Doubt.

Was it better? Did Tom mean all that he said?
'Twas a good chance—a hasty word spoken.
I turned and the poor boy grew awfully red
When I said our engagement was broken.
He was in earnest, and I thought so, but then
Some vow love without rhyme, without reason.
There is always something deceptive in men,
I discover it so every season.

Every season—let's see, why, this is my fourth—
But such short years, and why should I marry?
Though papa this year is exceedingly wroth,
He is right—'tis a long time to tarry.
And Tom's not so bad—ah, no, many are worse;
He is jealous, but wealthy and clever.
Though I wish he wouldn't address me in verse—
Were we parted, as I said forever?

Forever! I see him now turning away,
For he loved me—will love change to hating?
No, no, I pray not. What, a card, James, you say?
Why, it's Tom! Is the gentleman waiting?
I will be down at once—but why did he call?
I had almost expected a letter.
Do I love him? Well—yes—perhaps after all
I will take him for worse—or for better.

—Flavel Scott Mines in the New York World.

A DOCTOR'S OUTING.

Belgravia: Ned Mostyn and myself were chums and cronies at the grammar school in the fine old city of———. Our friendship was very fervent; it seemed to us as if it could never fail; but, on leaving the city, the many crowded thoughts that press upon a young man on his entrance into the world, if they fail to obliterate our boyish affection, left it, as it were, faint memories of the past.

By a strange coincidence we met as fellow students at Guy's, and our friendship was renewed. As it happened, being masters of our own destiny, we resolved to start together under the title of Percival and Mostyn, and we were fortunate enough to secure the practice of the late Dr. Woolley in the thriving town of N———.

Our practice was a success, and we were fast securing an excellent position. We had been much occupied and hard-worked, but, by one of those changes which sometimes occur, we were suddenly left with little or nothing to do. I was employing this unwonted leisure in looking over some of those formidable items of which our ledger presented a numerous and gloomy record. I had been especially totting up one account which had been almost our earliest—a certain Mr. Graves', which had been marked "doubtful" in the second year, "very doubtful" in the third, and "bad" in the fourth—when who should present himself in our little consulting-room but the veritable Graves himself.

"Doctor," said he, "I have come to pay you that 'ere bill o' mine. The figures are vastly big 'uns, but if they were ever so much bigger I ain't the kind o' man to grudge the amount, for have never forgot the many bitter journeys you have had to see me and mine all across that common; and now I've got the money together and you shall have it, doctor. There it is, £75 15s 7d, every halfpenny of which you thoroughly deserve, and ought to have had long ago." And emptying his canvas bag on the table, he displayed the full amount in shining metal to the uttermost farthing.

I couldn't help thinking of the laborious honesty with which these people must have amassed this money, and with what a one-sided view one is apt to look upon the items of a ledger. The money still lay on the table when Ned came in accompanied by our friend Captain Willoughby, our nearest and best neighbor.

"Four-year-old Graves," said I, "what do you think of that, old fellow. And I was thinking, Ned, as things were dull, the case-book very tight, and you yourself full of business energy, I would take a turn myself this very night and hear Ap Thomas, the harpist, of whom I have heard a good account."

"Capital idea, old boy; so you shall. But what a night you have chosen. It snows in sheets, it rains and it blows, and does all imaginable bad things in the way of weather."

"Yes," said Willoughby, "it mustn't be to-night, doctor, for the ride in your trap to N. is worth much more than you can expect to get for it."

"Oh, as for that, I don't mind the weather."

"I dare say not, but—happy thought—you shall have my brougham and the grays, and Reeve shall drive you. He'll run you over in style. Don't say no, for I insist upon it. They have done nothing lately, and I know it will enhance your comfort at any rate."

"I second the kind proposal," said Ned, and the thing seemed so pleasant that I could not refuse.

In due time a splendid pair of grays were at the door, and I was bowled along to my destination. It was certainly far preferable to an open dog-cart. N——— was soon reached. I rather tardily remembered that a ticket had not been secured for the entertainment, and drove at once to the music shop where they were sold. I entered at a fortunate crisis, for one or two tickets had just been brought back as the purchaser was hindered from being present.

