thought flashed across her mind whether she would let this go on, and would not be a helper to the helpless for the time to come.

The Doctor, who had also joined a little in the conversation, was now obliged abruptly to bring his visit to an end. The nurse brought in a telegram addressed to him.

"This is the way, you see, Miss Gribble; we doctors are never our own masters for an hour. Of course when I left home for the day I had to leave word where I was to be found, and here is a telegram which calls me away as quickly as I can go. I am so sorry your visit should be cut so short. But what would you say to staying? I can get home faster by the train than if I drive: let me leave the brougham for you."

Miss Gribble, somewhat to the Doctor's astonishment, elected to stay. The silken thread of sympathy for the sufferings of her fellow-creatures was beginning to twine itself around her heart; the milk of human kindness was beginning to secrete itself with life-warmth from mysterious glands, the existence of which she had never known before. She was on her way to something more useful and more blessed than "'stericks"—to helpfulness, and blessing-giving, and love.

Miss Gribble felt quite safe in the hospital, and that she would be so in the brougham, and finally on her own doorstep when she got out; and so she sat down again by the little woman's cot.

"You don't know," said the twisted woman, "how much I long to come." To "go" perhaps she should have said: we should have said to "go," meaning to go away from all earth's sufferings—away to heaven; but what she did say was "come."

I like to think of that word "come." It seems to me as if she had been accustomed to talk with Christ, and as if *He* were so one with her that it would not be so much "going away" as "coming to." There is a drawing sound about "come" that makes death as nothing; it is as it were a voice to our will, even in death; as though ours was an invitation, not a command to die; as though we had a vision of the Holy One beckoning us to Himself.

I set down that word "come," good reader, with care. "Go" might mean anywhere; "come" means "unto Himself." When my last summons is sent forth may it be with that one word "Come." When to love's last whispers the failing ear is dulled, may it be quick to hearing a whisper softer than the softest of human love saying, "Come;" and though none around my bed can interpret what the moving yet the silent lip would say, my Lord will give it sound unto Himself, and hear it saying, "O, Lord! I come—I come."

"Nothing to live for," "weariness," and "prostration," and "pain." "Oh, the nights *do* seem so long!" "But," said the little creature, "from the highest to the lowest, they try to take the bitterness out of life. If the assistant nurse were my own sister, she could not be kinder."

"Taking the bitterness out of life!" Miss Gribble was in the mood for taking in ideas—indeed, it would not have been much good for her not to have been—for ideas seemed to be in the mood to push themselves in, if they were not taken in. They did not appear by any means to have their company manners on, or to be going about

in their Sunday clothes. They were at work, and their work at present was to enter Miss Gribble's head and heart, and give her new thoughts and new feelings, and, I am bound to say, a new life of satisfaction for the rest of her days.

CHAPTER V.

We little know what blessings we have ourselves until we see others suffering from the want of what we have so abundantly, and Miss Gribble began to reflect on how much she had which this poor creature had not, and how thankful this poor creature was for the little she had, while she herself was unthankful for the much which *she* had; and Miss Gribble began to feel serious, very serious indeed. She was feeling that she was not at all up to the mark of what she ought to be in thankfulness; aye, and in showing her thankfulness in a practical way. And these ideas were confirmed by her further progress through the building. "Schools of cookery," "schools of art," this school, that school: they are abounding all over the country; but here, in this great building, were many schools. In fact, the Hospital for Incurables might be said to be a university, with many colleges and schools attached to it, or rather contained within it. Here are schools for the head, and for the heart, and for the life; schools to teach thought and thoughtfulness, to teach gratitude, and liberality, and patience, so that he who learns in them aright will be grateful for his own immunity from great suffering, and will bear with patience life's little frets and ills, from which there is no escape; and will succour those who are struck down hopelessly, and for their "earthly ever," with what might have come, but has not come, on himself.

Enter your name, good reader, as a candidate for matriculation in this university. Come down to this hospital; let its corridors be your cloisters, its wards your lecture-rooms, its beds your books, with text and commentaries on the deep mysteries of God, on the call of Heaven, which, in all directions, comes to us to mitigate the direfulness of human woe; on the blessings within your reach of whiling away one of the lonely hours which *you* know not; and soothing one of the pains which *you* feel not; and lightening one of the gloomy outlooks which *you* see not. Here you may become a great scholar in the humanities, and, leaving a blessing for others, may go forth into the world with a heart so softened and taught, as to be a life-long blessing to them and to yourselves.

