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Selected Poetry.

From the Boston Olive Branch.

My Heart is Like an Instrument.

BY CARRIE E. PLUMLEE.

My heart is like an instrument
Whose strings have all been broken
And shattered, hangs against the wall—
Of other days, a token.
False hands have swept the magic chords
And played in wild delight,
Their improvistics tuned to love—
And all on earth that's bright.

Ah! yes—they've caused my very soul
To wander up toward heaven!
And pause, suspended, wondering why
Such joy to me was given?
But now, alas! the music's ceased,
My heart is very still;
'Tis true, it throbs, but not as when
The false ones tried their skill.

'Tis well mine's not a form to bow
'Neath friendship's broken rod;
'Twill bend, but oh! 'twill rise again
By the help of faith and God.
I'll tune the heart that once was tuned
By other hands than mine,
I'll teach them that a light grown dim,
Bekindled, yet may shine.

I'll win a name from wayward fame,
And some who pass me now
With cold averted looks, may yet
Low at my footstool bow.
I'll teach them that a heart once crushed
Can have new strings again,
And from the music of the past
It shall not breathe one strain.

Knoxville, E. Tennessee.

Selected Miscellany.

From Sharpe's London Magazine.

THE DISCONTENTED FLOWERS.

In the depths of a beautiful wood, far away from the noise of cities, and the smoke of chimneys, is a bright clear pool of water, in which the drooping branches of the willow mirror and bathe themselves. Sweetly scented lime-trees are grouped together near it, beneath the arching boughs of which the graceful fern and the blue-eyed forget-me-not flourish luxuriantly.

The banks of this crystal lake are fringed with moss and tall flowering grasses; and the woodland paths beyond, where the ground is not so moist, are carpeted in the early spring with masses of the delicate blue hyacinth; and no sooner has that faded than the modest lily of the valley arises, with her perfumed bells, to scent the air in that sequestered spot.

Many a wayfarer has paused in his journey through the forest, to drink from the limpid waters in that still retreat, and has wondered at the variety of foliage and blossom growing side by side in that place; and has been puzzled to account for the appearance of some plants, which, according to the botanists, had no business to be growing wild in such a locality.

But there are records handed down from tree to tree, and whispered from flower to flower, of a time when the now extensive wood was a private shrubbery, planted with taste and care, by a wealthy land-owner; and the pool, which is now the favorite haunt of the May-fly, the dragon-fly, and their kindred, was once a fish-preserve.—The ancient ferns, too, now rearing their beauteous fronds as a shelter for myriads of the insect tribe, have a faint recollection of having been transplanted from a distant region in their early youth; but they have taken kindly to their present home, and are too old now to care about making another journey to the soil of their ancestors, so they cling closer and closer to the rocks that surround them, and spring up year after year more vigorously than ever. And the forget-me-nots, as the days go round, creep farther and farther over the surface of the pool, laughing up in the sunlight with their bright eyes, as though change and trial were unknown to the flowers of earth.

It is indeed a very lovely spot, and the sunbeams and the moonbeams linger there by turns, right willingly, piercing playfully through the coy leaves, which try so valiantly to keep them out; but the zephyrs come to the rescue; and to them the leaves bow obediently at their lightest breath, and make way for them. So the shining rays, which are heaven's messengers, follow swiftly in the zephyr's path, and gleam and shimmer down into the very depths of the pool itself.

Surely if peace be known upon earth, she haunts that favored spot! And there is no lack of music either to enliven the tranquillity. It is not a dead calm which reigns there; for the song of the lark, the voice of the cuckoo, and the melody of the nightingale, are all heard there in due season; and day and night, in sunshine or in shade, there is the never-ceasing music of a rippling stream, which has its source in the sparkling pool, and goes babbling on of the beauty of its home as it wanders far away, over many a mile, to mingle its waters with those of a mighty river.

The little streamlet has no name, and is not known in the great world; but it runs its daily course with gladness, and beautifies and benefits whatever comes in its way.

Human eye gazes but rarely upon the beauty of the scene I have been attempting to describe; but it is ever present to the angels of God. And those whose mission it is to bear earth's incense of praise to the courts above, have also a tribute to collect from the dwellers in this fair valley; for surely joy and gratitude are due for the cooling dews, the gentle showers and refreshing breezes, not to mention the warm bright beams of sunshine which the flower-buds welcome so gladly.

