

FAST AND SURE.

Strong in the faith of woman I lift mine eyes to thine...

Within thy hand no peace secure, Nor doubt nor fear betraying...

Yes—draw me to thee nearer, And whispering sweet and low...

Oh! this upon thee leaning, As woman ever should...

A TOY DRAMA.

Colonel Poland, of the Indian army, and late of the Hussars, was a man whose ill luck had long been proverbial among his friends.

He was a married man with a delicate wife and a couple of young children, and the climate speedily made his wife a chronic invalid.

Grief almost killed Mrs. Poland, and nearly broke the Major's heart—for he was not the Colonel, then.

Poland began to think his luck had turned at last. He had recently been promoted to a Colonelcy, and shortly expected to command his regiment.

Poland called his servants to take his wife to her room, feeling utterly stunned and helpless.

But just when the prospects of the family seemed to brighten, a new terror rose to torment the luckless Colonel.

His child began to show premonitory symptoms of the same wasting disease which was already so terribly familiar to his parents.

"I can't ask him, my dear; no, there is nothing else for it; I must send in my papers, and we must try to keep out of the work-house somehow or other.

And so the matter was settled. Colonel Poland was to resign his commission, and the little family were to start for England by an early steamer.

They stayed a couple of nights at Bundapore, and sympathized deeply with the Polands in their dilemma.

"It would really be rather a favor than otherwise," he protested. "My wife and I are very dull by ourselves, and if you could only trust us, I am sure we would take as good care of the boy as if he were our own."

The Colonel grasped his friend's hand in silence, but he could not realize the position.

"I don't want to press you," said Bradley, "but it certainly seems a pity that you should cut the Service now, and starve on half pay."

So, after a long discussion between Poland and his wife, it was settled that the Colonel should accept his friend's offer, and send Rupert to England, while he and his wife remained at Bundapore.

There was very little time for preparation, or for prolonged leave-taking. The poor mother strove to console herself with the thought that her child's life would be saved, but she suffered terribly in parting from him.

Two years passed and the Polands were almost reconciled to the separation by the comforting letters they constantly received from Dr. Bradley.

Only six months were wanting to complete the Colonel's term of service, when, by the same mail, arrived a couple of letters from England, one in a black-bordered envelope.

His father had been his worst enemy, and his brother had never raised his little finger to help him.

"Why, Bessie, what is the matter?" he exclaimed, and then his eye fell on the letter from Dr. Bradley.

Rupert was lost! He and his nurse had disappeared, and not a trace could be found of them.

One thing was clear in his mind—that he must sail for England without a day's delay, whatever the cost might be.

On the misery of the return journey—the journey to which the Colonel and his wife had looked forward so eagerly for years—it is needless to dwell.

Not the smallest trace had been found of the child and nurse, except that the detectives were practically certain that they had gone to London, and there disappeared utterly.

What had induced the woman to take this extraordinary step, Doctor and Mrs. Bradley utterly failed to imagine.

"But perhaps he is found by this time," he said.

"No, no!" moaned his wife; "they would have telegraphed. I shall never see him again!"

"Of course the little beggar's dead," remarked to his friends young Martin Poland, who, by the way, was the Colonel's presumptive heir.

every child in the Kingdom who happens to have light hair and blue eyes!

"It would be rather awkward for you, too, if the child is found," suggested a malicious old gentleman, whose mission in life was to rub people the wrong way.

In spite, however, of such sneers, Colonel Poland and his wife hoped against hope, and took a somewhat melancholy pleasure in doing all they could to relieve the wretchedness of the poor little gutter children whom they found in work-houses and hospitals.

Christmas was drawing near, and the Colonel, according to his custom, was full of benevolent plans for the welfare of these waifs and strays of infant humanity.

"By the way," said Mrs. Poland, "I see that there is a competition for the best home-made toy. I used to be rather clever at that sort of thing."

"Do, dear; it will be a nice occupation for you."