Miss Gribble having, so to speak, entered at this university, proceeded diligently with her books. She no sooner laid down one than she took up another. The literature of suffering, unwritten indeed

with pen and ink, is to be found lined on many a human face; but here was a whole library of it, in many volumes, great and small; in many editions, old and new; on pages whose twisted characters seem hard to be deciphered, and all the more because they were blurred with human tears.

But our friend had a certain amount of determination of her own. Indeed, if she were determined to go into the "'stericks" she would;

and, moreover, if she were determined to come out of them she would; but things were altogether too practical here for anything of this kind; and I merely mention them incidentally, to help the reader to form an estimate of what Miss Gribble really was.

The little smattering of the literature of pain which she had picked up in the wards and looks of the twisted sufferer whom she had just left, made our friend desirous of learning a little more in the same direction. So she took down, so to speak, another volume of this sad

subject, and it did not disappoint her. It, too, had its own sorrowful and mysterious tale to tell.

Yes, mysterious here on earth; for who can tell why this poor creature, and many another in this house of pain, should suffer thus, and why Miss Gribble (save and except her self-made "'stericks") should not suffer at all?—why *you*, good reader, are not in this sick one's place, and suffering all day long?

Miss Gribble sat by this invalid's—this Incurable's—bedside, and, following our idea of Miss Gribble being in college, and studying for a high degree, proceeded, in the prosecution of her studies, to turn over the leaves of her book; not, however, without her making herself mistress (I beg the nineteenth century ladies' pardon—"*master*") of the contents of each as she went along.

Thirty-four years ill! There was a study; and that was the first page of Miss Gribble's new book. "Nearly a lifetime, and I," said Miss Gribble to herself, though she wouldn't on any account have said it out loud, "am forty-eight, and I never had a real day's illness in my life. Why, if I were like this poor creature, I must have been ill ever since I was thirteen!" Then there flashed through the mind of this new student of pain all the places she had been in during thirty-five years—where she had travelled, the sea-side places which she had visited, the fêtes, and garden and lawn-tennis parties she had been at, to say nothing of carriage drives, and afternoon teas, and entertainments by the score. They all seemed to come before her at once, just as a man's whole life does in a few moments when he is drowning; and then she was immediately recalled to herself by the presence of another suffering object before her.

"And I have been twenty-five years *here*."

"That's a blessed alleviation of all this suffering," thought Miss Gribble. "Why the twenty-five would have been like seventy-five but for this blessed help."

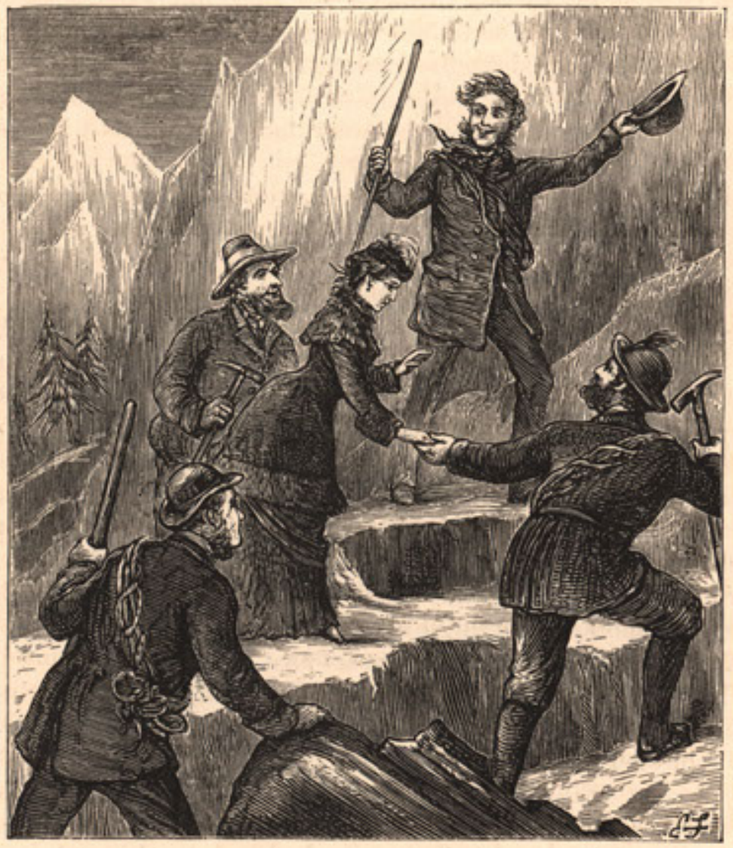
"And what's the matter with that hand?" asked Miss Gribble in a sympathetic voice, for already she had learned a little of this; and, having left all her "'stericks" in town, she was going in for the realities of things.

