

MY LITTLE WIFE.

She isn't very pretty
(Say my lady friend);
She's neither wise nor witty
With verbal odds and ends.

No need for odds of fashion
And for her fancy dress;
She's never in a position—
Except a tender one.

Her voice is low and strong;
She likes to sing and spout;
While others talk of doing;
The duty near her seeks.

It may be to burnish
The sideboard's scanty plate,
Or to polish the glass;
The beater at the gate.

So I, who see what grace
She shuns on lowly life,
To fashion's fairest faces
Turns my back.

And though a sinner with pity
The city dames may smile,
Who deem her hardly pretty
And sadly out of style.

To me she seems a creature
So true and so kind,
I would not change one feature—
One curve from crown to foot.

And if I could be never
Her lover and her mate,
I think I'd be none the wiser
The beater at the gate.

PETTIBONE'S COURSHIP.

I was first smitten with Jane at a concert. She was a tidy, black-eyed young woman in pink ribbons. I thought I had never beheld such a vision of purely mundane loveliness. Perhaps I never had—I was young then. Attending her was a tall, lank youth who was a doctor, and who I was against whom I conceived at once an invincible prejudice. I did not know the young man. Worse still, I did not know Jane, and worst of all, he did. I naturally hated him profoundly for this advantage.

It will be unnecessary to relate the violent means I took to scrape an acquaintance with Jane. I secretly followed the pink ribbons home and stealthily read the name "Porter" on the door-plate; how I haunted the street in my Sunday-clothes till I made myself an object of suspicion to the police; how I discovered that her father was a dentist, and that she had a formidable step-mother; how I found out the name of the doctor who sat in a seat behind her; how I sent her valentines, left anonymous bouquets on the door-step, and all, alas! to no purpose. It is needless to describe my bitter but futile chagrin all this time at seeing the red-headed youth frequent the house on the most familiar terms; nothing, certainly, but my native firmness of principle averted a catastrophe.

Drawn length to desperate straits, I resolved to a desperate expedient. I went to consult her father professionally. I entered his office with guilty misgivings. I trembled lest he should divine my real purpose. He was a thin little man with a weak voice and a hacking cough. None the less I regarded him with profound reverence. Nay, I invited him with many a misgiving; he was not the father of Jane! I esteemed it an undeserved honor to be allowed to remain in his presence, so long had I yearned to know somebody who belonged to her, my heart's idol. I may say, briefly, in passing, that I presentedly recovered from that yearning. But to return to the point, let me premise that I had fine teeth, I had never felt a toothache in my life, but nevertheless, that cold, hard, remorseless little—but no; I will not stigmatize him now. Poor wretch, his path was not of roses, and he has long since gone the way of all the living. Suffice it to say he examined my teeth; he punched and prodded with various tools; he fled to find a nerve; he failed to find it; he thought he had very much disengaged; nevertheless he had served an ominous silence. I consulted his face; he wore an inscrutable but determined expression. I asked him feebly if he found anything requiring attention. He uttered a vague and inarticulate exclamation and proceeded to set forth a tray of diabolical-looking instruments—saws, forceps, vices, hooks, files, pincers and such, gathered with much cotton wool and cold water, as though he expected a hemorrhage. My heart began to beat like a trip-hammer and my stomach felt as though it were sinking into bottomless pit. I affected to laugh, while a clammy perspiration bedewed my forehead.

"Ha! ha!" I cried hoarsely. "Why, do you know as though you—you were preparing for camp?"

The doctor with a grim faciuncula went on with his preparations, during which every shred of courage oozed from my craven heart.

"Do—do you find that there is much to be done?" I asked at length, huskily.

"We shall see better, presently," he returned coldly, as he examined the point of a fiendish-looking instrument and waited for me to resume a recumbent position. I lay back submissively, and he began to file away" on a magnificient molar.

I maintained my self-control by constantly repeating: "It is Jane's father, and after all, what signifies one tooth?"

During a pause in his proceedings, while he stopped to rest his arms, I took advantage of the opportunity to make a slight advance.

