

STORIES OF THE CLUB.

"Alas that life has such realities,"

Box.

"Come, Doctor, it's your turn; you see we are all waiting for you, so let us have it."

"Yes, Doctor, out with it; if it's a poor story, the sooner it's over the better; and besides there's the Dominie has been waiting his turn, this half hour. So no more excuses if you please."

"I shall be very happy if the Dominie will relieve me now, and I will take his turn when it comes, for I confess I scarcely feel in the mood tonight. Won't you, Mr. Paterson?"

"It would be against the rules of the Club, unless you can produce a better reason than your not being in the mood. And as to my being anxious to display, that is only an assertion of Tom's, which he must allow me to inform him, is as easy to be made as is difficult to be proved."

"Is it proof you want Dominie, ? I'll leave it to the company whether you have not been as uneasy as one of your flogged boys when he finds the seat too hard for him."

"Arguments like these certainly have one advantage—they can never be refuted; but even if it were my turn, I think I have a good professional excuse. You know the maxim '*nullum tempus occurrat Domino.*' I intend to plead the exception when my turn comes, that is, if I can avail myself of the legal acumen and talent of my learned friend Mr. Todd."

"Thank you, Dominie, I shall be most happy."

"Well then that's settled, *pactum est*; but come, Doctor, you know your excuse will not be sustained if you put it to the vote, so you had better consent with as good a grace as you can. *Bis dat qui cito dat.*"

"A forfeit! a forfeit! two quotations in one sentence are intolerable. I suppose you want proof of that, do you?"

"Well, Tom, let the words be taken down, I shall debate the matter with you when we have more time; I see the Doctor has his pipe lighted, and is all ready to begin. Silence for the Doctor—if you please," (sotto voce.)

"I suppose I have no very valid excuse; and I like to abide by the regulations, especially in my own house. And here comes Mary with the things. Set them down there, my love. There, that's a good child. Help yourselves, gentlemen, if you please, and I'll do my best."

THE DOCTOR'S STORY.

ONE bitter cold night in the month of January, seventeen years ago, somewhat later in the evening than it is now, I had made all snug in my little office, and had drawn up my chair close to the stove, and was beginning for the twentieth time in as many hours, to think over my future prospects, and to wonder whether any of the inhabitants of the village of H—— would ever think of needing my professional services; when, just as I was beginning to arrive at the comfortable conclusion that it was of little use to remain longer in expectation, at least out of bed, a knock was heard at the door. At that time, gentlemen, a patient was of much more consequence to me than at present. I had just finished my medical studies, having walked the Hospitals, and listened for the usual length of time to the lectures and demonstrations of the learned faculty of P——, and with my diploma in my pocket and the scanty experience and abundant zeal which generally attend the young practitioner, I had made a pitch, as the phrase is, and only wanted plenty of patients—and fees—to succeed swifingly. Patients, however, did not come nor send very soon. Whether it was because I was a stranger, or because patients were scarce in these days, I cannot say; however I had made up my mind, and was resolved to make a fair trial, before giving up. So I read and re-read my medical library, arranged and re-arranged my small stock of medicines, and waited as patiently as I could for the first fruits of what I vainly hoped would prove a plenteous harvest. You may easily imagine, then, that it was with some slight expectation that I told my visitor to come in. It was a little boy some ten or twelve years of age, who opened the door and scarcely entering, addressed me with:

"Please, Sir, will you come and see my mother?"

"Come up to the stove, my fine fellow," said I, "and warm yourself; tell me who your mother is, and where you live, and then I will know what to do. Is your mother very ill?"

"Yes, Sir, she has been very ill, and Margaret told me to run for the Doctor, because Charles had gone away to seek father."

"And who is your father? Sit down there and tell me."

"He lives down the river about two miles from this. We have a farm there, just where the brook