

THE TWO MOTHERS.

For fondling arm, warm breast and life's sweet... What dost thou to thy mother make return?

THE WIDOW'S WAGER.

Widow Deane sat at the front window of her little parlor one morning... chessboard and men, and drew her chair up opposite Mr. Fields.

"I promised to beat you," she said, arranging the board on a little stand between them. "I'm going to do so if I possibly can, Mr. Fields, with an arch glance into his face."

Mr. Fields happened to be admiring her brown curls as she looked up, and the fact that she detected him in the act so disconcerted him that he knocked over the chessmen she had arranged, and then he had to help her set them again, and their hands came in contact on the board.

At length the board was arranged, and they were ready to open the game. "Oh!" cried the widow suddenly, "wouldn't it be nice to have a wager? It would make the game so much more interesting! Don't you think so, Mr. Fields?"

Mr. Fields didn't know but it would. "I'll tell you what," said the widow, blushing like a gillyflower pink and looking every bit as sweet, Mr. Fields thought. "I read a story not long ago about two persons playing a wager, and the stake was a kiss! Now, I'll agree to kiss you if you beat me, and if I beat you shall kiss me. Isn't that fair?"

"Yes," stammered Mr. Fields, "but— but I'm afraid you'll beat me!" "Why, then, you'll have to kiss me, that's all," laughed the widow. "If you beat I'd just as soon kiss you as not. As likely as not you'll beat me."

"Well, I'll take the wager," answered Mr. Fields in desperation. And so the game commenced. If ever he played to win it was then. There was something very fascinating about the idea of kissing the widow, but he didn't believe he could muster up courage enough to do it if he won the game. He much preferred that she should kiss him. He could stand it with considerable fortitude to be kissed, but to kiss was rather more than he could think of with composure. He never had kissed a woman that he could remember, and he was sure he should make some awful mistake if he tried to.

But from the first the game went against him. His pawns were captured right and left, and then his bishops were taken from him. Then his king got in check, and he had to sacrifice his queen to get him out, and then, by one masterly move, the widow planted a knight directly in front of the king's place, and left him in check with her castle, and cried out, "Checkmate!" her eyes sparkling with mischief.

Something that was almost a groan broke from Mr. Fields' lips. How was he ever going to pay his wager? It made him shiver to think of it. "I am waiting for you to pay your debts," said the widow, smiling bewitchingly into the bachelor's face.

"I wish I'd won the game," stammered Mr. Fields, bursting into a cold sweat. "Why, then I'd have to kiss you!" said the widow, coquettishly.

"I—I know that," cried Mr. Fields. "That's why I wish I'd got the game!" "What a selfish man!" laughed the widow. "I didn't suppose you were so selfish, Mr. Fields; upon my word, I didn't!"

"I ain't selfish," cried the poor man, driven to desperation; "but—but I daren't!" "What an excuse!" cried the widow. "I won't accept it! You don't want to kiss me. That's the reason! But I'm going to insist on your paying your debts, Mr. Fields. I should like to know why you're afraid of me! I know better! You'll have to get up some other excuse before I let you off. I wouldn't have been afraid to kiss you if you'd won the game, I'm sure."

"I—I wish you'd kiss me, and call it quits!" said Mr. Fields, feeling that he was being driven into a corner. "I would if it wasn't for encouraging you in your selfishness," answered the widow, with an arch smile into his face which set the blood tingling clear to his toes and made him feel almost bold enough to pay his wager.

"I—I'll dare you!" cried the bachelor. "If you'll kiss me, I—I'll kiss you!" "Done!" cried the widow, and kissed Mr. Fields plump on the mouth before he could say Jack Robinson. "Now, you can't back out!" cried she, as rosy as the pinks in the garden again.

"I—I won't!" cried Mr. Fields and caught her and kissed her on her cherry lips. And then, suddenly growing bold and courageous, he kissed her three or four times—for interest, I suppose, on the debt he had contracted and, somehow, every kiss seemed to give him additional courage, for before he managed to let her go he contrived to squeeze her hand in a decidedly lover like way, and the widow didn't seem to object, but rather returned the gentle pressure.

