

A COMICAL MISTAKE;

—OR—
Dr. Raymond's Prescription.

BOB had no idea the doctor was behind him as he poked the valentine under the door. Had he not been too flustered to look round he would have seen him; and had not the doctor been deep in a medical reverie about Jane Todd's collar bone he must have spied the dapper figure as it darted away. But as it was, he fumbled for his key a minute, and then rang the bell, and while doing so, spying something white under the door, he picked it up and tore it open. Tore it open! that letter! with all its lavishness of border and blue seal! that letter over which Bob had sat up till two A. M., rounding his periods and curling the tails of his P's and Q's. Was it for this that he bestowed so many slaps on his forehead? O Fate!

Bridget, that faithful servitor, answered the bell, charged with a message which she was bent on delivering without the least possible delay.

"If you please, sir, Morton-Jones' wife's-sister's a been here, and little Johnny's a fell through the loft and took up for dead, and they'd like you to come this minute, and two Irish women called and a baby, and there's a little boy with a fayver it is in Long Lane, and Miss Usher's sent this note."

"Long Lane must wait," muttered the doctor, and he threw his instrument case and the letter on the table, and took the note Bridget held out. "Morton Jones, hey? He's that man on the Flats, isn't he?"

"Yis, sir."

"I'll go at one. Hum!" (skimming the dainty note in his hand). "Dear Doctor: So nervous and depressed—my old foe neuralgia upon me again—come as soon as you have leisure, please, and meantime send me that prescription which did such good last year. Prescription! Yes, of course, she longs to be dosing herself—all women do. Yours sincerely, Madeline Usher." That comes of being alone and fanciful. If she had one earthly thing to do she'd be a well woman. I'll see she gets nothing to hurt her."

And tearing a scrap from his pocket-book, he pencilled some cabalistic signs.

"Here, Bridget. Fetch a sheet of paper, will you? or, stay, this will answer. And seizing Bob's valentine, the unconscious doctor wrote upon its back as follows:

"MY DEAR FRIEND: I send something which I think will suit you better than the prescription you asked for. It isn't exactly medicine, but will do more good than if it were, and be a great deal better for you at this season of the year. Be sure to take a brisk walk after it. You know I always told you more than half your bad feelings come from loneliness and want of occupation. I wish I could make you feel this half as strongly as I do. I'll drop in this evening if possible. Yours faithfully,
"L. RAYMOND."

"Poor girl," he muttered, "she puts me out of patience sometimes, but she is a good creature. Bridget, see that this goes to Miss Usher as soon as Willy comes home from school. I'm in a hurry."

And he huddled the papers into an envelope, and was off with a bang of the door, leaving the note in Bridget's custody. The prescription lay upon the floor, where it had fallen unperceived.

Miss Usher sitting in her parlor by her bright fire, pale, dejected, wrapped in a shawl, was not a little amazed, when, two hours later, the missive was placed into her hands. Dr. Raymond had written her notes before, half professional half friendly, but this was something unexampled. Silver doves, a smirking cupid, with one pink wing and one blue one, roses, eglantines, and what-not round the edges, these flowery lines enclosed:

"Oh! say it is not wrong to love,
To love, to worship thee;
The sea yearns for the stars above,
The stars look on the sea.
The hot moon woo's the scented gale,
The parched flower the dew—
Their love, their longing does not fail,
And why should mine for yours?
"Like a bird all spent with wandering,
All weary must I roam,
Until I feel my restless wing
In the dear nest of Home.
But what were home without thy face,
O fairest love of mine?
Then deign that humble home to grace,
And bless your Valentine."

It was really not so bad—considering that but eighteen short summers had passed over Bob's head, and that for some time back his "restless wing" had been "furl'd" in the large dry goods shop round the corner, which he hoped some day to adorn as a partner. Whether the doctor would have admired it as addressed to Kitty—"that baby," as he called her—is unquestionable. But Miss Usher quite glowed as she read. It was so poetical, "so sweet." The little confusion of pronouns in the first verse escaped her notice altogether. She read and re-read, and then turned to the more prosaic second page.