Telling Reeve to make himself very comfortable during the interval, and to be ready; when the affair was finished I entered the hall. It was well lighted and densely packed, but the platform looked rather bald. There was the harp and the harp alone. After waiting some little time a rather insignificant personage made his appearance by its side, and I thought it looked very stupid to be there, little dreaming what a magician was before me in the form of that little man.

He commenced, and for two hours I was the abject slave of that man. He did with me what he would—I was pastoral, I was military, was jubilant, I was sunk in soft delights, almost to tears! In short I was mesmerized in a halo of glorious music! What could it be? Surely not that one harp. It seemed as if a whole band of angelic performers were hovering about one. I am particularly open to musical impressions, but never had been so completely enthralled. His intervals were only intervals of torment, only to be succeeded by new raptures; and when at last all was over I felt that I could beseech him to resume. But it was all over and with the rest I had to go forth into the night.

In truth it was a fearful night. There was a high, cold wind, with fiercely beating sleet, and coming from the brilliant light it was almost impossible to discern the objects around. I called out "Reeve! Is Reeve here?" and a voice said, "Yes, sir, and a pair of grays appeared to the front. The door of the brougham was immediately opened by some ready hand, and I was glad to escape the fierceness of the weather, and we drove off, the hail patting merrily against the windows. I saw we were going the right way, but lulled by the storm, I soon fell into the embraces of the poppy-god. The glamour of the harpist was still upon me, and my senses still enslaved. I dreamt the divine melodies of that harp were still with me, but retreating, and that I was compelled to follow. I went on through brambles, through woods, over rivers, over mountains, and could not stay my flight. At last they began to ascend, and, strange to say, I floated upwards also. At length, at a terrible height, the weird music ceased, and I immediately fell.

My dream was over. The carriage had stopped on the graveled frontage of what appeared to be and what really was a large house.

No words can express my astonishment as I gazed upon the streaming lights that met me in all directions, for the mansion before which we had stopped seemed illuminated throughout its whole extent. For a moment or two I could not disconnect it from what I had been dreaming; but I soon let myself out and perceived at a glance that the brougham before me was not that of my friend Captain Willoughby and that I could have mistaken it for his seemed impossible.

"What is all this, Reeve?" said I. What have you done with me? This is not Captain Willoughby—"

"Oh, lor! oh, lor!" said the coachman, "I've been and druv' home the wrong gen'leman. Oh, lor! instead of Master Fred I've druv' home the wrong gen'leman."

"This is not Captain Willoughby's carriage?" repeated I.

"No, sir," said the frightened fellow; "no, sir, no! Captain Willoughby's carriage was just behind me, waiting for Mr. Percival, Reeve told me."

"Well, then, why on earth did you take me here, man?"

"Oh, lor, sir! How could I tell you were a wrong gen'leman? You sings out, 'Shreeve, Shreeve!' and I heard the door bang, and I had enough to do to look to my horses; for they wuz very skittish. There were a great number of things about, and you sings out, 'Drive on, Shreeve!' and I druv' on; and, oh, lor, I've been and druv' the wrong gen'leman."

"And where am I now?" said I.

"Why, sir, you see as how you're at Squire Ellison's. And, oh, sir, do tell the squire as how I couldn't help it, or else I am a ruined man."

By this time several servants had come out with lights, crying: "Oh, Mr. Fred, come in, come in, come in! Miss Effie is dying."

More than ever astonished, I walked into the hall and was ushered into a room, and in the midst of a group of horror-stricken faces. I briefly explained that I had been to the concert, and in mistake had got into the wrong brougham, not discerning in the roughness of the night that the carriage before me was not that of my friend Captain Willoughby, and misled by the fact that the names of the coachmen appeared to be the same.