"I can't shut it. The fingers are all weak; but oh, how useful it is," said the Incurable, not disparaging the damaged member for its inabilities, but making much of the little it could do. "I just fell on it years upon years ago, and it is crippled ever since."

Miss Gribble had on lavender-coloured kid gloves, which, to their great astonishment, found themselves expanding in fan-like forms on the fingers, which spread-eagle movement only terminated by the

thumbs apparently engaging in a Scotch reel, which would have won universal admiration had there been any spectators to applaud.

These eccentric motions were caused by nervous communications from Miss Gribble's brain, saying to the muscles concerned, "Just see how different *your* case is—feel what *you* can do, and be thankful for *your* hands."



The excitement, which we have just heard of in Miss Gribble's fingers, was destined to proceed yet farther and agitate her toes. By the natural laws of gravity it descended; and, I suppose, because it could go no farther, terminated its career in them.

"Well," said Miss Gribble, "it is very bad to have one's hand in such a crippled state, but what a mercy to have one's legs!"

"But I have not mine," said the Incurable. "One of my feet has

been amputated. I have had the bone taken out; there has been an abscess in the bone. The leg has been laid open again, and I have had these same bad abscesses in the hip."

Involuntarily, almost I might say unknown to herself, Miss Gribble's ten toes set off. Being to some extent imprisoned, they could not indulge in the expansions and gyrations of her fingers; moreover, their habits in life being of a more prosaic nature they were not likely to do so even if they could; still they did wriggle sufficiently for self-assurance, to make themselves certain of their existence and their powers. Yes, they were all right; the whole ten were there—five on one foot and five on the other, according to the usual arrangements of nature. And her heels were there, one on each foot, each in its proper place, at least so far as her fashionable boots would let them be; and the insteps— Well, Miss Gribble believed in insteps—in insteps generally; and as faith turns over sometimes, alas! into credulity, in her own in particular, they too were all right; and as Miss Gribble had for many years attached great importance to the instep as a part of the human frame, that was a great comfort.

"But," thought Miss Gribble, "*I* might have been without any of these, or at any rate without half of them—five toes, one heel, and one instep; seven blessings might have been all gone, and *I*—" Then the drowning-remembrance process was renewed, and Miss Gribble remembered how she had whirled about in dances; and, with the aid of a never-to-be-forgotten American at one side of her and an equally never-to-be-forgotten Australian at the other, with a dear Irish gentleman in front and an equally dear English gentleman behind, she had climbed a little bit of Mont Blanc; and how, as a girl, she had skipped and run races. "And now, now," said something inside, "do something for those in this place who for many a year have not had what you have been having during your whole life."

Another page of this book of suffering revealed "inflammation of the eye," and yet another "abscess in the ear"—those organs so near the brain, until at last the poor student closed this volume, and felt that in this one tale of suffering she had had nearly enough for the day. But, conducted by the lady in charge, she looked in from bed to bed, ever to hear (in varied form, no doubt) the same long tale of pain and suffering; and that, with little hope of alleviation and none of cure. Indeed, Miss Gribble's spirits would have gone down to some Arctic temperature, until the mercury, in its efforts to get low enough, would have tumbled out of the bottom of the thermometer, had it not been that she now came on a room where one of the chirpiest little creatures could be found.

In this room lived two patients, one of whom was almost hermetically sealed—entirely cut off from the outer world,—inasmuch as she was deaf and blind; and though she could speak, yet it was very indistinctly, so that unless there were someone, as the Apostle says, "to interpret," she was, to a certain extent, speaking in an unknown tongue. This little woman did her locomotion, such as it was, in a

tumbly, roly-poly kind of way, evidently, however to her own satisfaction, to judge by the cheerfulness of her countenance. Here, with another invalid, who had become her friend indeed, lived this fragment of humanity, with both knees dislocated! deaf! deformed! blind!