"Not exactly medicine." O that fun-

ny man. Much better 'sulted to this season of the year! Oh! very much! Dear, dear! What could it mean! But there was no doubt about that—it could mean only one thing! "Lonely!" Yes, indeed. Dear, delicate, little Miss Usher had often felt so, but there seemed no help for it. There was nobody in particular she wished to have live with her, and no one to marry suited to her taste. Dr. Raymond, to be sure—he was so superior, so good; but she had never once thought he would marry again—he was so devoted to his first wife. And thinking how fond she had once been of that wife, and how fond she was still of that little Kitty and Will, and what a lonely life it was, after all, for a man to try to keep house for himself, Miss Usher felt her cheeks flushing, and a glow and stir coming into her heart, which quite made her forget how ill she had fancied herself just before.

That same becoming blush lit her cheeks as she made her toilet for the evening after the "brisk walk" recommended, which had sent her home with an appetite for her simple dinner. What with the little cap of muslin and blue ribbons on her head, and the dainty apron, and the bit of work in her fingers, and bright fire and all, she was a pleasant picture, the doctor thought, when he came in an hour after; and, what is more, he said so.

"Well! This looks cheerful. Women certainly have a knack of making rooms cozy which men never get. Now, I found out at once that it was growing cold as I sat in my office, and I do not think you have felt it at all in this snug little bower of yours. And how are you to-night?"

The doctor was shaking hands all the time he said this. He had that warm, cordial way with him which is so valuable to a physician; but some how to-night it seemed more marked than usual. Miss Usher withdrew her fingers with a little twitter.

"Take this chair, doctor: it is a comfortable one."

The doctor sank, nothing loath, into the sofa depths.

"Well, did you take the prescription?"

"The walk! Oh! yes, and feel much better for it, thank you."

"That's right. I knew you would. And how did you like the other?"

"The other?" with deepening color "oh, I liked it very well—that is—very much."

"I'm glad to hear it. It was a simple thing, but I thought it would suit you. I scribbled a line to go along with it because I wanted to ensure your getting out to-day, and now I want a little plain talk with you on the same point. Let me ask, to begin with, don't you think you have lived alone long enough?"

"Perhaps so," replied Miss Usher with maidenly hesitation—"but—"

"You see," interrupting, "if we could make an arrangement by which you could have some young person with you—a bright, lively girl, of Kitty's age for instance—who would be an interesting companion, and not too much of a charge, it would be the very thing. Its sitting here forlorn and solitary, and having nobody to keep company or urge you to go out, which is playing the mischief with your nerves and making you fancy yourself an invalid. You are no more sick than I am. You only need rousing. Now, don't you think so yourself? Couldn't you bring your mind to like it?"

Miss Usher fluttered, looked up, turned ed scarlet, and looked down again.

"It's easy to find the person you want," went on the unconscious doctor. "I'll see to that. Only say the word."

"I have been so used to living alone," faltered Miss Usher, "that I am half afraid to try the experiment. But if I had you to help me, doctor—"

"Of course you'll have me," said the hearty physician; "that's my business, you know."

"Business!"

"Oh! well—pleasure, too, of course; but it is business, after all. What's a great, strong man fit for if he can't look after little delicate souls like you; to say nothing of my being your doctor, and you my poor Mary's school-friend?"

"Tis an agreement, then? In that case, I'll look about me at once, and begin to make arrangements."

"But," interposed Miss Usher, timidly, "are you sure as to Kitty's and Willy's feelings, doctor?"

"Kitty and Willy?"

"Yes. Because, you know, even if you meant every word of that sweet little letter this morning, it would have to depend a great deal upon that. I could not do anything to grieve their dear little hearts."

"My letter? What was my letter?" mused the puzzled doctor. "Do you happen to have it about you? I want to see if I made any mistake in the quantities."