But I have to tell of a time when sorrow found its way to mar the harmony of that lovely scene. No human eye could have detected the first symptom of evil. Outwardly all was fair and beauteous; but "the trail of the serpent" had passed even there, and the guardian watcher knew it all too well when the breath of praise rose not as freely as it was wont in the still hour of eventide.

There was a mist of discontent hovering somewhere, which marred the fragrance of that balmy hour; and the flower-spirit sighed sadly as he lingered on his mission and waited for the hush of night to investigate its cause.

At length the song of the birds was stilled. There was no voice save that of the murmuring brooklet. One by one the flowerets closed their weary buds; the beautiful blue forget-me-nots and the fragile veronica drooped their heads beneath the clear cold moonbeams, and the lily nestled her tiny bells closer to the sheltering foliage around her.

And then the solemn hush was broken by a sigh of discontent, which arose on the evening breeze, and was wafted to the ear of the flower-spirit. He heard an unthankful murmuring, and he knew whence it came, for he marked a solitary Forget-me-not and a single spray of Lily-bloom holding themselves aloof from their kin, and eagerly listening to the night-wind's whispering and the babbling of the tiny stream. They were discontented flowers; they did not care to live on any longer in quiet obscurity; they wanted to see the great world, about which the rivulet and the breezes had so often told them. They felt cramped and confined in that lonely, unfrequented pond. They thought themselves wiser than their neighbors; they had given more heed to what was told them of the world beyond the hills.

The brook was sorry that his babbling, which had been intended to amuse and instruct them, should have made them unhappy, and good-naturedly promised to help them in any way that he could to make their lot more enjoyable; but the breeze—false friend that he was!—counseled them to leave all their old acquaintances and relatives in the wood, and go forth together and see the world for themselves.

This the brook did not consider wise advice; but the willful flowers were only too ready to follow it, and as his voice of dissent was drowned by the bluster of the breeze, he said no more to disuade them, and was persuaded to join with the latter in assisting them to leave their home. So the sturdy little Forget-me-not tried more and more every day to detach its roots from its fellows, and stretched eagerly towards the bank, that the streamlet might waft her down its current; and the Lily, hour by hour, bent more away from her sheltering vail of green leaves; and though her stem began to get crooked, and her pure bells splashed with mud as the little tadpoles played about near them, she did not care for that; for she knew that before many days her friend, the breeze, would be able to snap her slender stem, and carry her off.

She was not happy; and both she and the Forget-me-not agreed that they wanted change, and would be improved by traveling.

They had not quite made up their minds when or how they should return; but of course they meant to do so one day, to display their knowledge of the world to their unsophisticated relatives.

Some of their companions, who knew of their discontent and their projected expedition, tried to persuade them that the Good Father knew best where to place his children; and the bees, who loved to nestle in the Lily's bells, and the butterflies and beautiful glossy beetles, who courted the sun, supported by the azure Forget-me-not, told them how useful they were in their own neighborhood, and how much they would be missed if they really succeeded in getting away. All to no purpose, however, the headstrong things thought they should be of far more use in a wider sphere of action.—Besides, the zephyrs had told them of beautiful flowers-fetes and grand festivities in which they might take part, and have their share of admiration too, instead of being cooped up in such an out-of-the-way place.

The elder plants shook their heads sorrowfully when they saw these young things so obstinately self-willed, and prognosticated evil if they left their parent-stems; but the Lily laughed at them for croakers, and the Forget-me-not agreed with her in every thing.

They did not think theirs at all a blissful lot; and having nothing for which to be grateful, they offered up murmurs instead of the incense of thanksgiving; so when their gentle watcher found the origin of the evil, a remedy was determined upon.

One disaffected member of a community makes many, and it was not right that the general harmony should be disturbed by these two unthankful murmurers.

So it chanced, ere long, that a youth lost his way whilst rambling through the wood, and lying down to rest at the edge of the pool, caught sight of the Forget-me-not just within his reach, and stretching out his hand, he gathered them both. The Forget-me-not responded so eagerly to his touch, that he took away a part of her root as well.

