

New Fables by Skookum Chuck

IV.—DOCTOR FISHER TO BE

"Gentleman to see you Miss."

"Show him up."

The voice failed to conceal the annoyance of the speaker. The landlady retired.

"Bother!" exclaimed Miss Fisher.

For a few more eager moments she devoured greedily a portion of Gray's Anatomy: "Thus far there has been traced the formation of enlarged spaces (secondary areolae), the perforated walls of which are still formed by calcified cartilage-matrix, containing an embryonic marrow, derived from the processes sent in from the osteogenic layer of the periosteum, and consisting of blood-vessels and round-cells, osteoblasts (Fig. 11)" Then she closed the book with a display of feminine temper, pushed her chair back from the table at which she had been sitting and frowned in agony:

"Fiddlesticks!" she complained. "Am I to be forever pestered by men?"

Even while she spoke there was an impatient knock at the door; and, before she could issue the usual formal invitation to enter, the visitor had clutched the handle of the door-lock with more impatience as though he would enter without ceremony.

"Come in," ordered Miss Fisher, hurriedly.

A young man entered beaming with delight but at the same time erratic with excitement.

"Dick, you here!"

"Yes. Why not? How are you?" And he extended a hand.

"Dick, you shouldn't have come," complained the young lady. But she accepted the friendly hand.

"But, Edna, I....."

"I beg your pardon, my name is Fisher—Miss Fisher, if you please," interrupted the girl haughtily. "Doctor Fisher to be."

Dick laughed:

"Since when?" he inquired.

"Yesterday, today and tomorrow," she replied inflexibly.

"What! Still harping away at that old stuff?" complained Dick.

"Most decidedly!"

"Well, you'r not mad, are you?"

"I certainly am. You shouldn't have come, that's all."

"Nevertheless I am here, and what are you going to do about it?" questioned Dick, drawing a chair close to her and sitting down.

"It's up to you," the girl replied, easing away from him slightly. "What brought you here anyway? You will spoil everything."

"I came on business. That is, I....."

"Glad to hear it. I was beginning to suspect you came to see me. What a relief!"

"Come now, you don't mean that," said Dick, taking up the slack that she had created between them by moving away.

"I mean it though."

There was a few second's deadlock during which Dick reached over and was about to pick up Gray's Anatomy which lay at arm's length on the table.

"No, you mustn't look at that book," the girl cautioned him, placing an objecting hand on the huge volume.

Dick withdrew hastily as though his hand had encountered a poisonous insect.

"No? And why not?" he inquired.

"Oh, well.....!"

A few moments of silent embarrassment.

"If you are going to be a doctor," warned Dick, "you will have to overcome all such refined modesty."

"Well, let's forget it."

"I'll say we should. But say, I have two tickets for the Empress. Will you come tonight?"

"Oh Dick, how rude you are! You know I detest theatres," she complained.

"Why I thought city life would have cured you of all that sour stuff?"

"Dick, you mean thing! Is that all the appreciation you have for my ambition to make good? I am mad now!"

"Oh, that's all right. No offence. I simply want to sandwich in a little recreation for you by way of a life-saver. A little nonsense now and then, you know," Dick apologized.

"I don't need any of your life-saving dope. I am happy," replied Miss Fisher, independently.

"What, happy on such a trash diet!" laughed Dick, sarcastically.

"Trash!" cried the girl, really angry this time. "It is good, sound, solid, sober sense, so there!"

"What, that?" And the young man pointed a contemptuous finger at the innocent volume on anatomy lying on the table with the title cover facing upward.

"Yes, that!"

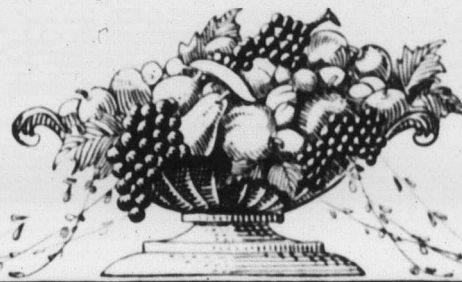
"Granted, for physicians and surgeons," differed the young man. "But not for a young lady of refinement."

"Sir, do you not know that the whole feminine world is crying out for female physicians and surgeons?" cried Miss Fisher haughtily.

"No. It's news to me," admitted Dick.

"Yes. We're always learning, arn't we?" replied Miss Fisher, almost scornfully.

"But we are not quarrelling, I hope," Dick evaded, calmly. "Come, let's be friends. Will you come to the Empress?"



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