Now, if one were to read this catalogue of misery and say, "that's Chirpy," the natural question would be "if that's Chirpy, what must Growly be?" But it was wonderful, in this place, how much chirpiness

there was, owing to good treatment, and kind thoughtfulness, and care. Forty-nine years had passed over the head of our poor friend, and ten of them she had spent in the Hospital for Incurables; and blind, deaf, deformed, dislocated as she was, I have no hesitation in affirming that, it would be good for many who can see and hear (sometimes both too much), and who can hold themselves up as straight as a poker, if they had half the internal happiness which a contented and pious mind gave this poor, afflicted, and incurable child of suffering.

Nothing had she to say to her visitor but what was pleasant. Here was she sheltered and shaded, here was she drawn aside from the rush and ruck of a world which always drives the weak and weary to the wall. Here had she found a friend in the person of a fellow-incurable, who not only talked to her on her hand, which she outstretched for the purpose, but who actually read her, in this way, parts of the magazine, getting through at the rate of about ten minutes to a column.

And so this piece of what the world would call "good-for-nothingness" lived happy and contented, to the great astonishment of Miss Gribble, and, I am happy to say, to her great appreciation of it all also. And when the little tumbly-about woman insisted on giving Miss Gribble a text before she left, and that text was "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name," it was altogether too much for that lady, whose heart said within her, "Thou hast not blessed the Lord, and nothing within thee hath praised His holy name!" and as she said to herself, "Where would this poor creature have been had there not been provided such a place as this?" and as she pictured her to herself knocked about here, not wanted there, shoved into this corner, tumbled out of that, and then looked at her, housed, and happy, and grateful, she said, "The Incurable need not of necessity be unhappy: I will try and assuage the lot of some, and give them some portion at least of the comfort I have so abundantly myself." And so, gladdening the heart of our poor little friend, which same heart was neither dislocated, nor blind, nor deformed, nor deaf, by the order for an antimacassar from the fingers which might be said to read the magazines, Miss Gribble ended her day's studies, and in the Doctor's brougham took herself home again.

That visit to the Hospital for Incurables changed the whole tenor of Miss Gribble's life: it filled her brain with new thoughts, her heart with new affections. Her horizon enlarged, her "'stericks" collapsed; and when "Self" took the bit between its teeth and tried to bolt with her, as more than once it did, she started the Incurables

in the race, and they came in not by a head, or half a head, or a fore-quarter, or a tail, but in a canter; and "Self" pulled up a mile from home, lame and broken-winded, and with its jockey thrown, his bones dislocated and his teeth almost shaken out of his head, and the poor animal not likely to be able to run again for some time, and obliged to be scratched for sundry other engagements which it had.

The fact is Miss Gribble was being cured by an Incurable, and if anything of her old maladies seemed to try to settle on her again, she found a visit to the Hospital—a dose (so to speak) of Incurables—the best medicine in the world; and she was heard even to declare that, "she never felt so well any day in the year, as the one in which she signed her little cheque for them." This little operation acted as a kind of tonic on her whole system, making her feel doubly happy—happy once, because she could help these poor Incurables, and twice, because she was not an Incurable herself.

CHAPTER VI.

I ought not to have run on like this, using up all my paper on our friend Miss Gribble, even though it be to tell you of such an excellent result, and how it all came about, seeing that the reader will, I hope, want to know what became of her brother-in-law, Mr. Anton, and his dear little daughter, and his terrible and tormenting toe.

It was all very well for Dr. Jacobus to say he would take his patient here or there next Thursday; there was someone else to be consulted on that matter, who would have a say on it, and who would not take "nay" for an answer. They say that that's how some people get married, they won't take "no" for an answer; though, I am told, some people live long enough to wish they had.

However, this toe said "NO! NO!" and it was a full fortnight before Mr. Anton was able to start. The whole thing seemed to him a very strange kind of affair. He could understand pill and draught, though if he had his choice he would rather not have had anything to do with them; and he could understand being sent off for a course of waters, or even for a change of air; but just to be whisked down to a particular place for a bit of a day and back again, and to be assured that great good would probably be the result, was more than he could quite take in.

However, Dr. Jacobus had so often done him good, and was so

implicitly to be relied on, Mr. Anton made up his mind to do as he had been directed.

The Doctor went with his patient, and found the same noble edifice which his sister had found there three or four weeks before. Not a brick had stirred; there it stood in its noble, simple grandeur—a veritable "Palace of Pain" as it has already been designated by one of its friends, now, alas! no more.

