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## PEASANT AND PEER.

Dolly the milkmaid came down the lane,  
And Harry the shepherd came over the grass,  
And they met right there by the hawthorn hedge,  
And that is the way it came to pass.

Their hands met there in the hawthorn hedge,  
And the lips met there in a true-love's kiss,  
And the promise that passed between them there  
Open'd a life of perfect bliss.

There's a careless way with a courtly bow,  
He asks my lady to be his wife—  
'Tis little against her aristocracy,  
And that is the first of a courtly life.

The noble is being led by Harry's foot,  
Where Dolly's milk pail is the sweetest treat,  
And their love's heart is as true as gold,  
And their hearts are as true as gold.

My lady weeps in a courtly bow,  
Where Dolly's milk pail is the sweetest treat,  
And their love's heart is as true as gold,  
And their hearts are as true as gold.

For the love is out with his love and honor,  
And Love, the guest of the noblest heart,  
Has never yet crossed the noblest heart,  
And their hearts are as true as gold.

'Tis the same old story—worth not fame,  
Nor rank, nor power, nor wealth, nor fame,  
Nor a pretty love, nor a pretty love,  
Can't give the blessing that comes with Love.

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loving words. In a few moments the big blue baby eyes closed, the little orphan was asleep. Doctor Grey bent down to take the sleeping child.

"I think you were mistaken in saying ministering angels could not be seen. Philip and I have seen one to-night—only the wings were invisible," he whispered softly.

Dorothea looked up, but something in his face checked the light words she would have spoken. Turning from him, she pressed her burning cheeks against the cold glass pane of the window.

The doctor left the room with his sleeping charge. When he returned Dorothea was sitting on a low cushioned stool chatting merrily to his mother. Alice called to them as he entered, and in a few moments they were gathered round the piano, singing Christmas carols. They were followed by Christmas stories full of dwarfs, fairies, haunted dolls, and perilous adventures.

"Hush," Dorothea raised her hand, and swiftly crossing to the window threw it wide open. They all followed, and breathlessly listened to the far off Christmas chiming. When the last lingering note died on the air they turned to look at each other with amazed eyes.

"Why, dear, let us open our hearts to the Christmas greeting, brought us by the bells. They whispered of the Father's watchful care, we can all safely trust in His protecting arms."

Mrs. Grey's voice was low and sweet, and taking her bible, she read to them the old, sweet story of the Child in the manger, keeping their watch on the Judean plains, seeing that mysterious light and hearing the heavenly host sing—

"Glorious to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men."

CHAPTER VII.

The Christmas services were over and the young people from the Grey House were sitting round the glowing fire, talking over the events of the morning. Hudson, the butler, enters, presents to Dorothea, a silver letter, on which reposes a tiny note. Carelessly she takes it and reads the few words written thereon.

"No bad news from the Woods, I hope," says Hannah anxiously, watching her friend's white face.

"Oh no! Nothing wrong there. Will you excuse me, Hannah? I must see the man."

"Certainly, dear. But why not have him in here? She is going to say, but while she is speaking Dorothea leaves the room."

Requesting the man, who is waiting in the hall, to follow her, she leads the way to a parlor, which in summer is covered with green creepers, and turning to him speaks quietly—

"What news do you bring? Am I needed?"

"No, Miss. I knew I couldn't see you, without sending in that written message, so I will sit here, waiting for you, Miss. My wife, she just died the other day, and I've lost my place at the—"

"You know where. It is a bitter winter to our poor folks, Miss, and I've had lots of trouble, what with my wife's funeral and being unfortunate in my other ways, so I thought how, as my wife, you might be able to help me, Miss."

"You are mistaken. I cannot help you, and I ought not, if I could. Were I to give you money, you would spend it for whisky, and I don't know where you would get it from. I have nothing for you."

"Do not be so hasty, Miss. I see doctor Grey coming this way, and I don't think you would like to have I'm know what claim I have on your kindness. Would you now, Miss?"

The fellow laughed insolently as he noticed the shudder that shook Dorothea from head to foot. Before she could reply her self-possession doctor Grey entered the parlor.

