put my scheme into execution, and begged her to allow me to repair the damage done to her umbrella, urging that my fence was the cause of the catastrophe, and inventing on the spot a remarkable story of my abilities in the way of removing paint from red silk. At first she demurred at my proposal; but as I would not be refused, after some hesitation she acceded, and asked me, if it was not too much trouble, to call when the task was finished, and I carried the umbrella upstairs in triumph.

Late in the afternoon I called. My enchantress came to the door in person, and I presented the substituted umbrella. She was quite enthusiastic over the rejuvenation that had been wrought, and thanked me warmly for my services. Still talking over the little misadventure we wandered into the parlor, where, somewhat to my astonishment, I found myself established like an old acquaintance in the course of a few minutes, and I admit that I did all in my power to fill the position satisfactorily. We talked upon the well-worn subjects, the weather, the theatre, the Institute, where, by a little equivocation on my part, we found an exceedingly large number of mutual acquaintances, and had by no means reached the end of our list of topics when tea was announced.

I was introduced to a middle-aged lady, whom I judged was her aunt, and invited to stay. The complete captivation to which I was now subject prevented my refusing, and I stayed. After tea, likewise, I did not take my departure. She did not seem surprised at the duration of my call, but became every moment more entrancing. I noticed a guitar in the room, and at my solicitation she took it up and sang to her own accompaniment. I played somewhat myself, and we improvised some duets,—fearfully sentimental things, that at another time I should have regarded my participation in as evidence of imbecility. Now nothing seemed more appropriate in the dimly lighted room, under the bewitchment of her presence.

Finally the music ceased. As if by a common impulse we both rose and strolled toward the window. The moon was shining without, and for some moments we watched it without speaking. I clasped her hand, which was not withdrawn, and as the radiant moonlight fell upon her half-averted face, I felt that no more lovely picture had ever been presented to my vision. What thoughts were passing in her mind I could not tell; but she cast down her eyes and sighed. I drew her toward me until I held her in my arms, and she did not resist the embrace. I do not care to be held accountable for what I would have said in another moment if our rapture had not been interrupted by the approach of a man, who at that moment turned the corner of the street and came toward us. Naturally I deferred my declaration until he should have passed. But the stranger paused before the door of the house in which we were, and slowly began to ascend the steps. She saw him, gave a little frightened scream of "Richard," and tore herself from my arms. At the same moment I too recognized her Richard as my Dick. Abruptly excusing myself I seized my coat and hat, precipitately descended the stairs to the basement, and made good my escape from the lower hall as Dick was entering above, berating myself for not remembering that, in his panegyric of the night before, Dick had laid especial stress on her affectionate disposition.

A Close Distinction.

When Jack and Nell were lovers fast,  
She asked him if his love would last;  
He answered her, in fond surprise,  
That there could never doubt arise.  

But Love had arrows still to spare;  
Jack found a maiden far more fair,  
And quite forgot, beneath her spell,  
The promise he had made to Nell.  

Though Nell had fears, she trusted yet  
Until the smiling pair she met;  
And then she owned, with feeling sighs,  
That she could never doubt her eyes.