"What do you say to a doll's house?" asked Mrs. Poland, after several other suggestions had been discarded as impracticable.

"I can't—I can't spare Rufus much longer, it's so lonely here now. I'd rather be oppressed by old England and have Rufus home than to be free and live without him."

"I wonder who will get the bungalow?" she said to the Colonel, when the doll's house had been duly packed and sent off to its destination.

Low-voiced, neatly-dressed nurses were passing to and fro among numbers of little cots, each of which contained some tiny scrap of suffering humanity.

At present rapturous expectation ended in blissful reality; a chorus of delight and surprise filled the long, formal room, where the cries of pain, were, alas, much more frequent, and every child in the ward fondled some toy which chased the look of suffering from its face.

One little fellow alone did not seem satisfied with the splendid woolly donkey which had fallen to his share.

"What's the matter, Bob?" asked a nurse, very kindly, with whom Bob, was an especial favorite.

"Please, nurse, may I see Ada's doll's house?" pleaded the child.

"Are you satisfied now, Bob?"

There was a stir at the other end of the ward, as some visitors entered to see the children and their toys.

with a sad expression and wistful eyes.

"I think, Madam, your toy was sent into this ward," said the Superintendent, who acted as guide; "but Mrs. Price will know. A doll's house Mrs. Price, with one story and a veranda."

"What is the name of the little pleader?" quickly asked the Colonel, strangely interested.

"And I mine," said honest Rufus Parsons. "And I think my son good enough to mate with a princess."

The day had been a dreary one for the young matron, Rebecca Parsons. She was entirely alone in their humble forest home as she, the bride of a few months, had given a "God speed" to her Rufus and bade him go with the brave band of Massachusetts volunteers to fight for freedom and a freeman's right.

"I can't—I can't spare Rufus much longer, it's so lonely here now. I'd rather be oppressed by old England and have Rufus home than to be free and live without him."

Rebecca wrapped herself in warm shawls, caught up the milk pail and started to the barn, looking back at the bright fire that burned in the great, wide fireplace.

"I am your prisoner, lady; do not betray me for the sake of my young wife. Think if it were your own husband; and he swooned, so weak and sick as he was from the effort it cost him to make this appeal to his captor.

Rebecca's heart was a tender and womanly one. She ran to the house for brandy and wine, and gave it to the soldier. She looked at the wound; a gaping, cruel one it was, and in the chest too, but only a flesh wound.

A high fever came upon the patient. For days he raved in delirium, and Mrs. Parsons found it hard to control him. Two weeks' careful nursing and he was out of danger, but very weak and spent.

In Europe and in this country it must often have been observed how many people of an advanced age, women as well as men, are traveling for health or pleasure.

At supper, as she sat alone, two strong arms were folded about her, and a loud voice greeting told her Rufus had come home.

"Indeed I am, as I did not know you were near here. Is there anything wrong, Rufus?"

"Oh, no, but it is rumored that a red-coat is in this neighborhood. Now don't be fearful, Rebecca. I am here to-night, and good news, dear, after this week I am coming home to stay all the time."

At daybreak Rufus kissed Rebecca and rode away, bidding her keep watch for stray redcoats.

He was the attendant of a railroad lunch counter at a station in Indiana. The other day, as a stranger called for a cup of coffee, the attendant glared at him for a moment and then began to spit on his hands.

but one morning there came a packet from England for Mrs. Rufus Parsons.

It was a great event in their monotonous lives, and delighted indeed was the young housewife at the dainty, pretty articles of dress and the toilet table sent by Mrs. Reginald Lingard.

Rebecca Parsons and Lady Lucie Lingard were at once tender and true friends, each forgetting the difference in dress and station.

Victoria, the eldest daughter, was a genuine aristocrat, and a little inclined to snub and patronize all Yankees; but Beatrice, the piquante, black-eyed gypsy, was in love with everything she saw.