The same rooks there, only most of the young ones were now short-coated; and whatever disputations were going on aloft were probably between fond mothers, each one thinking her own the blackest, and claiming pre-eminence for its own little dear.

But all within was as still as ever. The same folk there—the same suffering, holding within itself the capacity for the same teaching.

"Now, Mr. Anton, what I want you to do is to roam about here until five o'clock—it is one now—and I want you to pick up what you can of the life of the people here. Your doing so will do you good in many ways, and your gout will be better for it. You may possibly, if you take in all you see, escape some fits altogether; and, when they cannot be escaped, they may be greatly lightened."

And the Doctor was in sober earnest. "If I can get this patient of mine to divert his thoughts from that everlasting subject of money, and from the worries and annoyances connected with it; if I can teach him at once the power and the impotence of money; if I can put his mind on new rails, I shall be doing him good, both in body and in soul."

Left to himself, Mr. Anton thought he would first take a turn round the grounds, partly to gather himself up so as to meet the new situation in which he found himself, and partly to think how he was to proceed.

But he was not left long in doubt. Scarcely had he emerged from the portico, before he was met by a gentleman, who, if the truth were known, had been lying in wait for him ever since the Doctor left, and that by the Doctor's own desire. He was a gentleman who took a great interest in the Institution and its patients, and visited it continually. Indeed, it was the chief pleasure of his life to be officially connected with it. He was evidently the right man in the right place, no "square man in a round hole," or, if you like to turn it round and look at it the other way, personally I have no objection: no "round man in a square hole." It was plain that he was acquainted with every nook and corner of the place, and with every individual in it. He was well up in everyone's pains, and in the long story of their trials, and could have passed an examination in legs, and arms, and nerves, and

spines, and all the mechanism of torture—mind and body—which would have astonished the examiners, and certainly eventuated in a high wranglership at least.

This little man had been told by Dr. Jacobus to introduce himself to Mr. Anton, and to be barnacle to him as long as he was inside the Hospital's walls.

"Sir," said the little man, after, in true English fashion, he had made some observations on the weather, "this is a wonderful place. I

often think it ought to be at South Kensington. We could show more wonderful sights here than they can there—sights, sir, in the living, breathing human subjects—only I am afraid, sir, no one would come to see us, or at least very few, even though the entrance were gratuitous, and we made them a present of a first-class return railway ticket; and no one would come at all if they had to pay a shilling. Season tickets, sir, would be out of the question. Now, sir, with your permission, we will first take a stroll round the outside of the grounds,

and then—then we will take a look in, and see what is going on inside."

Mr. Anton, feeling himself hopelessly at sea, thought, as a practical man, that he could do no better than surrender himself helplessly to the steering of one who evidently knew all about the place, and carried, so to speak, compass, and chart, and wheel all complete in his head.

"This, sir," said Mr. Anton's guide, "this, is our farm. Here we keep cows, feed pigs, and rear fowls, and lay eggs, and grow potatoes; and here, down this garden, grow our vegetables. You see it is of great importance to invalids to have these things fresh—milk and vegetables, which some cases imperatively require. And we make it pay, sir; bad as times are with farmers generally, we make our little place answer. We are obliged to feed our patients upon such food as their complaints require."

"Any turtle?" said Mr. Anton, rather jocularly.

"Turtle, turtle—let me see," said the little man, and he put his finger on his forehead and dropped into a meditative mood, apparently endeavouring to recall some far distant past. At last he broke silence and said, "It was in the year one thousand eight hundred and seventy, just sixteen years ago, that we purchased one pint of turtle soup and three bottles of old port wine for a particular patient. That turtle was consumed at the rate of two tea-spoonfuls a day, and the port wine at the rate of four. It was a peculiar case, but it was pulled through, and the Doctor said 'the turtle did it.'

"Sir," said the little man, not only treading upon the toes of his companion's conscience, but dancing a hornpipe on every corn on them, "if people who gobble turtle and swill themselves with port wine and champagne, and no one knows what, knew what might be done with the better use of these things, and of the money with which those things were bought, they would gobble less and give more. We, and such as we here, should be the better outside, and they would be the better inside. Aye, if even they said, one day a week, or one day a month, or one day in the quarter, 'We will have a boiled leg of mutton and trimmings to-day, and no more but a nice pudding,' and gave the price of that dinner (I mean what they otherwise would have had) to our Incurables here, what a heap of good they would do! Why, sir, I believe that the west end of London alone could support us on the price of the unnecessary part of one dinner a year from each house."

