

Doctor Kendall's Revenge.

DOCTOR Allan Kendall sat in his office reading a letter. Evidently the contents moved him strongly for his brow was clouded, his mouth sternly set and his whole face indicative of the struggle in his mind. Presently he threw the letter on the table, abruptly pushed back his chair, rose and paced the room.

"Just like Emily's kind heart," he mused, "but I can't do what she asks. I can't forget his treachery."

He stopped his walk before the table, picked up the letter and read it again. And now, reader, if you will allow me, I shall peep over his shoulder to acquaint myself and you with the cause of his perturbation.

"Dear Cousin Allan," ran the letter, "It is almost time for my annual epistle to you and I must congratulate you on the splendid success you are gaining in your profession. Never mind who tells me. Certainly not you in those scanty, thin, miserable letters you send me once a blue moon. No one can, in justice, accuse you of vainglorious boasting. But it warms my old heart, Allan, to hear the glowing accounts which reach me. Why, I feel almost a maternal pride in you since you are in a sense the product of my upbringing. I think I see you that first day at uncle's standing in the door with Charles. Poor Charles! Forgive me for mentioning him. I know you charged me never to communicate to you one syllable concerning him; but O Allan, if you could only see him, I am sure even your anger would melt away. He is a physical wreck. You remember his weak chest? Recently his physicians ordered a complete change of climate for him, but in addition to his ill-health his eyesight is almost gone. As a result of both, his business is ruined. He has been unfortunate in speculating and, therefore, has not funds to travel.

His wife (you knew pretty Nellie Blair) is trying in every way to better their condition by working in an office, but her wages are pitifully inadequate even for their present needs. And their little boy—such a dear, bright child—is neglected.

Today as I looked at them I thought of you and your abundant prosperity. O Allan, could you, would you forgive Charles and send him money enough to pay his travelling expenses? You and I are his only relatives and I can do nothing for him. I know it is hard for you to forget the past but, remember this is the grand chance of your lifetime to return good for evil. Today, in spite of your poor start, you are far more prosperous and happy than he, and have the peace of a good conscience.

If you cannot do what I wish, Allan, you will pardon an old woman's meddling and write again to your loving cousin,

EMILY KENDALL.

As Allan finished his third perusal of the letter, he looked absently at the envelope; then noticed that the post-mark bore a date of three months previous.

"By George, Emily has written the wrong address. Wonder it ever reached me even at this late date!"

Dr. Kendall could not help wishing from the bottom of his heart that he had never seen the letter, for it had raised a tumult in his mind. Just then he found the precept "Do good to them that hate you and despitefully use you," a hard saying indeed. Not that he was revengeful or implacable by nature but his generous impulses had been deadened by the treachery of his cousin, Charles Kendall, whom he had loved better than a brother.

Allan and Charles Kendall were the sons of two brothers who had been drowned together during a boating excursion. An older brother of the boys's fathers had adopted them and promised to divide his extensive business interests between them at his retirement. But Charles, deeming that time too distant, had taken advantage of his trusted position to defraud his uncle of large sums of money. Later, fearing a discovery of his guilt, he had cunningly contrived to place the blame on his cousin who, in a position of equal trust had no proofs with which to refute the accusation.

In the interview that followed the disclosure of Allan's supposed guilt, his uncle had ordered him from his presence and his home and warned him under pain of exposure not to attempt to obtain a position in that

town. Allan had his suspicions of the real wrong-doer, but mere suspicions and suppositions could not clear him, so with a sorrowful heart but defiant front, he had left in two days for the West. There, a few years later in a most unexpected way he had obtained proofs of his cousin's guilt and treachery. But they came too late to re-instate him in the good graces of his uncle who had died leaving the bulk of his wealth to Charles.

Allan had loved his uncle very dearly and the thought that the kind old man had died believing him guilty of such base ingratitude had roused in his mind a great anger towards Charles and a great desire for revenge. But he did not lose his time in brooding over his wrongs. He took up the study of medicine and as he was a clever young fellow, soon rose in his profession till at the end of eleven years he had an enviable reputation in the hustling Western city which he had chosen for his labors.