With deeper blushes, Miss Usher drew it from her pocket.

"Here it is," she said. "I think a

great deal of it, I assure you." Doctors, by dint of long practice, acquire great command over the facial muscles. Our doctor was master of his. He surveyed the flowery page with outward composure, but within, his soul was rent with a convulsion of wonder and merriment which was terrible.

"How in the world did I come by that nonsensical farrago?" he asked himself; "and how ever am I expected to explain to this poor little soul?"

And suddenly it popped into his head, "Why not? What with the blue ribbons, the flushed cheeks, the pleasant little room, his full knowledge of her sweet temper and lady-like ways, the idea was not unattractive."

"Not a bad thing for any of us," he muttered, half aloud.

"What did you say?" inquired Miss Usher.

"I say," responded the doctor, with great presence of mind, "that you have heard enough—quite enough of this agitating topic for to-night. You won't sleep a wink if I let you go on. Go to bed at once, please, and to-morrow I'll come again and discuss it thoroughly," and, after a gallant leave-taking, he stole out on the professional tip-toe, saying to himself: "I'll sleep over it, at all events."

I need go no farther. When a widower asks himself, "Why not?" and decides to "sleep over it," the case is settled beyond a peradventure.

I don't think Miss Usher, now Mrs. Raymond, knows to this day exactly how it was; though the doctor cleared himself some time later of the responsibility of the verses. And I shall never believe to my dying moment that the idea would ever have entered his head had it not been for the accident to Bob's little venture. Poor Bob! That cupid, with parti-colored wings, failed in his duty as far as he was concerned; but then he turned around and wove a spell for two other people; and perhaps that is as much as one can expect of a cupid.

A Sad Case.

A dispatch from a Boston paper says: There is strong reason for the supposition that Mrs. Nancy Madan, who died in East Cambridge jail last week, thus ending a life sentence for the murder of Obediah Jones, was innocent of the crime. She was formerly in Dedham jail, but was transferred to East Cambridge in 1871. During all her imprisonment she has persistently maintained her innocence, and reiterated the statement a few minutes before she died. On one occasion, when she supposed herself alone, she was overheard by one of the matrons of the prison praying, and the whole burden of her supplication was that as God knew her innocence, it might be made manifest. On the Sunday before her death, at the service in the prison chapel, she recited from memory Christ's sermon on the Mount, and she frequently expressed her forgiveness of all who had been concerned in her trial and conviction. Her conduct during her imprisonment was admirable, and her attention to what she considered her religious duty was constant and unvaried. At the trial it was shown that the daughter, upon whose evidence she was convicted, was of bad character, and had been living with the man, Obediah Jones, who was murdered, and the presumption is that the mother had no motive for the crime. The daughter has never visited her in prison. It is claimed that other facts are in the possession of the authorities which go far toward proving that the woman who has ended her life in prison was innocent.

Value of the Home Paper.

A LARGE proportion of the people in every community do absolutely nothing to support their local papers, and yet reap the benefit—in dollars and cents—every day, of the editor's work. A man will say, "Advertising does no good in my business; it may be necessary for dry goods men, or milliners, but it's of no use in my business; I have to keep men on the road and get my customers by going after them;" and yet the fact is that the town in which he does business would be unknown, the railroad over which he ships his goods would be unbuilt, and he himself unheard of, were it not for the newspaper, which he says does him no good. The local newspaper is of benefit to every man in the community, just as much as the local government; and when a man refuses to contribute to the support of the paper, on the ground that it "does him no good," he might just as well refuse to pay his taxes for the support of the courts and the police, on the ground that he "never breaks the law, and doesn't need any officer." There are men who imagine themselves to be perfectly honest, and very pious, who are doing business in every community, and every day appropriating to their own use the fruits of other men's labors, by reaping the benefits of the newspaper without contributing a cent to its sup-

port; and yet they would be terribly shocked if they should be charged with stealing wood from their neighbors. But the principle is just the same, the only difference being that in one case the law can reach them, and in the other it cannot; but, morally, it is just as dishonest to steal the fruit of your neighbor's enterprise, as to steal his fuel or his chickens. Too much credit cannot be given to the weekly newspapers for the work it has done, and is still doing, for the benefit of this country.—*Western Homestead.*

FOR THE TIMES.

