He was instantly sobered by dismay at finding that he had planted his heel squarely on the child's bare foot. He grew white as he examined the dingy little foot, which was bleeding and terribly limp; for his was no light weight, and he had been walking heavily down the hill.

But Tom did not stop to lament the accident, and had his handkerchief around the foot in short order,—at the same time finding out from the girl's scared playmates her name and where she lived. Then he started at a trot through the cross streets, and had soon delivered his burden, still unconscious, into skilled and tender hands at the hospital. The surgeon shook his head over the bruised little foot. Two or three bones were broken, and the child might always be a cripple.

Tom stayed until the little one was safe and sound in the best bed she had ever known, and tried in his clumsy way to beg forgiveness; but the child did not understand him, and answered only with a feeble little moan that made big Tom's sight suddenly dim.

After sending a messenger to the child's home, and leaving directions that she should be well cared for at his expense, he promised to call again, and started for his room; but walked all the way to Cambridge, the moan still in his ears.

"Poor little kid! She has more than her share of hard times at best, and now I must crush her little toes, like a great clumsy brute, and make her a cripple! She won't be able to run and play like the others, and that was all the fun she had!"

His reflections did not make him happier, and it was with a strong feeling of disgust that he remembered a wine supper at which he was due that night. However, he started to dress for the occasion, and was putting on a dress-vest, when he felt something stiff in one of the pockets. It proved to be a dance order, and it recalled rather unpleasant memories when he saw that it was dated the night that he was introduced to Helen Brown. He glanced down the column of engagements, and was thunderstruck to find against the first schottische after the intermission "Miss Brown" as his partner's name; for he remembered only too well the cut he received from her.

All at once an idea struck him, and he hastily examined vest and coat pockets. In the coat pocket he found another order of older date, but exactly similar in appearance, and with almost the same dances; and the truth flashed into his puzzled head when he saw that his partner for that unlucky schottische was Miss Jackson. He had gotten the two orders mixed; and Helen and his sister believed that he had intentionally slighted his partner, and then unblushingly tried to claim a dance he had not engaged.

His chance discovery so overwhelmed him that he gave up the party, sending a curt excuse, and resolving to explain and apologize as soon as he possibly could.

The next day saw him entering the hospital with various paper bags in his arms, and several gorgeously colored books sticking out of his pockets, as well as a bushy, flaxen object that looked for all the world like a doll's head; and it was with a decidedly sheepish as well as surprised look that he bowed to Miss Helen Brown, who was just leaving as he entered, and whose eyes twinkled as she saw his odd load. Her bow was, however, very distant, and Tom flushed hotly, his eyes opened by his discovery, as he realized what her opinion of him must be. He was still more sheepish, however, as he delivered his bundles to the kind-faced nurse, who could not restrain her mirth at the kind and quantity of their contents. "Why, here are oranges enough for the whole ward," she said. "And grapes! She can't eat them all in a year; and I'm afraid she doesn't know what a toy is. But, sir, you might show the toys to her, and if you could tell her a story she would be delighted, I'm sure," she added mischievously as she turned away.