After that there was a little silence, but for some reason Mr. Fields wasn't so bashful as he had been. He began to think it best to follow up the advantage he had gained over his timidity; and so he by and by, after a good deal of encouragement to do the deed, managed to scare up bravery enough to kiss the widow again, and she didn't seem to be put out about it, he thought.

And then—Mr. Fields couldn't tell how, for the life of him—he actually asked the widow to be Mrs. Fields. He felt great wonder, after the deed was done, how he ever got bold enough to ask a woman to marry him; but he did, and she did not answer "no."—New York World.

A Light Vote! Deer Isle claims the "lightest" voter at the last election—John O. Robbins, who weighs but 29 pounds. Owing to his diminutive size Robbins was lifted to the ballot box by Mr. J. W. Green, and much interest was manifested in the little fellow's movements. He is 25 years old.—Portland (Me.) Press.

Go to Mullen, Bluet & Co. for rubber coats. Eastern Produce Co., 123 East First St. Best eastern hams, 11c and 13 1/2c; bacon, 10c; pork, 10c; lard, 9c. No. 2, 13c; No. 1, 15c. Creamery butter, 25c and 30c. Best roll butter always on hand.

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FINANCE AND TRADE.

NEW YORK, Dec. 13.—The stock market today was irregular, but while the fluctuations were wide during two hours' trading, the net result is to leave everything only fractionally changed from last night's prices.

NEW YORK, Dec. 13.—Money on call easy; close offered at 3. Prime mercantile paper, 7 1/2 to 8 per cent. Sterling exchange—Quiet, steady: 60-day bills, \$4.78; demand \$4.83.

NEW YORK, Dec. 13.—Closing prices: A. & T. R. R., 30 3/4; Mex. Cent 1st m b 1 1/4; Mex. Cent. Com. 10 1/2; San Diego, 15 1/4.

NEW YORK, Dec. 13.—Closing prices: Alice, 1.75; Occidental, 1.00; Adamscon, 1.55; Sutter Creek, 1.00; Eureka Con., 3.00; Union Con., 1.50; Aspen, 3.00; Yellow Jacket, 2.00; Potosi, 6.75; Gould & Curry, 1.25; Belle Isle, 1.50; Hale & Norcross, 1.40; Best & Belcher, 2.50; B. Express, 8.00; Bodie, 1.00; Horn Silver, 3.00; Caledonia B. H., 1.05; Iron Silver, 3.00; Chollar, 2.50; Mount Diablo, 2.00; Commonwealth, 1.50; Phoenix, 8.80; Crown Point, 1.75; Phoenix, 8.80; Deadwood, 1.20; Plymouth, 1.00; Delmonte, 1.00; Savage, 1.70; N. Belle Isle, 1.00; Standard, 1.00.

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 13.—Following are the closing prices: Best & Belcher, 2.10; Peer, .15; Chollar, 2.35; Peerless, .20; Crocker, .15; Potosi, 4.25; Con. Virgin, 1.45; Yellow Jacket, 3.15; Confidence, 3.75; Savage, 1.65; Gould & Curry, 1.40; Sierra Nevada, 1.75; Hale & Norcross, 1.50; Union Con., 1.50; Locomotive, .05; Yellow Jacket, 2.00.

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 13.—Wheat, quiet and steady; buyer, 90c; seller, 91c. Barley—Buyer, season \$1.50. Oats—Buyer, 50c; seller, 51c. Corn—Firm; cash 51c; January, 50c; May, 49c. Sugar—Raw, steady; fair refining, 45c; centrifugals, 90 test, 5 1/2c. Refined quiet but steady.

NEW YORK, Dec. 13.—Petroleum closed dull; spot Pennsylvania closed at 64 1/2c. General Markets. NEW YORK, Dec. 13.—Hops—Weak. Pacific coast, 30c to 40c. Options closed steady 5 points up to a down. Sales, 5,750 bales. December, \$17.20; January, \$17.40; February, \$17.50; March, \$17.60; spot 14c, steady; fair crops, 19c; No. 7, 17c.

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AMUSEMENTS.

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