"Only to think of one pint of turtle doing so much good!" said Mr. Anton, who in his time had drunk almost enough to swim in.

"And to think of how many pints do so much harm," chimed in the

little man; "gout, indigestion, headache, liver-money, back-money, head-money, stomach-money, temper-money. But about that pint, the only one we ever had here, we didn't really come to the end of it for, I may say, ten years: for what with my asking after her 'flippers,' as we used always to call her poor hands, and asking her 'which she was to-day, calipash or calipee?' and our little jokes about a turtle-dove, we carried it on for ten years, always with a smile and a laugh; and you know," said the little man in a half-confidential whisper, "we catch at these things here—we make lots of things out of nothing. I wouldn't mind, now, giving ten shillings for a good new joke—one that would wear well, and when 'twas worn out could be soled and heeled, or turned, or dyed, or in some way or other come out fresh. Sometimes I'm hard put to it," said the little man, "but when I see this tired one, and that drooping one, I say to myself, 'It will never do to let you go down like this,' and something turns up. I try to get a smile or laugh wherever I go."

"'Tis very quiet here," observed the visitor, as the two sat down under a large tree, "very restful; but I don't know that I should like it altogether. I like the excitement and bustle of business."

"Ah! but the excitement and the bustle are the very things we want to avoid here. How should you like to have a sledge-hammer banging on your head, or a red-hot pair of tongs pulling at your nerves, or the everlasting rattle of two trains crossing each other in a tunnel, and you sitting on the buffer of the engine of one of them, or on the buffers of the engines of both of them—how should you like that all day and all night? And that's what noise and bustle would be to the poor creatures we have here. Look up at that window. In that room lies a poor creature who could be disturbed even by a feather's touch; the dust floating about in the summer's sunbeam is almost too much for her; all the nerves are preternaturally alive. Imagine the torment to such an one in the noise of some little house with children, perhaps twins, screaming, and screeching, and cater-wauling, and a sewing-machine going, and perhaps parents scolding, and every sound sawing and pincering and gimlet-holing and red-hot-pokering her brain and nerves."

"Awful!" said Mr. Anton. "You don't mean to say you have anything like that here?"

"Aye, indeed; and what's more, we have it protracted year after year, and that without any prospect of its ever being got rid of, ever—ever—ever."

"What, never?" chimed in the visitor.

"Never, never, never," said the little man; "world without end,

that is, *this* world; but, blessed be God! there is a world to come, in which there shall be no more pain, and no more crying, for God Himself shall wipe away all tears from the eyes."

"I screech, and holloa, and shout," said Mr. Anton, "when I have the gout; I should go mad, if I had it as this poor creature has her pains."

"And if you were driven to go to the city, and be badgered about there while you were in your suffering; and moreover, if you knew you never could get out of it, what then?"

Mr. Anton put his forefinger pointedly to his ear and made a double clicking sound, such as a revolver makes when it is being cocked, and then—though I don't know exactly how he did it—a curious kind of noise with his tongue, by which I verily believe

he meant to bring before the mind the idea of that revolver going off.

The little man, who was as sharp as a needle, took in the idea at once. "Yes, yes," said he, "I see it; *you* couldn't stand for a little while even, as much as our poor patients have to stand for a lifetime."

"I suppose they are all women," said Mr. Anton, "women can bear pain much better than men; and 'tis not so bad for a woman to be bowled over as a man—a business man, for instance. You don't have any such here?"

"Well, what do you call a business man?"

"Now, a banker, for instance," said Mr. Anton, flying as high as he could, and stumping up his little friend as he thought, to a dead certainty. "You haven't anyone here from Lombard Street, have you?"

Here the little man pulled out of his pocket an ivory kind of opera-glass, only it was single, and more of the telescope nature. Indeed, I should have called it a telescope, but that I might be thought to be making fun of it, seeing when it was pulled out to its full length and, so to speak, stood on tip-toe, it was not more than two and a half inches long. With this our energetic little friend swept the horizon of the grounds of the hospital, and finally pulled up at a black speck. "There," said he, pointing in the direction of the speck, "there is a man. Now, sir, do me the favour to look through this glass; adjust it to suit your own sight. Now what do you see?"

