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POETRY.

FOR THE COURIER

To my Friend Julia.

Memory brings the cherished thoughts
Of brightest summer hours;
When we wandered by the brook,
To pluck the fragrant flowers—
To form for you a sweet bouquet,
A keepsake near thy heart to lay.

On eve's pale brow, one star burned bright,
And zephers fraught with balm;
A heavenward hope, a soothing dream,
Which sent for us a charm.
Was there not music in the breeze
While crystal dew drops filled the trees?

'Twas then we talked of days to come,
To us so full of light.
Some white winged messenger would come,—
And bring with those days so bright
The sweetest joys, of thrilling power,
As we neared the bright to-morrow

We would climb to the eyries of eagle men,
The highest hight of mind;
And make mankind a nobler race,
In the strength of a governed mind,
We kindred spirits would daily meet,
And chase time in communion sweet.

Should gathering clouds darken our sky,
We would share each others fate,
And though all others, false should prove,
We would never, never forsake,
Together would we humbly bend,
Together should our prayers ascend.

MARGERIE PRESTON

SELECTED STORY.

The Stranger's Gift.

BY MARIA J. BISHOP.

It was towards evening, in the year 18—, when widow Austin Dupere closed the shutters of her small window, and prepared the diminutive table which served her and the beautiful Lizzette for tea. She was of French extraction, as her small, delicate features told, and though poverty, keen and deep, had long watched by her door, yet that door ever swung open to admit the stranger and the sufferer.—Neither could it banish from the cottage a beauty of neatness and order which made it seem the paradise of peace.

"It is a wild night Lizzie dear,' said the old lady, as she smoothed down her white apron. "Heaven help the poor souls that may be out in it."

The girl raised her head. She was a lovely creature; the heavy masses of damp, dark hair shaded a faultless face, nor could the coarse dress of russet brown conceal the elegance of her form. Throwing back the curls that wandered over her beautiful neck, she advanced to the window.

"Dreadful mother; and the Hartz forest yonder stands white and spectral against the sky. Hark! was not that the barking of a dog?"

The widow set down the small tea-urn, which sent up a comfortable column of smoke, and opening the door, looked forth into the whirling storm, while Lizzette, like some Grecian statue, stood baring her ear to catch a repetition of the sound. But nothing met their ears save the bleak crashing of branches, and the moaning of the wind over the dreary wild.

"'Twas imagination Lizzie."

"Could I have been mistaken?" said the girl. "No mother, there it is again."

"Bless me! some poor creature is lost!" said the widow, while she threw an additional morsel of fuel on her scant fire.

A moment more, and a knock summoned them to the door. When opened it revealed an officer in the French uniform. He was deadly pale, seemingly wounded, and as he staggered forward into the centre of the room the respectful deference which marked his manner showed the gentleman. He explained in few words that he had lost his way; was wounded, was benighted, and begged the shelter of their roof till morning.

On hospitable cares intent, Widow Dupere bustled about her cottage, while Lizzette, charmed with the strangers graceful manner, hung on the tales of conflict which, notwithstanding apparent pain, he recited for her entertainment.

As the little party drew around the table, he said:

"My dear madam, I cannot express how grateful to a soldier is your kindness. Visions of this tempting cup have been on my mind all day; for I am no friend to these harsh Rhenish wines. May I beg your acceptance of all I have—this half of a lottery ticket?"

He placed in her hand a scrap of pasteboard, together with his card: 'Gen. Bouvear, Imperial Staff.'

His hostess took the slight gift, and a tear filled her eye as she thought of his deep poverty; and placing the ticket in her work-basket, she thought no more of it.

The morning broke clear and beautiful over the Russian forest, and as the soldier bade adieu to his friends he said—

"I and Romeo are obliged to you for your kindness, Many miles lie between me and my troop, yet the remembrance of these peaceful hours will beguile my way."