Rumors of his prosperity had reached his old home town and rejoiced the heart of his uncle's housekeeper, faithful Cousin Emily who had petted him and scolded him by turns when he was a boy. For old times' sake he kept up a sort of spasmodic correspondence with her, during the course of which he had disclosed their cousin's treachery and charged her never to mention Charles' name to him.

Just before the receipt of Emily's long delayed letter, he had made a large sum of money through judicious speculation and a cheque for two thousand dollars lay on the table before him. He had intended to devote it to charitable purposes and Emily's plea had pointed out a most acceptable form of charity—charity towards an enemy. But he did not welcome the suggestion. His anger towards his cousin was too hot hot and resentful to allow him to consider returning good for evil just yet.

"Justice had been meted out after all," he mused, "all his wealth has vanished and his wrong-doing has recoiled on his head. In a sense, he is in my power."

But then came the disquieting reflection: "And his wife and child—they are in my power too. Will that little child lose his father when I might save him?"

Can I allow that loving wife to wear her young life away in work and worry? Oh, why must the innocent suffer with the guilty?"

And Dr. Kendall leaned his head on his hand and knew that the moment which "comes once to every man and nation to decide for the good or evil side" had come to him for he sensed that his desire for revenge was an unholy passion which was warping his mind and which if acceded to, would mean the triumph of evil.

He thought again of Charles' sufferings, of his poverty, of the life that might be saved but it was the pitiful image of the little boy that decided him.

"I can't be cruel to a child," he said, as he reached for the cheque and a pen to endorse it. He placed it in an envelope and was debating whether to send it direct to Charles or make Emily his messenger of mercy, when his telephone rang. He pushed the envelope into his pocket and ran to answer the telephone. The message was from one of his most enthusiastic "cures."

"No, it isn't any of our family," he replied in answer to the doctor's inquiry. "It is a man in the next flat. They're strangers here and the wife ran up asking if we would send for a doctor as she didn't know where to go and couldn't leave her husband. Pretty urgent, I guess. Better come quickly."

Allan got out into the street and walking rapidly soon arrived at the flat. The door opened promptly to his ring and a woman stood before him. At sight of her he started back for it was Nellie Kendall. She in her anxiety did not recognise him and recovering himself, he followed her into the room and up to a coach on which lay the wasted figure of a man—of Charles Kendall.

At sight of that wan face and attitude of dejection; the last trace of anger died out of Dr. Kendall's heart and it was some minutes before he could steady his voice to speak. Even then it was so husky that Charles did not recognise it. Nor was he likely to recognize his cousin's face for as he turned his eyes towards the doctor, the latter saw that there was little sight in them.

Allan worked over him for some time discovering that his condition while critical was far from hopeless in a congenial climate and that despondency was retarding his improvement as much as disease.

"You came here for his health?" he said to the care-worn woman who was hovering near.

"Yes, we arrived only last week and the weather was so cold for travelling. We could not find it possible to come before."

Her voice trembled a little but she went on bravely as she led the doctor away from the couch.

"Can anything be done, doctor?"

"Yes, he can be cured, but he must go farther West."

The woman's face paled and she laid her arms suddenly on the back of a chair.

"We cannot afford it," she said, "it took all we could get to travel out here and I have been trying to get work since we came but—" Her voice broke. She stopped; then went on, almost wildly, "Can't you give him anything to help him?"

"Yes," said the doctor, "this prescription will help a great deal."

He took the envelope out of his pocket, removed the cheque, folded it and laid it on the table with a sudden fleeting smile which Mrs. Kendall thought strangely familiar.

Just then he felt his coat pulled and turning saw a little curly-haired mite of a boy looking up at him in shining dark eyed wonder.

"Oh, doctor-mans has you made my daddy well?" lisped the boy in such serious tones that Allan felt a wave of tenderness as he lifted the child in his arms.

"Yes, my little man, daddy is going to be well enough to play with you in short time, and meanwhile, you must be a good boy and not annoy mother."

Nelly's eyes were glistening as he gave the child to her and turned to get his hat.

"Your fee, doctor?" she asked as he put his hand on the door.