

BEBEE,

OR

TWO LITTLE WOODEN SHOES.

BY OUIDA.

Continued from last week.

She looked at her earnestly; her eyes were shining, her cheeks were warm, her little mouth was tremulous with eagerness.

"Did any one ever speak to you in that way?" he asked her.

"No," she answered him. "I spoke to my mother, and I think the cathedral angels put it there. For the angels must be tired, you know; always pointing to God and always seeing men turn away. I used to tell Antoinette sometimes. But he used to shake his head and say that it was no use thinking; most likely St. Gudule and St. Michael had the church down in the night, and they were more wonderful, he thought, for their part. And so perhaps, they are, but I am no answer. And I do want to know, I want some one who will tell me—and if you come out of Rubee's country as I think, no doubt you know everything, or remember it."

He smiled.

"The free pass to Rubee's country lies in books, not in one. Shall I give you another—last time, I mean, since giving you are too willful to hear of without offense. You can read, you shall!"

Bebe's eyes glowed as they lifted themselves to his.

"I can read—not very fast, but that would come with doing it more and more, I think, just as it comes with writing; and I have read, and I've read it about a million times before one learns to spin as easily as cobswebs. I have read the stories of St. Anne, and of St. Catherine, and of St. Lucy, fifty times, but they are all the books that Father Francis has, and no one else has any among us."

"Very well. You shall have books of mine, every one first; and then those that interests you. But what time will you have? No so much; but you like a little golden bee."

Bebe laughed happily.

"Oft give me the books and I will find the time. It is light so early now. That gives one so many hours. In winter one has so few one must be bold, because to buy a candle you cannot afford except of course to buy a candle as one's duty is, for our Lady or for the dead. And you will really, really, lend me books?"

"Really—I will. You will bring me to the Grande Place to-morrow, or meet you on your road there with it. Do you know what poetry is, Bebe?"

"No." But your flowers talk to you?"

All the same. But then no one else hears them ever but me; and so no one else believes.

"Well—poets are folks who hear the flowers talk as you do, and the trees, and the sea, and the boats, and even the stones; and so, when the poets write this out, the rest of the world say, 'That is very fine, no doubt, good for dreamers; it will make no bread.' I will give you some poetry—for I think you care more about dreams than about bread."

"I do not know," said Bebe; and she did not, for her dreams, like her youth, and her innocence, and her simplicity, and her strength, were all unconscious of themselves, as such things must be to pure and true at all."

Bebe had grown up, straight, and clean, and fragrant, and joyous as one of her own carnations, but she knew herself no more than the carnation knows its color and its root.

"No, you do not know," said he, with a sort of pity; and thought within himself, was it worth while to let her know?

If she did not know, these vague aspirations and dreams of life, of love, of freedom, with the glow of her early youth, the time nowers drop downward with the summer heat. She would forget them. They would linger a little in her head, and, perhaps, always wake at some unquiet hour or some anguishing time, but trouble her. Only to make her croak song a little sadder, and when she was alone—until, indeed, they would sink away and bear no blossom.

She would grow into a simple, hardy, bold working, God fearing Flemish woman like the rest. She would marry, no doubt, some time, and rear her children honestly and well; and sit in the market stall every day, and spin and sew and dig and wash, and sweep, and scrub, and bathe, and be burdened with poor feed to the end of her barrenness and laborious days—poor little Bebe!

He saw her so clearly as she would be—if he let her alone.

But should he leave her alone?

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in the strong summer sun, and then goes down to the sod again under the sickle.

And her just as she would be—if he left her alone.

He said nothing; only her eyes had such a pretty, frank, innocent look like a bird's in them, and she had been so brave and bold with him about those silk stockings; and this little ignorant, dreamful mind of hers was so like them as one ear of barley is like another as it rises from the soil, and blows in the wind, and turns brown in