

THE FIRST CASE.

(AN OBSTETRICAL BALLAD.)

In hours that brim with memories, with pleasures past beset,
There still are some few little things we sooner would forget ;
Of both, as I look back ten years—it only seems a week—
Of both the tragic and the gay, I shall a moment speak.

First, of a little incident that I remember yet ;
And will not in a score of years be willing to forget ;
It was the Council Finals, and with feelings that appall,
Despondently we gathered in the sickening Council Hall.

The paper was distributed, and we were reading them ;
It did not strike me that it was a literary gem ;
And only one thing to my mind was absolutely clear—
Were I an inspired writer I could get no “fifty” here.

Meanwhile the minions of the hall in rubber overshoes
About us hovered noiselessly, lest we to err should choose ;
While on the platform, high enthroned, and proud of what he'd done,
Sat, just as he sits here to-night, old Doctor Richardson.

After a time, however, he stalked down the hall awhile
And—what had he to rack his soul!—beamed with a peaceful smile.
I gnawed my pen as he approached—my face was grey, perhaps ;
And he saw I was moribund with a profound collapse.

So by my chair he paused, and for a moment took his stand ;
Glared as he wished to eat me—then reached out and shook my hand,
“Good luck to you, sir,” he exclaimed—as if he meant it, too ;
And these words of the grand old man cheered me with courage new.

The other little matter is the sort one would forget ;
I do not tell it frequently—I never told it yet.
The first case that I had was not what one might call a case,
Because I never really met that patient face to face :

“Gee Whiz!” the husband said when I appeared before the same,
“I thought you were a doctress—isn't Ezra a woman's name ?
The wife she wants a female—wouldn't have no other brung—
And then besides your being a man—you look so gol darned young !”

I nursed a longing for revenge six weeks with morbid mind ;
And then I *had* my vengeance on the “cruel of my kind ;”
A dissolute young carpenter (who led a troubled life)
Prayed me upon his hands and knees to come and see his wife.

The husband left me at the door, and I went in instead.
With an enlarged abdomen, she reclined upon her bed ;
Her mother, dropping tears and rags, tramped up and down the room.
While I upset a *pot de chambre*, and tripped across a broom.

“My good soul, let me see your tongue !”—her pulse I also took ;—
But 'twas a different region that the mother wished to look ;
“O Lord,” she said, “put up with that, are you a doctor, say,
And don't observe the poor sweet lamb is in a family way ?”

“Madam, enlightened doctors always in this way begin—
I now will carefully proceed to—see what is within.”
“O mamma” next the suffering wife her parent did implore,
“I don't think that this doctor ever had a case before.”