He raised the fingers of Lizzette to his lips, and bowing to the widow, was soon lost in the distance.

Months sped by, and in the journals of St. Petersburgh appeared notice after notice, requiring the holder of ticket No— to answer. Widow Dupere had not seen these notices, for she lived in solitude; but, as ever, the stranger was welcome to her abode; and, ere long a Jew stopped to unlade his wares, and to beg a morsel of food at her door. As the inmates of the cottage attended to his wants, his eye caught sight of the lottery ticket.

"Ah, mistress,' he exclaimed, "knowest thou what thou hast there? It is a prize of twenty thousand guilders, and the emperor wants to meet the holder of the ticket."

A few weeks more, and the widow had proved the reality of her wealth. The ticket had drawn a magnificent clock whose marvellous workmanship and beauty well might grace a palace. Long she refused the magnificent offer of the emperor, advertising for the officer to whom she deemed the prize belonged, but at length she consented to receive a yearly pension of five hundred thalers until he should appear.—Finally she received the following note:—

"MY DEAR MADAM:—The scrap of paper given in gratitude was yours as the poor gift of the stranger. It is still yours when it represents a fortune.

BOUVEAR."

A Georgia Wedding.

The preacher was prevented from taking his part in the ceremony, and a newly created Justice of the peace who chanced to be present was called upon to officiate in his place. The good man's knees began to tremble, for he had never tied the knot, and did not know where to begin. He had no Georgia Justice, or any other book from which to read the marriage service. The company was arranged in a semi-circle, each one bearing a tallow candle. He thought over everything he had ever learned even to

'Thirty days hath September,
April, June and November"

but all in vain, he could recollect nothing that suited the occasion. A suppressed titter all over the room admonished him that he must proceed with something, and in the agony of desperation he began:

'Know all men by these presents that I'—here he paused and looked up to the ceiling, while an audible voice in the corner of the room was heard to say:

'He is drawing a deed to a tract of land,' and they all laughed.

'In the name of God amen!' he began again, only to hear another voice in a loud whisper say:

'He's making his will, I thought he couldn't live long he looks so powerfully bad.'

'Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray'—was the next essay, when some erudite gentleman remarked:

'He is not dead but sleepeth.'

'Oh yes! Oh yes!' continued the 'Squire,

A voice replied, 'Oh no! Oh no! don't let's.'

Some persons out doors sung out, 'Come into court!' and the laughter was general.

The bride was near fainting, and the 'Squire was not far from it; being an indefatigable man, however he began again:

'To all and singular, the sher'—

'Let's run; he is going to levey on us,' said two or three at once,

Here a gleam of light flashed across the face of the 'Squire. He ordered the bride and groom to hold up their hands, and in a solemn voice said:

'You, and each of you do solemnly swear in the presence of the present company that you will perform towards each other, all, and singular the functions of husband and wife as the case may be, to the best of your knowledge and ability, so help you God!'

'Good as wheat,' exclaimed the father of the bride.—*Stamford Advocate.*

Purity of Character.

Over the beauty of the plum and the apricot, there grows a beauty more exquisite than the fruit itself—a soft, delicate plush, that overspreads its blushing cheek. Now, if you strike your hand over that, and it is once gone, it is gone forever, for it never grows but once. Take the flower that hangs in the morning, impearled with dew, arrayed with jewels. Once shake it, so that the drops roll off, and you may sprinkle water over it as carefully as you please, yet it can never be made again what it was when the dew fell silently upon it from heaven. On a frosty morning, you may see the pane set glass covered with landscapes—mountains, lakes, trees, blended into a beautiful, fantastic picture. Now, lay your hand upon the glass, and by the scratch of your finger, or by the warmth of your palm, all the delicate tracery will be obliterated. So there is in youth a beauty and purity of character which, when once touched and defiled, can never be restored; a fringe more delicate than frostwork, and which, when torn and broken, will never be embroidered A man who has soiled and spotted his moral garments in youth, though he may seek to make them white again, can never wholly do it, even were he to wash them with his tears. When a young man leaves his father's house, with the blessing of his mother's tears still wet upon his forehead, if he once loses that early purity of character, it is a loss he can never make whole again.