"Dr. Porter, I began, "you are—where have I seen you at the Rev. Dr. Longfellow's church?"

"Quite likely."

"Very fine preacher, Mr. Longfellow."

"I don't agree with you."

"Ah, indeed, that is—meant to say it is pleasant to go there on account of the music."

The choir is abominable."

The doctor with a grim faciuncula went on with his preparations, during which every shred of courage oozed from my craven heart.

"After this rebuff I lay back again in the operating-chair, seeing no other alternative. This time he began on the upper jaw.

"What, another? Excuse me," I cried, stretching into a sitting posture. "Pray excuse me, but—er—do you think—is there anything—what can be the matter with that tooth?"

The implacable little doctor looked coldly out of the window and made no reply.

"I think," I continued, weakly, "I think that perhaps I won't have anything more done at this time."

"As you please," returned the doctor, with an air of displeasure.

"Why, of course," I said led nervously, "I shall do whatever you say, but—I—or—do you think there is any pressing hurry?"

"Ahem; you must take the responsibility of waiting, sir!" replied the doctor with an air that need not be described.

"Go on!" I said with a groan, as I lay back on the rack.

Lying thus supinely, while he with main strength honeycombed another splendid grinder, I bethought me of a new tack, and so, taking advantage of the next breathing spell, I began:

"Doctor—my heart—has—given—daugh—that is—I have noticed a young lady in your pew, and I—thought perhaps she might be a relative of yours?"

"Yes!" replied my tormentor, with a rising inflection, as he got out more cotton wool.

"I was thinking—or—of getting up a—or—a little picnic; it is so desirable to promote mirth among the young people of the church—I should like to invite her if—that is—"

I hesitated and blushed. The doctor sharpened his instrument and coughed dryly.

"My daughter knows too many young people, already, I—that is—her mother does not approve of so much gadding."

"Of course we should need a matron, and I should be glad—er—highly honored if Mrs. Porter would join us," I faltered with shameless hypocrisy.

"Thank you; I will inform them of the invitation," said the doctor, coldly, as he committed himself to go to work.

I submitted myself to two or three hours more of rasping and gouging, cheered at the thought of my masterly stratagem.

I went home that night with a sense of nervous exhaustion, and my head feeling like a barrel; but, firm in my purpose, the next day I repaired early to the doctor's office, supported against prospective torture by the inspiring vision of Jane.

The doctor went silently and grimly on with his work, and finished with a second and a third tooth. But yet not a word of the invitation. Just as I was upon the point of sounding him upon this subject he suddenly started me to my heart's core by saying, coolly:

"I—I won't have it out. You want to make a ruin of me!" I cried, indignantly.

"Mr. Pettibone," she said suddenly, "how long have we each other?"

"About three months, I believe."

"It seems ever so long, doesn't it?"

"It's because we've seen so much of each other."

"I dare say."

"You've been here a great deal, haven't you?"

"I have!"

"It will elucidate, and you will probably lose a piece of your jawbone."

Scared beyond expression at this alternative, I hesitated. The doctor saw his advantage and pursued it.

"I will only be for a moment," he said, picking up his forces, and coming out of the room with a determined air.

"What's that?" cried Jane, sharply.

"I pose it must look rather particu-

"Eh! Why so?" I inquired, with a vague feeling of alarm.

"Why, it might—that is, folks might say that you—you almost must mean something?" I echoed.

"Yes—"

Jane's head was now leaning on my shoulder. I don't know how it happened. I only know I had not stirred.

"But—I assure you I don't," I started, very much embarrassed.

"What's that?" cried Jane, sharply.

sitting bolt upright and withdrawing her hand violently.

"That is, I should say—of course, I do."

There was now a long silence, during which Jane's head gradually sank to its former position.

"Say you—you do, Mr. Pettibone?"

"Do—I beg pardon—do what—that is, Miss Porter?"

"Do—mean—something," whispered Jane, encouragingly, from my shoulder.

Suddenly, as by an electric thrill, I found myself spitting up the vision of the doctor's words.

"I—I'm sorry," I faltered.

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