

POETRY.

'SHOE STRINGS.

Oh, the Oxford ties are dainty, with their silken lace neat.

My Shoe.

Then she buys some patent fasteners warranted to clasp all day.

SELECT STORY.

DOLLY'S FORTUNE.

By Mrs. E. BURKE COLLINS.

"Is there no hope, doctor?" Doctor Lyndhart glanced into the girl's sorrowful face.

He had answered similar questions in a similar manner hundreds of times before in his life.

It seemed so hard that a girl like Dolly Alden should be left alone in the world.

And poor as well, which supposition was almost a foregone conclusion with all the people in Aylshire who had given the subject a moment's reflection.

For grandfather Alden had little to leave, and that little was already disposed of to satisfy the clamorous claims of various creditors.

And although Dolly had been ever the apple of his eye, Stephen Alden was too honorable to divert one dollar of his small possessions from his legitimate end—the pockets of his creditors.

Doctor Lyndhart smiled mysteriously. "You're young, I am sure upon an important errand," he said.

"I wish I could talk!" she exclaimed, with a pretty gesture of despair. "If I could express all I want to say, perhaps you might understand me; but you know cannot. Alfred thinks as I do, I am sure; ask him to argue it for you, and let me listen."

"Alfred is lounging under that tree, and has a cigar in his mouth, a much better thing than any I can see," she said rather pettishly.

"You see, she said, rightly interpreting my unspoken wish, that you should be taken in me altogether if you thought me clever, I don't understand you and Alfred half the time; and, as for your romance, I don't understand that at all."

"You are like the Sleeping Beauty in the dear old fairy-tale," said Dolly. "I opened my lips to tell her one of the many in my mind, when I suddenly remembered with astonishment that that was Alfred's; another—Alfred's again; a third—no, that was mine."

"You see, she said, rightly interpreting my unspoken wish, that you should be taken in me altogether if you thought me clever, I don't understand you and Alfred half the time; and, as for your romance, I don't understand that at all."

"What an arbitrary old man!" he exclaimed, "to stipulate that you marry that fellow Gordon. Surely, Miss Alden, you are not bound to comply with his terms? You need not, at least, be in haste."

"Don't dear!" she panted. "Indeed, indeed I'd rather die. I never could love any one but Wayne, and I would rather be poor—poor as poverty all my life long, than to marry a man I do not love. Granddad, it would be wicked—downtight wicked!"

"The old man sighed, and turned away faint and exhausted. The exertion of speaking had been too much for him. Life's brief candle was burning down very rapidly, and now that he saw there was no hope of providing for Dolly's future, he gave up the struggle for love, once. He died that night, and poor Dolly was left alone to face a dreary future."

Stephen Alden had been buried two days. Dolly was sitting alone in the gloomy best room of the old house, in her black gown, her little, pale face wearing a look of sorrow, when she was startled by the appearance of a stranger—a short, thick-set man, with a round, red face, piercing gray eyes, and an untidy red beard. He saluted Dolly with an awkward bow.

"I see Mr. Allen?" he began. "Dolly started and with difficulty choked back the tears. "He—Grandfather is dead," she faltered. The stranger looked surprised, then extremely regretful. There was no mistaking the genuine regret upon his misty, red face.

"Is it possible? Oh, I am so sorry—so sorry that I did not get here before! Did he mention to you any particular private business, Miss Alden? Oh, yes; I know that you are Miss Alden. I have seen you before, though I have never had the pleasure of being presented to you. My name is Morton. I came here upon particular and private business with your grandfather. The news of his death had not reached me. I am very, very sorry, Young lady, I beg your pardon, but your future is indifferently provided for. I trust that you will not object to—"

NO HEART FOR LOVE.

Perhaps it was because she was so picturesque that I loved her first; because the light of her large gray eyes recalled the saints of Fra Angelico, and because her hair lay in such splendid masses of sunlit brown upon her slender neck; because every motion of her rounded figure threw her into a new attitude of grace, and every pose was a study for a painter; because every article of dress that she wore was instantly transfigured, and no longer part of the trivial fripperies of fashion hung like the drapery of a goddess.

