One Physician’s Fight Against Syphilis

Opening Paragraph: "I am a doctor. My training qualifies me as a skin specialist, but since I opened my office I have had only a few skin disease patients. The rest were all venereal cases. My friends had told me it would be like that. Now I know they were right and I no longer hope to be able to treat only skin ailments. Nevertheles my practice is interesting."

Main Body: "Today a middle-aged man came into my office. He looked like a well-dressed salesman. I soon found that he had an infection. I had to question him insistently, however, before he would admit he was married and had been maintaining a sweetheart on the side for years. He was sure he could not have caught his affliction from her.

"Bring her here and let me examine her," I said. The woman came. She was a typical coquette. Her diamonds glittered, her sable necklace dangled down her back. She had on in all several thousand dollars’ worth of adornments.

"The microscope confirmed my suspicions. Of course, her disillu-
sioned lover was incensed and the break between them is now irre-
parable. The worst is that he may have infected his wife. I made an appointment for her tomorrow."

"The woman was just left. It is as I suspected. But I am interested in this case less as a doctor than as a student of human nature. I was still busy in my bedroom early this morning when Ludovicus, my housekeeper, rapped and said there was a woman out in the office. "She is very plain," she said. "She looks like a scrubwoman, or something.” When I saw her I thought the same, for she did not even have on a hat, and sat there in a much-worn work dress.

"Why do you wish to see me?" I asked.

"Didn’t my husband make an appointment for me?"

"Your husband? You must be mistaken."

"Why, yes, doctor—that was my husband. He was here yester-

day and said I should come today."

So this plain, impoverished woman without even a hat was the wife; and the woman in diamonds and sables, the mistress! Such a contrast I shall not soon forget.

"The treatment would take weeks—perhaps months. He could not understand why he should have to undergo such discomfort, for he had not"

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"had anything," as he put it, for over seventeen years. The dear man thought that when he was rid of his infection he was rid of its after-effects.

I met Beau Eugene many years ago at a dinner given by a local government official. My companion at the table whispered that Beau Eugene was a millionaire manufacturer and the most noto-
rious Don Juan in town, "in spite of his charming wife," who was also present. I observed this wealthy Don Juan with interest. He sat across the table from me and next to a very lovely girl. His wealth must have influenced our hosts to assign him this unphilosophical creature, for there was a sufficiency of elderly married ladies in the party. The company did not seem to see anything odd in this arrangement; they were evidently accustomed to his philandering.

But the girl! She knew all about her partner and resembled some wild thing that goes circling about the bait in curiosity, terror, and fascinated premonition. The looks of admiration, abyss, and desire she stole at him were plainly prophetic of the outcome.

He meanwhile proceeded systematically with his purpose, keeping the conversation in an undertone. She would look down the length of the table from time to time, now blushing, now laughing, toying with dangerous and delicious fancies. Despite his grey hair, he possessed all the charm that a man needs in order to turn a woman’s head. There was no suggestion in his face of the life he was known to lead. He looked his forty-five years, but the manly beauty of his features had not suffered. Large, black, (Continued on next page.)"