As soon as I began to speak I saw the sorely distressed face of a fine old gentleman, who had sat heaped up, as it were, in his chair, begin to brighten, and he now burst in with:

"Dr. Percival! But I dare say you forget I have had the good fortune to meet you once before, and it's heaven's kind providence has led you here to-night. Such a mistake could easily have arisen; my horses being the same color as those of Captain Willoughby, and the coachman's name so closely resembling the other—Shreeve instead of Reeve. Your way home, too, would also be part of the journey here. But, oh! what a fortunate mistake! for you will save our dear girl; for I cannot believe you to be too late, and I can confide her to you, doctor, with all faith. Come, let us lead you to her, for her case is most urgent. Poor Effie fell through a sheet of glass in the conservatory, and has wounded her arm in such a way as to defy all our attempts to stop the bleeding."

I was led to the patient. She lay on a couch, and the beautiful girl looked more like a colorless figure of wax than a human being. The whole couch was bedabbled with blood, and the many bandages steeped with it. Scared women were around her, and I could hear a suppressed whisper, "She still bleeds."

From the appearance I surmised, as it turned out correctly, that the brachial artery had been punctured.

The inefficient bandage was at once stripped off, and one of the attendents was made to compress the wounded artery firmly with the thumb, whilst I rapidly extemporized a tourniquet with such materials as could be procured, and soon succeeded in stopping the flow of blood. But even I was astonished to see the loss sustained by the fragil-looking form before me. She had been long in a fainting condition, but in an hour or two, as the result of gently administering stimulants, I began to discover signs of reviving consciousness, and I thought I might leave to seek out Romsey and the implements necessary to place our wounded patient in safety. Hospitality in every shape was pressed upon me, but I could not wait, and the grays were once more in requisition to drive me to Romsey's.

We started off furiously, and had traveled about a mile when the coachman man suddenly pulled up, shouting out: "Hullo, sir! what's this? Some one has got a regular smash here. Oh, lor! it's our own trap, and where James is I don't know. It seems broken into smithereens."

I hastened out of the carriage to find, as the man had observed, the mere wreck of what had been a dog-cart.

The snow was still falling, although the hurricane had somewhat abated; but in the midst of the wind I thought I heard a feeble voice.

The darkness was intense, but, taking one of the carriage lamps, I proceeded onward to find propped up on cushions, and covered with cloaks, the form of the Romsey I sought. The snow was falling on the poor fellow's face, and in spite of his wrappings he must have suffered severely from cold.

"Is this Mr. Romsey?" said I.

"It was Romsey," said he; "it's now a bruised and dislocated mass. I've had by no means a jolly time of it. That lump of stones that you see opposite gleaming in the dark (I was going to say 'accursed be those who laid them there') has shied the horse and thrown it against this infernal piece of wall, and I may apply for my superannuation fund as soon as may be. The poor brute of a horse is completely done for, and has been led off by James somewhere, James himself having all to nothing the best of it."

"Well, Romsey, what shall I do? Let us take you up in the carriage."

"I'm hanged if I know what would be the best thing to do," said Romsey, as if not hurt at all. "Nellie will soon be here, I know, when she hears of it; and guessing from the time James went she can't be long, I know. She is a famous tactician, old fellow, and will arrange everything. She knows what an accident is, and is equal in every emergency save this, indeed, poor girl!"

"But I can not let you lie here and freeze; I'll take you to your house or to the Cedars, from which I have just come, as you may guess. My name's Percival, and, by a curious mistake, I have been able to take your patient."

"Thank God, Percival, and thank you, too; for the thought of this dear girl and the anguish I have suffered on her account has been far worse to me than all the nasty raps and bumps these poor bones of mine have had to bear."

"It is hard to tell you now; I was coming for you to help me set a wounded arm right. Have you any instruments?"

"Yes; I guessed something of what had happened, and here is my case, on the top of my head. Take it, pray take; leave me and go to her."

"No, no, no! I can't do that. She is all right for the present; we will lift you gently into the carriage and take you home, and I do trust that bruises will prove the worst part of the business."

