

**BÉBÉE, OR, TWO
LITTLE WOODEN
SHOES: A STORY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649071975

Bébée, or, Two Little Wooden Shoes: A Story by Ouida

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

OUIDA

**BÉBÉE, OR, TWO
LITTLE WOODEN
SHOES: A STORY**

B É B É E,

OR

TWO LITTLE WOODEN SHOES.

QUIDA'S WORKS.

GRANVILLE DE VIGNE	\$1.50
STRATHMORE	1.50
CHANDOS	1.50
IDALIA	1.50
UNDER TWO FLAGS	1.50
TRICOTRIN	1.50
PUCK	1.50
FOLLE-FARINE	1.50
PASCAREL	1.50
TWO LITTLE WOODEN SHOES	1.50
CECIL CASTLEMAINE'S GAGE	1.50
RANDOLPH GORDON	1.50
BEATRICK BOVILLE	1.50
A LEAF IN THE STORM (8vo. Paper.)	50

These Novels are universally acknowledged to be the most powerful and fascinating works of fiction which the present century, so prolific in light reading, has produced.

The above are handsomely and uniformly bound in cloth, 12mo form, and are for sale by booksellers generally, or will be sent by mail, postage paid, on receipt of price by

J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO., PUBLISHERS,
715 and 717 Market St., Philadelphia.

BÉBÉ E,
OR
TWO LITTLE WOODEN SHOES.

A STORY.

By "OUIDA,"
AUTHOR OF "STRATHMORE," "TRIOUVIN," "UNDER TWO FLAGS,"
"IDALIA," "FASCARELLI," ETC.



PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
1874.

K825D37
OB



TWO LITTLE WOODEN SHOES.

CHAPTER I.

BEBEE sprang out of bed at daybreak. She was sixteen.

It seemed a very wonderful thing to be as much as that—sixteen—a woman quite.

A cock was crowing under her lattice—he said how old you are!—how old you are!—every time that he sounded his clarion.

She opened the lattice and wished him good-day, with a laugh. It was so pleasant to be woke by him and to think that no one in all the world could ever call one a child any more.

There was a kid bleating in the shed. There was a thrush singing in the dusk of the sycamore-leaves. There was a calf lowing to its mother away there beyond the fence. There were dreamy muffled bells ringing in the distance from many steeples and belfries where the city was; they all said one thing: "How good it is to be so old as that—how good, how very good!"

Bébée was very pretty.

No one in all Brabant ever denied that. To look at her it seemed as if she had so lived among the flowers that she had grown like them, and only looked a bigger blossom—that was all.

She wore two little wooden shoes and a little cotton cap, and a gray kirtle—linen in summer, serge in winter; but the little feet in the shoes were like rose-leaves, and the cap was as white as a lily, and the gray kirtle was like the bark of the bough that the apple-blossom parts, and peeps out of, to blush in the sun.

The flowers had been the only godmothers that she had ever had, and fairy godmothers too.

The marigolds and the sunflowers had given her their ripe, rich gold to tint her hair; the lupins and irises had lent their azure to her eyes; the moss-rose buds had made her pretty mouth; the arum lilies had uncurled their softness for her skin; and the lime-blossoms had given her their frank, fresh, innocent fragrance.

The winds had blown, and the rains had rained, and the sun had shone on her, indeed, and had warmed the whiteness of her limbs, but they had only given to her body and her soul a hardy, breeze-blown freshness like that of a field cowslip.

She had never been called anything but Bébée.

One summer day Antoine Mæs—a French subject, but a Belgian by adoption and habit, an old man who got his meagre living by tilling the garden-plot about his but and selling flowers in the

city squares—Antoine, going into Brussels for his day's trade, had seen a gray bundle floating among the water-lilies in the bit of water near his hut and had hooked it out to land, and found a year-old child in it, left to drown, no doubt, but saved by the lilies, and laughing glesfully at fate.

Some lace-worker, blind with the pain of toil, or some peasant woman harder of heart than the oxen in her yoke, had left it there to drift away to death, not reckoning for the inward ripple of the current or the toughness of the lily-leaves and stems.

Old Antoine took it to his wife, and the wife, a childless and aged soul, begged leave to keep it; and the two poor lonely, simple folks grew to care for the homeless, motherless thing, and they and the people about all called it Bébée—only Bébée.

The church got at it and added to it a saint's name; but for all its little world it remained Bébée—Bébée when it trotted no higher than the red carnation-heads;—Bébée when its yellow curls touched as high as the lavender-bush;—Bébée on this proud day when the thrush's song and the cock's crow found her sixteen years old.

Old Antoine's hut stood in a little patch of garden ground with a brier hedge all round it, in that byway which lies between Laeken and Brussels, in the heart of flat, green Brabant, where there are beautiful meadows and tall, flowering hedges, and forest-trees, and fern-filled ditches, and a little piece of water, deep and cool,

where the swans sail all day long, and the silvery willows dip and sway with the wind.

Turn aside from the highway, and there it lies to-day, and all the place brims over with grass, and boughs, and blossoms, and flowering beans, and wild dog-roses; and there are a few cottages and cabins there near the pretty water, and farther there is an old church, sacred to St. Guido; and beyond go the green level country and the endless wheat-fields, and the old mills with their red sails against the sun; and beyond all these the pale blue, sea-like horizon of the plains of Flanders.

It was a pretty little hut, pink all over like a sea-shell, in the fashion that the Netherlanders love; and its two little square lattices were dark with creeping plants and big rose-bushes, and its roof, so low that you could touch it, was golden and green with all the lichens and stoneworts that are known on earth.

Here Bébéc grew from year to year; and soon learned to be big enough and hardy enough to tie up bunches of stocks and pinks for the market, and then to carry a basket for herself, trotting by Antoine's side along the green roadway and into the white, wide streets; and in the market the buyers—most often of all when they were young mothers—would seek out the little golden head and the beautiful frank blue eyes, and buy Bébéc's lilies and carnations whether they wanted them or not. So that old Mães used to cross himself and