I had been through some rough months of care and sorrow when I first met her, that had left me weary and glad; and to seek a quiet nook in the Welsh mountains, where I might rest both mind and body, where I might drink in renewed strength and inspiration from the bracing air and enjoy the society of my old friend, Alfred Talford.

He had told me that his sister was with him at the little country inn; but I did not notice the fact except to wonder if she would be much in the way. But the morning after my arrival, as I strolled out to watch the early shadows over the hills and to breathe the dewy freshness of the air, I came suddenly upon her.

Generally we lose, in closer and more intimate acquaintance with a person all recollection of the first impression he makes upon us, or remember it only to laugh at its absurdity. But I shall always remember my first sight of Clara, as she stood leaning over the railing of the garden, talking to her brother, her soft gray dress falling about her in such perfect folds, and her cheeks flushed by the clear, keen air.

Through the long summer evenings we three sat under the trees and listened to the rushing of the brook till the monotony grew oppressive, and Clara broke into some sudden burst of song, clear, cool and unimpassioned as the brook itself. "Sing me something fervent," I said to her one evening—"something with passion and pain in it—a song to stir the heart, to come home to our struggling human nature; not these ethereal fancies of Chopin or Schumann—moonshine set to music."

She shook her head half sadly, while yet she answered with a smile, "I cannot sing such songs. Music is for repose, not for struggle. It ought to soothe and subdue one, not excite."

"Then, according to your theory, a large part of even what we call sacred music is all wrong," I said, "our pentecostals, our agonized prayers for help, our wild cries of sorrow and remorse?"

"I wish I could talk!" she exclaimed, with a pretty gesture of despair. "If I could express all I want to say, perhaps you might understand me; but you know cannot. Alfred thinks as I do, I am sure; ask him to argue it for you, and let me listen."

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POSSUM RIDGE LOVE SCENE.

A gentleman was over on Possum Ridge the other day hunting, and after tramping about for some time he sat down on a log in the woods to rest. Directly he heard voices, and peering through the bushes he saw a young couple but a few feet away, sitting by side on the grass. They were both bareheaded, and he was in his shirt sleeves his cotton pants being held up by a single bed-lacking "gallus." The gentleman overheard a portion of the couple's conversation, which ran thus:

"Ho—! I was thinkin' of you to-day," she— "Now, was you?" "Yes, I wuz."

"What was ye thinkin' 'bout me?" "Lots 'o things."

"You jest talkin' now?" "I hain't nuttin' I did think 'bout ye."

"Was they good things or bad?" "They was good, o' co'se."

"Now you jest talkin', Hiram." "I haint nuttin' I was thinkin' good things 'bout ye."

"What d'yer think?" "I haint nuttin' I did think 'bout ye."

"O'se I won't if yer thought good things?" "I thought yer wuz awful purty."

"Oh, Hiram, ain't yer ashamed yer?" "No, I ain't. Yer air purty."

"Yer know I ain't, an' yer ain't got no business to make fun of me." "Hain't makin' fun of ye. Yer the purtest thing I ever see."

"That's lots 'o gals a heap purtier'n me yer now."

"I ain't never seed 'em."

"Yer know what she wuz yer thinkin' of?" "I thought yer wuz awful sweet."

"Oh, Hiram, ain't yer ashamed?" "Oh, Hiram, ain't yer ashamed?" "What wuz it?" "I wuz thinkin' I'd love ter marry yer."

"Oh, Hiram, I'm goin' home."

"Yer said yer wouldn't git mad."

"I hain't mad, but yer orient ter make fun of me."

"Hain't makin' fun of ye. I do want to marry yer."

"Yer know better."

"I do want yer. I'd git married to-day if you would. Hain't yer willing?" "Uh, uh."

"C'ose?" "C'ose what?" "Jest c'ose."

"Yer don't love me none."