If there is any person in the world to be envied it is the one who is born to an ancient estate, with a long line of family traditions and the means in his hand of shaping his mansion and his domain to his own taste, without losing sight of all the characteristic features which surrounded his earliest years.

His grandfather should be a wise, scholarly, large-brained, large-hearted country minister, from whom he should inherit the temperament that predisposes to cheerfulness and enjoyment, with the finer instincts which direct life to noble aims and make it rich with the gratification of pure and elevated tastes.

Rebecca milked Bonny Lass, the sleek, gentle cow, and was pulling down hay for Prince's supper, when she was startled by a faint moan.

"I don't want any supper, and I hate that old barn," she said, holding back.

"Hello, Miss Doldrums! In the dumps again? Come on, supper's 'most ready!"

"Do you see anything behind me, Horace?" asked the nervous little girl, softly, as they walked toward the barn.

"Nothing but the shadow of a little coward," he answered, gayly.

"Owls always hoot that way; but, little cousin, there is an All-Seeing Eye that witnesses every act of hidden wrong-doing, and a 'small still voice' that speaks louder, even, than this solemn bird."

A single firm in Jasper, Mo., has shipped 7,000 rabbits this season. In some sections of Missouri restaurants class rabbits among the "delicacies of the season."

He was the attendant of a railroad lunch counter at a station in Indiana. The other day, as a stranger called for a cup of coffee, the attendant glared at him for a moment and then began to spit on his hands.

"What's up?"

"We were in Wall street together ten years ago. You advised me to buy railroad stock and unloaded on me and brought me down to \$40 a month."

Whe?

A big, old-fashioned barn in the country, piled full of sweet-smelling hay; thousands and thousands of clover blossoms, with honey cups over which fat bumble bees tumbled and buzzed, gathering their sweet burden, were stowed away in the loft; golden buttercups mingled with the grass; great-eyed daisies, on which Aunt Alice drew such cunning little baby faces, were ruthlessly beheaded and packed away in the mows.

Such a delightful place for a romp and a tumble! Such delightful tea parties as were held out there! All the dolls were invited, and sometimes Moppet's whole family of kittens, only they would be so rude about sticking their heads in the milk jar.

"O, Amy!" cried Cousin Jessie, "we're going to have supper in the barn; Dora will give bread and cake, Will is picking berries and Flossy is making a real salad out of the cook book. Johnny brought her some garbage from down the creek to put in, but I think it smells awfully."

"I wonder what ails Amy lately; she is so quiet," said Aunt Alice.

"She mopes along all the while, and will not play," said Horace. "I'm going to find out what the trouble is and see if I cannot bring back her merry laugh," and he sprang down lightly from the porch.

To tell the truth, Amy was worried and was sure no little girl ever had such a dreadful thing happen to her. She was acquiring a very bad habit of not always telling the exact truth about little things. She had never been guilty of a deliberate falsehood, but it is so easy to slip into silly ways.

"I'll tell mamma Betty broke it," she thought, "and she won't know any difference, for she sent her away last week. Yes, I'll just lay it to Betty."

"Who who-o?" called a loud, hoarse voice from the loft.

"Hello, Miss Doldrums! In the dumps again? Come on, supper's 'most ready!"

"Do you see anything behind me, Horace?" asked the nervous little girl, softly, as they walked toward the barn.

"Nothing but the shadow of a little coward," he answered, gayly.

"Owls always hoot that way; but, little cousin, there is an All-Seeing Eye that witnesses every act of hidden wrong-doing, and a 'small still voice' that speaks louder, even, than this solemn bird."

Habbits.

A single firm in Jasper, Mo., has shipped 7,000 rabbits this season. In some sections of Missouri restaurants class rabbits among the "delicacies of the season."

He was the attendant of a railroad lunch counter at a station in Indiana. The other day, as a stranger called for a cup of coffee, the attendant glared at him for a moment and then began to spit on his hands.

"What's up?"

"We were in Wall street together ten years ago. You advised me to buy railroad stock and unloaded on me and brought me down to \$40 a month."