

A LITTLE WIFE.

O, give to me the fairy form,
The little hand and heart,
The beauty that is Nature's gift—
Triumphant over art;
For little heart, and little hands
Were not designed for strife;
And for ethereal happiness,
I'd choose a little wife.

No royal Juno's regal glance
Can melt or move my heart;
Or strike a sympathetic chord,
Or make me love by art;
For I must have a little dove—
A being, for whose life
I'd yield my own, and count it nought—
A faithful, little wife.

Almost a fairy in her touch,
An angel in her form,
She sheds a ray of happiness,
Despite the gathering storm.
What does such a man desire,
Than happiness in life,
And truest source of earthly bliss,
Is a cheerful, little wife.

Her steps are like the town at play,
So graceful, gay and neat;
Her manner, like the lighthouse beam,
Shining, without deceit.
A word to those that seeking are,
Celebrities in life,
For biggest heart, and brain, and soul,
Go seek a little wife.

F. N. DOVERMAN.

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A TERRIBLE MISTAKE.

Dora Guild was the daughter of an Indian General who died, covered with fame, and left her alone literally friendless in Bombay, where he breathed his last.

His dying words were: "Come, my poor girl, to your aunt in Arlington at Elmley, near London, and stay with her until you are married to Walter."

For General Guild and Colonel Gray had been friends together and comrades in many a battle, and had long ago advanced their motherless children to one another; the wedding to take place as soon as the young man had attained his majority.

So here was the orphan girl hearing the end of her long journey, and gazing wistfully at the strange and unfamiliar land of her birth.

There was one clause in her dead father's will which had recurred to Dora's mind with ever present pain, ever since she had first heard it; and that was, should she, upon making the acquaintance of Walter Gray, refuse to marry him, the bulk of her fortune should be passed over to her cousin, Penelope Arlington.

That her dear father should think it necessary to coerce her into compliance had wrung from her many a tear. Wholly unversed in the strong-minded ways of some English maidens, she had never dreamed of disobeying him, or of choosing a mate for herself.

The journey was over at last.

Miss Guild found herself in a quiet country house, surrounded by the most fervent assurances of welcome from her sole surviving relatives, who, of course, knew all about her affairs, and treated her with the most delicate consideration.

Mr. Arlington was a bluff and hearty gentleman farmer; Mrs. Arlington a reserved lady, who, however, seemed kindness itself; while Penelope, the only daughter, and Dora's possible rival for the fortune, was a gentlemanly, chestnut-haired girl of twenty, who greeted Dora by winding her arms around her and laying her cheek to hers without a word.

In the course of the evening of Miss Guild's arrival, while she was giving her aunt some account of her voyage from India, she observed her cousin Penelope standing out on the lawn, talking earnestly with a gentleman.

It was a brilliant night in midsummer; the moon, white and searching as a great limelight, shone on the pair, and showed Miss Arlington's companion to be not only young and handsome, but also a lover.

His hand held hers, and his stately head was often bent in unmistakable adoration close to her tresses, while she leaned towards him in all the loving confidence of a returned affection.

Very soon they entered the parlor, and Walter Gray was directly presented to Miss Guild.

And he the lover of Penelope!

Dismay, consternation, fell upon the heart of the orphan. There could be no mistake—every look, every action of the two betrayed it.

She was affianced to a man who loved another.

The cold touch of his hand on hers, the distant salutation, as if she were the merest stranger, proclaimed that he was resolved to ignore the contract which was between them.

Dora shrank into the darkest corner of the room, and bitter disappointment filled her soul.

Very soon, however, the conversation going on round the table arrested her attention. Walter Gray was telling Mr. Arlington and Penelope an account of a strange murder which had lately occurred.

"The man," said he, "was rather a clever chemist, and accomplished his purpose in a manner saving more of the exploits of the 'Arabian Nights' epoch than those of our day. He got possession of her journal, and impregnated its leaves with a sort of volatile poison, which she of course inhaled the first time she made a record in the book, the result being a mysterious death which no one could account for."

The eyes of Penelope Arlington were fixed upon the narrator with a pulsating eagerness which arrested the attention of the orphan.

"What could it have been?" she almost whispered.

"Don't believe it," remarked Mr. Arlington, sententiously.

The lovers were gazing at each other, and there was half a smile on the features of each.