"Yer don't love me, nuther."

OLD JIM AND HIS FIDDLE.

Oh, that was a fiddle—an' ole Jim, he knew how to play it, too. "Home Sweet Home," "Devil's Hornpipe," "Lizzie, ole Gal"—"anythin', I don't care what—jest ask Jim an' he'd play it for ye."

Old Jim laid around the ranch that winter—the last winter he was with us, strange—'n' though we heard that fiddle from morning till night, we never got tired of it. They was somethin' peculiar 'bout Jim's playing. He alius throwed his whole soul into his tunes, an' I've heard him snicker right out when he played somethin' gay, and then again, I've seen the big tears roll down his cheeks when he played somethin' sad. It strikes me that's the proper way for a fellow to feel when he wants to make his music tell, and Jim's music told, you can stand pat on that.

"I've had this ole fiddle ever since I was 5 year old," said Jim once, as he lifted the instrument up an' kissed all the rosin off'n the strings. "Whenever I feel good I play on it jest to remind myself that I'm still on earth an' musn't git scared away, an' when I'm down in the mouth I play on it to chipper up, an' when I don't feel either good or bad—why, I jest play on it 'cause I want to. Lemme tell ye, fellers, a fiddle ain't just a piece of wood on some cuttin' strings—it's a real, live thing, an' I waldn't any more think of hurtin' the feelings of my fiddle than I wald of hurtin' your feelings, not a bit!"

Then he grabbed the fiddle by the neck an' sawed out a tune that made 'em cry—an' the rest of us too, for that matter. Old Jim was never a very healthy feller—his face was white an' his eyes big'n glassy, an' he jest kinder wilted away that winter, an' when spring came he was flat on his back. It was consumption, Jim said. He had come to Montana from Arkansas to get help, an' in consequence he had lived jest fifteen years more'n he had expected. He knew he couldn't live—he said so—an' I tell ye, stranger, it was afflictin' to see him in bed fiddlin' some dancin' tune for the boys, an' him so near his end.

One day Jim called us all around him. "Boys," said he, calm an' contented like, "I'm pretty near ready to quit. I know I'll die just about the time the sun comes up again—I feel it in my bones, an' if you'll jest prop me up and gimme my dear ole fiddle, I'll play you my last tune."

"I'll do it, Jim," said I. "An' then, when Gabriel's trumpet blows I'll come out of that grave and play a tune that the angels'll listen to." Then he tuned the fiddle slowly, an' when that was done, he kissed it an' murmured, "It's the last time, my boy," an' then he played.

It was a tune I had heard when a boy, in the east—"Nearer My God to Thee"—an' we all stood around poor ole Jim an' watched his white fingers quivering over the strings, an' we saw his eyes glimmer with a light that wasn't of the earth—I know that. That fiddle talked, stranger—yes, yer; talked straight to the heart, of every feller there, an' its voice was so sweet an' so sad that they wuzn't one of us who didn't turn away his face to hide the tears. Some of the boys wuz out doors an' I could see 'em wipe their eyes with their big red handkerchiefs. At last the music stopped quick.

"Here, Tom," said Jim, an' then he gave a long sigh an' kissed the fiddle again, "take it an' hang it up there until an't-to-morrow. My eyes were swimmin' so I could hardly see what I was doin'."

"All right, Jim," I said, an' I hung the fiddle behind the stove. We watched by Jim that night an' several times we thought he was gone—he looked so soft—but he would move a little—an' eye lid, mebbe—an' we was glad to think he was with us still. But the night slipped away an' a gray mist was hangin' over the mountain tops when Jim started up an' said, wild like: "It's the stove, boys, did I—just I know that. That fiddle talked, stranger—yes, yer; talked straight to the heart, of every feller there, an' its voice was so sweet an' so sad that they wuzn't one of us who didn't turn away his face to hide the tears. Some of the boys wuz out doors an' I could see 'em wipe their eyes with their big red handkerchiefs. At last the music stopped quick.

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