"Gad, my dear fellow, I am completely smashed! But don't say a word to Nellie when she comes. I hear her coming now."

Romsey's ear was quick, for straining hard amidst the gust of wind I fancied I could hear the sound of approaching wheels.

"Do let us lift you into the carriage before the lady comes, and so prevent the fearful shock of seeing you as you lie up here."

"No, my good friend, no, I had rather wait till Nellie comes.

Meanwhile on the frosty night we could plainly distinguish the impetuous gallop of horse and the sound of wheels like the fierce charge of a fire brigade approaching nearer and nearer. They pulled up, however before arriving at the scene of accident and came quietly and cautiously onward.

I confess in all this sad scene I was curiously anxious to catch a glimpse of the redoubtable Nellie; but instead of seeing the rather masculine specimen of womankind I had imagined, with nerves of steel and arms of strength, there ran forward a slight and elegant girl of some eighteen or nineteen years, dressed without confusion or apparent haste in a waterproof and hood.

She had procured from a neighboring upholsterer a light covered spring van, on the floor of which she had placed a mattress with many pillows and blankets. Her force of assistants was four—two elderly women and two men, with a plentiful supply of lanterns. She ran forward to her brother as if she knew where to find him by instinct.

"Oh, Nellie, dear," he said, "I knew you'd come quickly."

"Oh, it must have seemed an age to you. How hurt you must be, Edward. Drink this glass of water, dear."

"The very thing, Nellie! Oh, I have been wanting it so."

"Now, dear old Ned, we are going to move you. But I see Mr. Ellison's carriage here. He has been before us."

"Not Mr. Ellison, my dear, but Dr. Percival, who by a most fortunate accident was attending my patient and had come to seek me."

"And the doctor will help us, will he not?"

"He will certainly, if you will allow him to place himself under your guidance," said I.

"Sir, I thank you," replied Nellie. "We will lift poor Ned now into this van. Where are you hurt, dear, that we may not hurt you more?"

"All over, Nellie, all over. I know you will take me gently."

And well she marshaled her forces. There were altogether seven of us. One stood at the horses' heads to prevent a movement, one lighted the way, and the rest of us gently lifted Poor Ned on to the mattress. He bore the operation without a groan, although it must, indeed, have been a further dose of agony. I implored him to allow me to go home with him and see to his injuries, but he would not hear of it.

"Come to me as soon as you have finished with the dear girl whose life is precious to so many. Do not neglect her for a single moment. I place her in your hands, Percival. You have the case—be off, sir, this very moment. Nellie is a nurse and doctor all in one, and I shall be safe with her till you come."

The wise Nellie said: "Oh, doctor! it does seem selfish, but come as soon as you can; do come! for I feel myself thoroughly helpless in such a sad case."

What could I do? I was divided between the two, and I felt that Effie Ellison had the prior right to my poor services. Nevertheless, as we went rapidly back to the Cedars my heart and thoughts were with Nellie and her brother.

On reaching the Ellisons I found the son had returned by a hired conveyance. He had found Willoughby's man pacing up and down in great distress at having lost me, and had "guessed the nature of the joke," as he said, and had sent Reeve home, at which I was heartily glad.

I found poor Effie in a very bad state. The limb was much swollen and discolored, and the necessary operation was tiresome and most painful. I would fain have waited for further assistance, but the urgent nature of the case admitted of no delay.

In a very short space of time the skill of the most eminent surgeon in the country was secured, and together with the family we watched through hours of great anxiety. In the advanced morning, however, we resolved to snatch a flying visit to Romsey. We found him fearfully injured—a fractured arm, a fractured rib and internal injuries.

I was glad of the very able assistance that was now at hand. His case appeared desperate, and when we had done all, we could only shake our heads in ominous silence.

We returned to the Cedars. Our patients life here hung upon a very thread; but my distinguished colleague was pleased to compliment me on my prompt and energetic action in the matter, saying that if the lady lived it would be through me.