Soon after this, Dora, being considered weary after her railway journey, was conducted to her bed-chamber by her cousin, who again embracing her in a mute, clinging fashion, hoped she would rest well, and left her.

Not one word had been said about her betrothal to the young man in the parlour. Her cousin was likely not only to rob her of her inheritance, but of her husband also.

The young girl retired to bed with a feeling of desolation at her heart which may be easily imagined, and fell asleep weeping bitterly for the old, happy Indian life, when she was the idol of her father, and the darling of her ayah.

She awoke—or, rather, she struggled back to consciousness—with these words running through her mind—"The result being a mysterious death, which no one could account for."

It was a disagreeable remark to occur to one in the middle of the night, and it roused her to a pre-natural wakefulness.

She began to ponder over the events of the past evening, when suddenly something struck her ear which sent all the blood tingling to her heart.

It was like the trailing of a long muslin robe over the thick carpet which covered the floor, and the cautious rustling of paper; the one sound following the other with the slow and regular monotony of a machine.

The night was at its darkest, and the head of the bed was in an alcove, so that a view of the room could not be seen; but Dora divined with a choking of the breath, the meaning of the strange sounds.

Penelope Arlington was in the room!

Before she retired, Dora had read a chapter from a large old Bible which lay on her table.

She perfectly recollected placing it in the end of the sofa near the window when she had finished reading it.

She felt that her rival was on her knees before that book, impregnating its leaves with the "volatile poison" which Walter Gray had spoken of, and that as she finished each leaf and turned it slowly over, her long muslin sleeve swept the edge of the book, making the stealthy sounds which had aroused her intended victim.

Dora lay behind her door and foot by a feeling which almost stopped the beating of her heart.

Remember, she had grown up, and scenes of passion and violence; she had been among the helpless ones at Cawnpore when the Sepoys massacred their victims in cold blood; and death was not so strange a weapon in the hands of a young girl to her, as it would be to us; nay, it seemed the one weapon by which Penelope Arlington would most likely strike for love and wealth.

Motionless, her eyes distended, the cold dew of agony dripping from her every limb, the orphan girl lay and listened to this evidence of treachery.

At last once a heart at the side of the bed cracked, as though a wary foot was passing over it, and the long swish of the garments followed.

Then the door softly burst open as if without hands, a flow of air from the passage rushed across the girl's face, and she heard and the softening thrillings in her ears, the first cry of some neighbouring chauntier.

Her terror ended in a swoon.

When she came to herself it was broad daylight.

The golden sunshine was lying across her pillow, and the rich perfume of honeysuckle came in through the open window and filled the pretty chamber.

All seemed peace and innocence around her, but the soul of the orphan girl was filled with astonishment.

She could scarcely arrange her thoughts at first, so terrible was the ordeal through which she had passed; but at length she saw that she must leave the house immediately; that she must relinquish both her affianced and her fortune, if she would feel her life safe.

"Oh, papa! my papa!" wept poor Dora, "you have made a terrible mistake."

When she joined the family, in answer to the breakfast bell, she was in her travelling dress, and her trunks were all repacked.

"Why, cousin Dora, what is the matter? Are you ill, dear?" exclaimed Penelope, in a soft, coaxing voice, which seemed habitual to her.

Dora turned her back on her midnight visitor, and striving to speak calmly, said to Mr. Arlington, "I wish to go to London, to-day, sir. Please allow some one to drive me to the station."

There was a pause of consternation, then they all with one accord began to plead with her to change her mind, and none of the three were so urgent or so tenderly loving about it as Penelope.

"Just try us, dear cousin," she entreated, "for I am sure you will be lonely at first—everything is so different, but who will make you happier than we can? Has anybody offended you, dear Dora?"

"No," answered Dora, shuddering; "but I shall prefer to live alone."

"You are so young, so ignorant of the ways of our town," said quiet Mrs. Arlington, her chiming anxiously, "it is a mad thing for you to think of, child."

"I must go," responded the orphan, averting her pallid face that the dark misery of it might not be seen.

So, when the persuadings of himself, and the pleadings and tears of his women availed not, Mr. Arlington got offended, and cried, "Let her please herself, Pensie. King and order Sam to bring the carriage round."

Dora swallowed a cup of tea, and choked down a morsel of bread, and then she went back to her room to put on her hat.

Locking the trunks took her a few moments. She flung herself upon a chair, and wept silently, feeling herself to be the most desolate and friendless being on the face of the earth.