TREMONT, O., February 21, 1879.

MR. EDITOR:—Thinking a few items from Ohio would interest your many readers, I pen the following description of the country between the cities of Urbana and Springfield. The first-named is the county seat of Champaign county is a very flourishing city. The last-named is about the size of the city of Harrisburg, and is one of the greatest manufacturing cities in the West. Here the world-renowned Champion Reapers are manufactured, and here, too, the far-famed Turbine Water Wheel was first invented and made, besides a great many more of minor importance. The Champaign works occupy twenty acres of land. Their buildings are all substantially built of brick and present a handsome appearance.

The country between these two cities is drained by the waters of Mad river, a slow, sluggish stream about the width of Sherman's creek, but a great deal deeper. This piece of country is called the Mad River Valley, and is, undoubtedly, the richest valley in the State. Farmers last season raised 100 bushels of corn per acre and had one of the largest wheat crops I have ever seen. The hills (if I can call them such) to the West of the river are covered with beech and ash timber, while to the East they are covered with oak and hickory.

The roads, or pikes, are kept in better condition here than in Pennsylvania.—They use nothing but gravel to build pikes here, there being no stone in the country.

About six miles North of Springfield is the town of Tremont City, the birthplace of the Detective Association. But for fear of occupying too much of your valuable space, I close, hoping this may be of interest to your many readers.

GEO. M. YOST.

Rescued from the Very Grave.

The grave-diggers of South Atchison, Kan., complain that business is very uncertain this season. Tenny Dysart, wife and mother, and also colored, was supposed to have departed this life, and preparations were made for the funeral. The body was robbed for the grave and placed in the coffin, the sorrowing husband and mourning children sadly grieving at the loss of their wife and mother. The funeral was to take place at 3 o'clock, at which time the house was filled with friends. The hearse was waiting at the door, and the body was soon to be borne to its last resting place. As the lid of the coffin was thrown back one lady laid her hand on the forehead of the supposed corpse, and, with a cry of astonishment, declared that the body was warm. The physicians applied the usual tests, and pronounced that life remained. The body was taken from the coffin, and at noon the next day, she was conscious and in a fair way to recover.

Saint Paul and the Infidel.

A Christian was speaking to an infidel of salvation through Christ. "Pshaw!" said the infidel, in a tone of disgust, "this preaching of the cross is to me perfect foolishness." The gentleman smiled.

"You and St. Paul agree exactly," he said, quietly.

"How so?" asked the scoffer, in some surprise.

Turning to Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, the other read: "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness."

The infidel was so struck by the truth of this statement that he felt himself impelled to read the Bible for himself.—He began at once, and the result was his conviction of its truth, and his acceptance of the Gospel that he had despised.

Strange Jealousy.

There was a strange scene at a funeral in Pittsburgh the other day. The deceased was a young married lady, who at one time had received the attention of a gentleman who afterwards married another lady. The last-named lady was present at the funeral, and when the services were over she went up the coffin and talked in a very excited manner, showing that she was jealous of the deceased, and she declared that should her husband approach to look at the corpse she would tear out his eyes. The woman became so violent that it was found necessary to remove her from the room and to request her husband, who was outside, not to enter the house. All the parties occupied high social positions, and the disgraceful incident causes considerable talk.—*Ex.*

"Glory!" exclaims the Philadelphia "Bulletin." "Likewise hallelujah. Also to some extent, hurrah!" It is pleasant to see enthusiasm curbed down to dignity like that. "Hip, hip, hur—stoph a leetle!" exclaimed a person of German mind last Tuesday night, deliberately opening his vest. "Vait till I putten mine sushbender."

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