My next care was to telegraph to my partner, and for ten days and nights I watched by the bedside of Effie Ellison, only varied by hasty runs over to Romsey. At the expiration of that time Effie, though still very weak, was out of danger and I was free to attend my medical friend.

And Nellie and I have attended him, and together have managed to conduct his rather large practice for the last six months. I have visited the Cedars daily, and Effie is now quite well, and Captain Willoughby, who is constantly there and brimming over with gratitude to myself, declares that he will soon take her into his own keeping; and that he will have no more glass-breaking if he can help it.

They can all now afford to have a good laugh at the expense of myself, the Shreeve and the Reeve, and when one out the other will shout, "Beware of grays!" But nothing can exceed the grateful hospitality of the people, and I am as a son in the house.

But how shall I speak of my other patient? He still lives in his pretty home, a hopeless wreck. I have changed partners and taken the invalid, and Nellie as my assistant. No wonder her brother should say, I'll wait for Nellie. She makes home beautiful, and her brother, even with all his sad afflictions, cheerful. Her home is the best ordered home in the kingdom, and of course I love Nellie with all my heart; and, what is better, Nellie loves me—and what is better still, Nellie is mine. She does not bring me much wealth, but I am as rich in having such a jewel as "fifty seas if all their sands were pearls, their waters nectar and their rocks fine gold."

He Kissed Me.

A Nebraska paper narrates this educational incident: "A high school girl, class A, being told by the teacher to parse the sentence, "He kissed me,' consented reluctantly, because opposed to speaking of private affairs in public. "He," she commenced, with unnecessary emphasis and a fond lingering over the word that brought crimson to her cheeks, "is a pronoun; third person, singular number, masculine gender: a gentleman pretty well-fixed; universally considered a good catch. Kissed is a verb transitive—to much so: regular—every evening; indictive mood—indicating affection; first and third persons, plural number, and governed by circumstances. Me—oh, everybody knows me,' and down she sat."

Charity, Sweet Charity.

From Life.

"Madame, can't you give me something to eat? I haven't had a mouthful for two days."

"Certainly, you poor creature. Take this piece of chewing gum. If treated kindly, it will last you four days."

HIRAM BLOATER'S DOG.

He Grew Weary of the Familiar Scenes and Grave-Yard Quiet of the Wood-Shed.

From the Chicago Times.

Hiram Bloater's dog had a Sunday off yesterday, the first he had enjoyed for weeks, and he took an early morning constitutional that did him a world of good. At the close of his brief but thrilling experience as a glad, free dog the animal retired to his quarters in the wood-shed with enough experience in stock to last him a year.

During the summer and fall Mr. Bloater kept the dog confined in a wood-shed back of the house, where he roamed at will and the end of a six-foot clothes-line. It was not a valuable animal, but the owner said no dog of his should run at large while he was able to buy rope to tether him with. But yesterday morning a spirit of freedom broke out in the dog, and he set himself to work chewing his rope off close to the post. He was a huge, clumsy brute, grown lazy from lack of exercise, but he had strong jaws, and soon severed the rope.

It was a few minutes before 8 o'clock in the morning when the dog sneaked out of the front gate at Wells and Division streets, and dragging his rope after him. Mr. Bloater discovered the fugitive and gave chase, but the dog was on to him, and taking the middle of the down-town grip-car track he ambled off at a brisk trot, with Mr. Bloater and his eldest boy hot on the trail. The first car had not come down yet, but the cable was under way, humming along at a lively rate. Before the trio had covered a block the chewed-up, moist and frayed-out end of the dog's rope dropped through the slot and found the cable. Then the dog put on a spurt that carried him several laps ahead of his pursuers. At first the dog showed a disposition to hang back, but the unseen power below gave him such a yank that he was glad to start up again when he found his brakes wouldn't work. So with a low, sad moan the unhappy dog straddled a slot and started on his long, long journey.

Father and son with open jack-knives in their hands followed the four-legged grip-car to Chicago avenue, where they gave up the chase. The dog was too swift for them, and besides he had just caught his second wind. They were about to give up the dog for lost and return home when the boy thought of something.