What should she do in London?

Go to her father's lawyer, and tell him she did not wish to marry Walter Gray, then live alone in such lodgings as the remnant of her fortune could afford her.

Ah! it was, indeed, a terrible mistake, that clause in the will.

But into the midst of her musings stole a sound which thrilled her once more with awe.

The swish of a garment, the rustle of a paper, just as it aroused her last night.

Dora gazed about her like one bereft of reason. The large, old Bible lay quiet enough and closed exactly where she had placed it—no living thing was in the room but herself.

And then she saw the whole mystery.

The window was partly open, and a slight puff of wind had blown out the crisp white curtains in the room; then needing, had sucked them outward through the aperture, while the imprisoned air, running up the blind, had caused the tissue-paper hanging at the top to rustle.

There came another puff—the trail of the curtain over the carpet, the rustle of the paper hanging.

Dora sat gazing at the window, her face in its astounding thankfulness, a study for an artist.

At this moment Penelope came in. She had evidently been weeping.

"The carriage is ready, dear cousin," sighed she, tremulously.

Dora passed her hand over her forehead, then facing her rival, asked, in a hurried tone, "Were you up last night any time, Miss Arlington?"

"Yes," answered Penelope, in surprise. "About four o'clock I rose and shut my window. The wind was rising."

"Did you hear a cock crow as you did so?"

"Yes, I did. Why do you ask, dear? Stay, I know why! You were frightened by hearing a board creak beside your bed. I should have told you about that board; how stupid of me!"

"I heard a board creak," said Dora, scarcely believing her own ears.

"Yes, it ought to be fastened down. It runs the whole breadth of the house, and when I tread on one end of it in my room the other end creaks in this. Listen!"

She ran across the passage, shutting the door after her, and in a moment the veritable creaking commenced, accompanied by the clicking of the latch of the door, which had so petrified Dora.

When the young lady returned, the expression of her cousin's features was so mightily altered that she exclaimed, "Why, my darling girl, I do think you wanted to leave us because you thought the house was haunted."

"Perhaps—yes," faltered Dora, whitely gazing at her.

"Your poor little darling," murmured Penelope, in a voice of deep compassion, and she took Dora's unresisting hand in hers. "Why would you not tell us? Don't you know, Dora, and a smile played around her lips, "that we ought to love each other very dearly? We are both going to marry a Walter Gray, and be the closest sort of cousins."

"Are there two Walter Grays?" ejaculated Dora.

"What?" cried Penelope, her countenance slowly crimsoned as the situation burst upon her; "did you imagine?"

She never completed the sentence, but snatching up the poor, tired little orphan to her bosom, strained her there, and kissed her tearful, smiling face with kisses, which were fully returned.

But Dora never recovered the whole of her terrible mistake.

THE GLEANER.

The reduced scale of registering letters in England has increased the business four-fold already.

For instruments are required for a complete telephone line—two at each end, one to transmit and one to receive.

The King of Italy has ordered the sale of 1,000 of his father's horses, and is reducing the household expenditure. The King must indeed have been fond of horses; put them down at £40 a year each (for Italy), there is ruin in the sum total.

It powdered mustard is rubbed up with a little water it imparts to the latter powerful deodorising and purifying properties. The proportions are not given, but the writer recommends it not only as a means of cleansing various utensils, but also of removing the smell of fish and so forth from the hands.

It is a remarkable fact that not only in Ontario, but also in the other Provinces of Canada, the Irish are more numerous than either the Scotch or the English. In the four Provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, there are 706,269 of English, 549,946 of Scotch, and 546,411 of Irish origin. In Ontario

the Protestant Irish are twice as numerous as the Irish Roman Catholics, and thereby materially help to form a counterpoise to the great Roman Catholic population of the Province of Quebec.

It is popularly supposed in Italy that the late King "caught his death of cold" by sitting *en bras de chemise* at an open window in the middle of the night. Victor Emmanuel was, as the story goes, a sufferer from want of sleep, and whenever he found that all attempts to court the fickle god were hopeless he was wont to get up, and, lighting up one of his great cigars, placed himself where he could gaze out into the darkness or the moonlight. The tale, whether true or false, will serve to illustrate the curiously diverse expedients to which sufferers from a similar malady betake themselves.

