

"IT'S DIFFERENT."

(Ida Hamilton Munsell, B.M.)

Dr. Easton, or "Doctor Jim," as everybody called him, was a very popular member of society in the suburban city to which he had come a stranger but twelve short months before; no physician in town was so much in demand as was Doctor Jim. Discreet mammas invited him to all their social functions, while level-headed papas encouraged his attentions to their bewitching daughters, but he was singularly modest and free from egotism, which, after all, may have added to, rather than detracted from, his charms.

One evening the doctor was at a social gathering in a fashionable home. Young men and maidens filled the spacious rooms, and sounds of mirth and laughter floated on the air. Miss Hunter's jewelled fingers touched the ivory keys of the grand piano, and the strains of a passionate Chopin waltz set the pulses of the young people throbbing and their eyes to glistening. One couple sprang up and began to glide over the velvet carpet, another joined, then more followed, until nearly the entire company were on their feet.

Doctor Jim did not move; just now he was in a brown study. An event of the early morning hours, and now the presence of a certain young man in this select home, together with his evident popularity with the fair ones, had thrown the genial doctor into a meditative mood.

As he watched the giddy, whirling throng, he was thinking of the young girl—as youthful, as charming as any of those gliding across the floor before his eyes—whom he had been called to attend but twenty hours before—a mother, but no wife! Doctor Jim recalled the picture presented as he entered the hospital. The merry twinkle of sleigh bells filled the crisp air, and the witchery of moonlight was everywhere as he had closed the door and begun a battle where a girl's life was at stake. And he had lost! For as the grey mists enwrapping the city were struggling with the lights of early dawn, Marjorie White's torture had ended. The nurse and physician folded her soft, white hands over the pulseless breast, and placed beside her the new-born baby, dead before it saw the light.

It was of this that Doctor Jim was thinking, and his sense of justice and purity was outraged as he looked at the author of the recent tragedy, whirling through the giddy measures of the dance, and smiled upon and favoured by these innocent, thoughtless maidens.

"Something's wrong, somewhere," mused Doctor Jim; "but how can the situation be changed? 'It's different in a man's case,' is all the argument you can get if you bring up the subject. 'A man must have more license than a woman; he wouldn't be safe in society otherwise.' These threadbare ideas you get thrown at you if you suggest 'a white life for two.' If a husband goes wrong he doesn't make his wife support his illegitimate offspring, but how would it be if the woman were the sinner? Wouldn't the case be affected in an entirely different manner?"

Doctor Jim was rehearsing all the numerous arguments which he had heard.

"How is it different? Did God make one rule for the men and one totally different for the women, I wonder? They can't make wrong right, nor black white!" he said to himself. "Oh, if the mothers of the girls only knew what I know about some of these young fellows here to-night, would they allow the intimacy existing to go on? Society is a funny affair. It needs putting to rights with a vengeance, but who is going to do it? Not one man, that's sure. Social purity will continue to be a one-sided affair, I'm inclined to think."

"Yes, I'm coming, Miss Hunter. Pardon my inattention; I've been thinking," said Doctor Jim.

At this juncture the stately butler entered the room and announced, "The doctor is wanted at the 'phone, Miss Hunter."

When Doctor Jim came back his face was stern. Making his adieu as quickly as possible, he stopped for a second beside one of the most popular young men present, and said something in low tones which nobody else heard.

The young fellow's lips trembled, but he shrugged his shoulders, and with an air of bravado walked up to his hostess.

"Dr. Easton insists upon having the pleasure of my company, so I must bid you a regretful good night," he

said, and he held Miss Hunter's hand a second longer than mere courtesy demanded. While dark eyes looked unspeakable things at the handsome girl before him.

When the two had finally escaped into the outer air, Doctor Jim motioned his companion to enter the brougham which waited beside the curb.

"The hospital, James," he said sternly, and then the door closed with a bang and the spirited horses started off at a brisk trot.

"What's got into you, Doc.?" the young man queried, but there was an uneasy, restless look in his eyes that belied the joking tone.

"Marjorie White died this morning, Mr Van Doren, and I am taking you to the private room where lies all that is left of her, and your child."

"No, Doc.; for God's sake, no!" half shrieked the betrayer.

"Now, see here, Van Doren, I'm no saint myself, but I don't go in for this kind of vile work, and I'm going to do all I can to stop it in others. I'll be blest if I can stand seeing such as you in company with girls like those where we were to-night. Your very touch is pollution, yet they don't know it. How many did you have your arms about to-night? Nobody knows except myself of this late tescapade of yours, Van Doren, but by the Lord, man, they shall know unless you make some excuse and get out of this town inside of twenty-four hours! I'm going to ship Marjorie White and her baby back to Wisconsin to-night, and you've got to help me. After that you can leave town as quickly as you please. If you're not gone before this time to-morrow night I'll go to the mothers of all those young women and I'll brand you for what you are worth. Don't think I pose for a saint, Van Doren, it's not that; but I've made up my mind that what's right for one sex is right for the other, and I'm going to work along that line from now on," and "Dr. Jim" paused for breath.

"But that's different," began the young fellow, whose face had blanched at the physicians words.

"It's not different, I tell you. God never made two rules of conduct for the two sexes. He never said nor intended that men should be impure and demand purity of woman. God's just, I tell you. No, you'll do as I say."