"Say, father," he exclaimed, if Nero makes the South-side loop all right he'll be back this way in a half or three-quarters of an hour, and what's the matter with waiting here and cutting him loose as he slides by?"

"By George! that's so; but how are we going to know whether the cussed brute will take Clark or Wells street on the come back?"

"We don't know what he'll do, but if you'll stay here I'll go over to Clark street and one of us will get him," replied the ingenious boy, as he sped away with his knife still in his hand.

In the meantime the dog had made the Illinois street curves in safety and plunged into the cold, damp depths of the tunnel. He howled with terror when he struck the glare of the electric lamps, but on finding that he wasn't hurt he had good sense to save his precious wind. On he sped up the steep incline, out into the peaceful Sabbath daylight with bulging eyeballs and protruding tongue. In crossing Randolph street he narrowly escaped colliding with a milk wagon, but the driver saw him in time to pull up. He had a clean chute to Monroe street, where he made the turn with his hindquarters in the air and yelping at every jump. Between La Salle and Dearborn seven policemen shot at him under the impression that the poor creature was mad; but he wasn't. He was simply annoyed.

The dog spent no time in looking at the scenery along Dearborn street, but attended strictly to following the cable. Dashing around the corner of Dearborn at right angles to the track he once more approached the tunnel, where the prospect of taking the back trail inspired him with new hope. When climbing the grade he overtook a Swede who was sanding the track. With one wild glance at the bloodshot eyes and foam-flecked chops the wretched Swede dropped his pail of sand and tried to climb up the smooth, whitewashed tunnel wall, but fell back in a fit and had to be hauled home in Yerkes' new patrol-wagon.

At the power-house Nero's grip took the Wells street switch, and the dog was soon rushing back to the scenes of his infancy and the home of his puphood. When Mr. Bloater saw the dog boming he knelt down on the track and held the knife-blade across the slot. The rope struck the keen edge and the exhausted dog fell fainting in his master's arms.

Nero was taken home and put to bed in the woodshed, where he is now enjoying a much needed rest.

EXPECTED IN SOON.

A Party of Visitors who Caught the Hostess Unawares.

From the Washington Post.

All the music lovers of Washington know the brilliant contralto, Lizzie Macnichol, (Mrs. Frank Vetta). It is only a few months ago since she gave up her Washington home to go to the one her husband provided for her in Philadelphia. Like the plain, matter-of-fact little woman she is, she plunges into the mysteries and duties of housekeeping with perfect delight. The change from stage life to domesticity is always hailed by her with joy. She does not hesitate even to arm herself with a brush and scrub off the white marble hearthstones, those large and penates which do duty for door steps all over Philadelphia.

She was engaged in that soulful occupation one morning not long ago, with a handkerchief tied down around her head in the good old way she learned in Washington, when a party of her swell friends drove up.

"Is Mrs. Vetta in?" the supposed servant was asked.

"Mrs. Vetta is not in at present," was the very truthful answer.

"Can you tell us when she will be in?"

"Just as soon as she finishes washing the front door steps," she replied, with a merry laugh, disclosing her identity at he same time.

Bad Form.

From Town Topics.

Mrs. Upton (to her husband)—Charley, you have been with me nearly the whole evening; go and make yourself agreeable to Miss Bruce or Miss Walters. Mr. Upton—But, my dear, I prefer your society. Mrs. Upton—Yes, darling, but people will think we are fond of each other, and that is dreadful form, you know.

A Quiet Send-Off.

From Time.

"Good evening, Mr. Stickby; you must come to see me again some time." "Er, but I wasn't going quite yet, Miss Eva." "Oh, I beg pardon! You generally do go, you know, after an hour's silence."

A Small Matter.

From the New York Weekly.

Guest (complainingly)—This bill of fare is all in French. Waiter (reassuringly)—Niver you moind that, sur; the cook is Oirish.

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—CHICAGO—

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