"Dorothea, what does this fellow want? And why are you out here in this cold place?"

"I have a little private business with Miss Egerton, doctor, and we don't want no interfering from third parties. The man's tones were insolent and vindictive, and filled doctor Grey with a white heat of rage."

"Hold your insolent tongue, or I'll have you whipped from the ground, and leave here directly. Do you hear?"

"Yes, do, Miss Egerton shall I go? You know what the consequences will be."

"No! Do not go yet."

She pressed her hands to her head, then letting them fall, she approached doctor Grey.

"I beg you to leave me with this man, one moment, doctor. He says true—I have business with him, and you must leave us for awhile. I can only beg you why—I cannot explain—I can only beg you, as once before, to trust me."

"You ask too much! How can I trust you when I hear this wicked man so insolently proclaiming you in his power. Dorothea, for Heaven's sake have mercy on the torments I'm undergoing and explain the dark mystery surrounding you?"

She buried her face in her hands, as she made his appeal, and when she raised it, it was like the face of the dead in its impassioned calm.

"I cannot," she said hoarsely. "Leave me now—I will soon come to you."

With a groan he turned and quitted the parlor, leaving her looking after him with the same statue-like calm. Taking her purse from her pocket she emptied the contents in Tom Reeves's hands.

"Now go," she said impatiently, "and when you wish to see me again come to 'The Woods.' Every month I will pay you a certain sum to hold your wicked tongue."

Turning abruptly away she walked swiftly to the house. The second gazed after her a moment admiringly, then putting the money in his pocket, went whistling away.

"It was right," he muttered to himself as he walked along. "He loves her, and the deepest hurt he ever got was given, when she let him believe she was in his power. I rather think I've paid him off for the whipping he gave me, and if he keeps the child, and don't turn him back on my hands, I guess I'll cry quits with him."

But lord! What a fool she is! Why don't she tell him the truth, instead of letting him believe all sorts of things? These high-fliers be mighty curious animals to me, going on at such a rate about honor and old families, and keeping back disgraceful facts, and keeping an old name respectable, and such nonsense. I wonder where they got such feelings."

"Such feelings" will be a riddle to you, and to any like you, forever, Mr. Reeves.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Christmas dinner is over and the shades of the night are setting down around the Grey House. Doctor Grey looks wearily around on the snowy expanse of lawn, as he walks up the stone steps to the front door. The hall lamp has been lighted and little Philip, who has been on the watch for the last half hour, slips his tiny hand into the doctor's cold one as he enters the house. Hugh slides down on his little protegee, and holding the clinging fingers closely, walks into the library. Here he finds Alice Stanley, sitting, dreaming before the glowing fire.

"All alone, Alice! Where are the others?"

"Hannah and Jack have gone to carry a basket of Christmas goodies, to old Miss Jackson. Auntie is napping, and Miss Egerton is in her room. I believe I am so glad you have come, I think I was actually getting melancholy, sitting here by myself."

"That's bad, and you must not do so any more. What were you dreaming of, when I entered?"

"To tell the truth, Hugh, I was thinking of Miss Egerton. Don't you think she is a very odd sort of a girl?"

"She seems very much like other girls to me; she's very, and laughs, and talks, and sleeps. Why do you think her odd?"

"I can hardly tell. There is a sort of constraint in her manner at times, or rather an inexplicable sort of quietness, that strikes me as very strange in so young a person. I do not understand her, but there is some mystery about her, I'm certain. This afternoon when she received that note, you all did not see, but I noticed that she turned deathly white, and trembled from head to foot. She has not been like herself since. And yesterday morning at the rectory, I heard old captain Jones tell Mrs. Bramly that on last Monday evening, he overtook Miss Egerton walking over the common stone in 't' that m'n. He said no respectable young woman would be caught doing such a thing, and I must say I think him right."

"Alice you're displeasing me exceedingly by repeating such nonsense to any one else. I'm surprised at you! Knowing captain Jones to be an incorrigible gossip, how could you give credence to anything he said?"

"You will soon learn, Hugh, that I am not the only person, who listens to the most strange reports about Miss Egerton, and I am sorry to see that you and Hannah are so blind in