"A little old man."

"And what else?"

"Nothing else."

"Oh yes, you see a banker—that's a *banker*."

"A banker!" ejaculated, Mr. Anton, throwing up his two arms in astonishment. "What! a banker here?"

In truth the visitor to the Hospital for Incurables could not understand such a thing as a banker being there. A retired banker was associated in his mind with the enjoyment of life and luxury in his old age; but to find one actually the recipient of his fellow creatures' charity, was shocking to all his sense of business propriety.

"There, sir, £5,000 a-year *was*, and there, sir, *is*—*is* nothing a-year: the three last figures without the first."

"Surely there must be something wrong," said the visitor, who was safe, as he thought, in the chain-armour of his own prudence, rectitude and good-luck.

"Nothing wrong," said the little man. "In one day that gentleman—for gentleman he is—lost all. He had his magnificent establishment, as other bankers have, and in one day he was ruined, and that without

any fault at all of his own; he had no more to do with his own ruin than you have."

"Then how was it?" said Mr. Anton, his eyes opening wide, and his hands twitching a good deal, for a horrible thought came across his mind—what, if by any possibility a like trouble came on him!

"He couldn't help the Franco-German war, could he?" asked the little man.

"No, sir, certainly not."

"Nor the siege of Paris?"

"Certainly not."

"Nor the upset that gave to business, and credit, and everything else?"

"Certainly not."

"Then, sir, by no fault of his own is he here. The state of things in that siege ruined him; his debtors were unable to pay, and now, in pain and old age, he finds his home and shelter here."

"Let me sit down," said Mr. Anton, "I feel very bad inside. A banker! all in a day! not his own fault! dependent now on charity! I should be the better, sir, for a glass of wine," and in a swimming feeling which took possession of his brain, the rich man saw all his own bonds and bills, and mortgages and shares, and ground rents, and no one knows what, together with his freehold house, and consumable stores, float off no one knows where, but decidedly, very decidedly, away *from him*.

Doctor Jacobus! Dr. Jacobus! you have been giving this man very strong medicine—a strong dose, Dr. Jacobus; but it will do him a world of good, Doctor. Go on, Dr. Jacobus, and prosper; I wish you good-luck. Mix up a goodly number of strong doses, and put on the prescription, "To be repeated, until the desired effect be produced." The medicine which teaches us to make the case of others in some wise our own is good for all sorts and conditions of men—for bankers down to street-sweepers; for everyone who has a human heart and belongs to the sin-stricken, pain-stricken family of man.

It is a black draught, Doctor. I cannot describe it as "quaffing the flowing bowl." It is not something to be taken to the tune of "Drink, boys, drink," but I take it, and drink your health in it—or rather I pray that I need not take it, that my mind and heart may be healthy without it; that I may feel without being made to feel, and help the suffering without being made to suffer myself.

"Sir," said Mr. Anton, when he became a little less swimmy, "this place is rather too much for me. I am glad, truly glad, that that poor fellow is so well provided for; but I suppose you haven't any more men of business here?"

"Lend me the glass," said the little man, and after a minute he handed it to the visitor again. "There," said he, pointing in another direction, "you can see that man as plainly as if you were close to him. We have, as I have already told you, our little jokes here. We couldn't get on without them at all; we have to do all we can to keep up the failing spirits, and bring a smile on the withered faces. A new joke is worth anything to me. I've known one keep fresh without being put in water for a whole month, and so I call this man one of our cavalry."

"Why 'tis a jumble up of a man and something else. Oh, ah! yes, I see a chair."

"Yes, 'tis a man in a chair. And there he is fixed; he can't get in and out when he likes, as you can."

"He looks all right," said Mr. Anton, keeping the glass to his

"But he's not all right; all the lower parts of his body are paralyzed. He's fastened into that chair, and can just wriggle himself along with his hands."

"Think of me going about the city like that," thought Mr. Anton. "I think, sir, I'll go now, I've had enough for one day."

"You, sir," said the little man, "are, as I gather from your conversation, in business: so used that man to be at one time. He was in the midst of the fullest of his activities; he was in fact a commercial traveller. I am glad you have seen sufferers of your own vocation, and one at any rate in your own position in life being relieved in this place. We can shew many others the same. Be they professional men, or gentlemen, or artizans, we can show them their fellows suffering here, and relieved here—relieved for life. We can say to them 'As