SUGAR is required to combat cold; this seems to be the conclusion to be drawn from the experience of the sufferers from cold of General Gourko's troops during the crossing of the Balkans. The longing which the Russian troops had in their cold, cheerless march for sugar was remarkable. When approaching Sofia, "sugar," says a correspondent of a London paper, "not seeing the joke," "was in every one's mouth. They said 'Give us sugar,' and the universal remark which passed around to cheer the despondent and to quiet the impatient was, 'We'll get sugar in Sofia.' Probably this was the impulse of a correct instinct as to the true physical requirements under exposure to piercing cold.

HUMOROUS.

DANCING masters seldom have any money, but they're always taking steps to raise some.

Of all men it must be confessed that the tax-gatherer has the most calls for his money.

The minister who tells the truth in the pulpit will be sure to make some people glad and other people mad.

A MAN must be grounded upon a moral mountain to be able to withdraw a comfortable half dollar from circulation if he happens to get stuck with it.

BARON ALDENSON, on being asked to give his opinion as to the proper length of a sermon, replied: "Twenty minutes, with a leaning to the side of mercy."

It don't require a very imaginative man to have unalterable prayers when he's cracked across the southern end of his back with a muddy shawl.

EVERY day or two the telegraph announces that somebody has discovered a new asteroid. Which indicates carelessness in not sprinkling ashes on the sidewalk.

If a boy is sent to clear the snow from a sidewalk, he gets "a crack in the back," but he can put in ten hours' work building a snow fort and growl because the days are not longer.

AN Irish guide told Dr. James Johnson, who wished for a reason why he was always of the feminine gender, that "May be it was because she always had the last word."

A SHIPMAN advertises in a country paper for a situation, and in order to excite admiration of his experience, innocently states that he has been discharged from seven establishments within a year!

CONVERSATION overheard not a thousand miles from Adelphi Terrace: "I say, Bode, can you lend me a Shakespeare?" "I don't think I've got a Shakespeare, but I can lend you a Bradawl."

A LITTLE boy was asked the other day if he knew where the wicked finally went to? He answered: "They practice law a spell here and then go to the gas-chamber." "It was a painful operation for the boy to sit down for a few days."

TALK about female curiosity—it's all one-sided. Let one man stop on the street to spell out a sign on the top of a nice building and every other man's nose goes by; well stand still and stare for ten minutes trying to make out what the first idiot is looking at.

To the correspondent who asks if it is wicked to smoke, we can only reply sorrowfully that we consider it an almost unpardonable sin. Let him send his present stock of cigars to this office, and we will burn them up for him as a sacrifice for his first misdoings—one by one.

"LET me see," said a desperately dunned debtor: "this is the fifth time you have called within four days, is it not? Regret to disappoint you, young man; but step in next Saturday before three o'clock, and I'll positively settle—in my mind when you may call again."

MR. BYRON, the dramatist, met an improvident and impetuous actor, who extracted a few sovereigns from him as a temporary loan. A few minutes after he encountered an old friend whom he had not seen for some months. "Why, Byron," said he, "you're getting quite thin!" "That I should think so," so would you. Why I've lost several pounds in the last ten minutes!"

THEOPHILE HOOK once met with the Duke of B——. The latter was to have been one of the knights at the Eglington Tournament, and was lamenting that he was obliged to excuse himself on the ground of an attack of the gout. "How," said he, "could I ever get my poor pulled legs into these abominable iron boots?" "It will be quite as appropriate," replied Hook, "if your Grace goes in your last shoes."

Those admired regiments called "the Heavies" are, as is known, kept exclusively for service in the United Kingdom. An officer, who as belonging to one of the regiments in question, must be called distinguished, was lately heard talking to his partner at a country ball on the subject nearest his heart, when the young lady asked him, "Does your regiment often go to India?" "Oh, dear, no," replied the officer; "our regiment never leaves England—except, in case of invasion."

The following inappropria is attributed to a well-known Commons' House, textual advance. It seems to have been suggested by the motion for the appointment of a committee of the House of Lords on intemperance, the Duke of Westminster having deputed the function of "moving" to Lord Clerk:—

Said the Duke to the Earl, "a committee I want. This horrible drink to throttle. And you, my dear Clerk, are the very best man. I think of for stopping the bottle." So the Earl did the business without idle talk. And moved the committee instance. And they all of them said they were thankful to Clerk. Who thus helped them to stop the decanter.