DON'T COUNT THE STEPS.—It is, perhaps, well for us that we do not count up in early life the number of steps, many of them weary ones, we shall have to take in treading the long road that reaches from the cradle to the grave.—It is well for the young housewife that she does not estimate the number of million of dishes she will be required to wash during a period of house keeping forty years long; in each of which the table must be cleared, and the dishes washed, over a thousand times. It is well that the poor seamstress does not calculate the number of miles of 'seam and gusset and band, band and gusset and seam,' her tired fingers must form, till the lamp of life, like the table lamp, gives out. It is wise and well that she, who sits from one year to another in the same little room, does not realize that her hand moves, in forming stitches, more miles than a steamship travels in crossing the Atlantic.

That was a fearful prayer of the infidel sailor in danger of shipwreck: 'O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul!' But there is sublimity and beauty in that of the soldier, on the eve of battle; 'O God, in the day of battle I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me!'

A Pickpocket's Joke.

An amusing instance of the inability of the public to distinguish an honest man from a thief, happened some time since on the Portland railroad. A thief, who had been picking pockets for twenty years, and who is at present serving out a sentence in the State Prison, had been operating for several weeks so extensively as to arouse the indignation of the travellers on this road. Some of his victims had expressed the determination to flog and tar and feather the first pickpocket captured.

About this time the thief was 'wanted' for stealing a large amount of bonds from a gentleman on a Brooklyn ferry boat, and a detective was sent to Portland to arrest him. He secured his man and started for home. They experienced some difficulty in finding seats, but finally the thief procured one with a gentleman who resided in Portland, and the detective occupied the corresponding seat on the opposite side. The thief introduced himself to his neighbor as a detective, and informed him, in a consequential tone, that he was taking the man opposite, who was well known pickpocket, to New York to answer for a bold robbery he had recently committed. He also advised his fellow-traveller that his prisoner was probably the very man who had picked so many pockets in that neighborhood.

'He likes to play practical jokes,' continued the thief. 'On the train we have just left, he made several gentlemen believe that I was the prisoner and he the officer.'

The real detective sat watching his prisoner, all unconscious of the approaching storm. The gentleman moved to another part of the car, and communicated the information he had just received to several friends. One of them had been robbed a few days before of over $200, and he was still very angry. He stepped over to the detective, and, in a loud voice said.—

'So they have caught you at last, you miserable cut-throat! You are the rascal who stole my money. I know you. I saw you when you took it, and if you had not escaped I would have shot you like a dog, You say you are not a thief; that you are a thief catcher?—Do you suppose, with your villainous face, you can make me think you anything but a thief? You ought to be thrown from the cars; and I, for one, will assist in so doing.'

A crowd of excited men gathered around the unfortunate detective, and in spite of his protestation, persisted in abusing him shamefully, and were about to hurl him from the platform of the flying train, when the thief interfered with.—

'Gentlemen, I trust you will use no violence toward this unfortunate man I cannot permit it. He is my prisoner. He is in the hands of the law, and the law must take its course.'

Fortunately, perhaps, for the detective, the train reached New York about this time, and he escaped.

BRIGHT HOURS AND GLOOMY.—Ah, this beautiful world! I know not what to think of it. Sometimes it is all sunshine and gladness, and heaven itself lies not far off, and then it suddenly changes, and is dark and sorrowful, and the clouds shut out the day. In the lives of the saddest of us there are bright days like this, when we feel as if we could take the great world in our arms. Then comes gloomy hours when the fire will not burn in our hearts, and ah, without and within is all dismal, cold and dark. Believe me, every heart has its secret sorrows which the world knows not and often times we call a man cold, when he is only sad.

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