Now the two flowers were supremely happy, and even rejoiced at having managed so cleverly without being under obligations either to the breeze or the brook. They smiled down triumphantly upon the friends they left behind them as, securely fastened in the youth's button-hole, they journeyed away with him.

He had a long distance to go, and at first the runaways enjoyed this elevated position exceedingly; but when the hot sun began to parch up the juice in their stems, and there were no cooling waters to refresh them, they felt faint, and drooped their heads; indeed, the Lily would certainly have died, being the more delicate of the two, if the journey had been much longer. Suddenly they felt themselves revived by the contact of cooling water, and the Forget-me-not, being the first to raise her head, saw a young fair face bending over her with a look of eager delight.

"Look here, Claire! these pretty flowers which neighbor Charlie brought me are reviving already. It is a famous specimen of the Myosotis palustris with a root too. I shall dry it in a day or two."

The little Forget-me-not did not like being called by such a strange sounding name; it had never been heard in the valley: but the Lily was not sufficiently revived to pay much attention to its displeasure.

Clarie, a little dark-eyed damsel, some years younger than her sister, gazed also admiringly upon the two travelers, as her sister went on talking about them. "I hope they will keep fresh; I shall wear them this evening instead of Captain Mowbray's splendid exotics; I know he will be very angry; but I don't care for that!" laughed the young girl: "I would rather please neighbor Charlie." And she took out a wreath of artificial flowers, also lilies and forget-me-nots, and placed it for a moment on her head. As she thus stood sportively before the glass, the wanderers—now both quite wide awake—thought they had never seen any thing so beautiful. Much more did they admire her a few hours later, when she was ready dressed for the ball in her simple white muslin, trimmed with sprays of the same tiny flowers to match her wreath, her only ornament a string of magnificent pearls round her neck.

"Good-by, dear Clarie," said the young girl, kissing her sister: "I hear papa calling me; I must go now."

"Good-by, Edith; I hope you will enjoy yourself: but oh! wait a moment; you have actually forgotten neighbor Charlie's flowers; let me put them into your brooch for you."

So the Lily and the Forget-me-not, looking very fresh and beautiful, were securely fastened on to the dress, and felt not a little proud of their new position; in fact, could scarcely hold their heads high enough.—They did not quite like being covered over with the opera-cloak; but pride must bear a little pain, and they were amply repaid for the temporary obscurity of their situation when the heavy wrapping was removed, and the fair Edith, leaning on her father's arm, entered the splendidly illuminated ball-room. But soon they began to feel the effects of the heated atmosphere, and the Lily thought remorsefully of the cool evening breezes which she knew were even then fanning her sister-flowers in the quiet valley—her distant home. Nor did the Forget-me-not feel much happier; but neither of them liked to complain. Captain Mowbray, of whom they had heard, danced with Edith once, and tried to persuade her to walk out on the balcony with him, which, to the great mortification of the poor fainting blossoms, she declined. At length neighbor Charlie led her out into the moonlight, and the Forget-me-not raised her head once more; but the poor Lily could no longer be refreshed; she had drooped from exhaustion, and had been crushed beneath the spurred heel of the mustached Captain. Neighbor Charlie noticed its loss, and his companion seemed very distressed at the discovery; but the young man told her it did not signify, as she had preserved the flower he wished her always to treasure.

But the solitary Forget-me-not no longer felt pride in her position: a terrible feeling of home-sickness came over her, and she bowed her head in sorrow for the loss of her friend and companion, longing only for an opportunity of escape from her captivity.—Fortune favored her at last. It was early morning, and the two still stood talking together by an open window, as the guests were preparing to depart, when all at once neighbor Charlie caught sight of a moss-rose bud temptingly within reach: "This will be a good substitute for the lost Lily," said he, as he gathered it.

The brooch was unfastened, but the young girl's fingers trembled as she placed the rose-bud within it, displacing the Forget-me-not. A zephyr bore up the wanderer for a while, then wafted it down, down, far away from the maiden and her lover, rendering it quite insensible from the rapidity of its flight When it again opened its dimmed blue eyes, the little Forget-me-not was lodged upon a mossy bank within sound of splashing water—within sound of it; but alas! not near enough to taste of its sweetness. Poor little thing; she had gained experience by her travels; but it had been dearly bought She looked wofully altered since she quitted her peaceful home: a tiny rootlet was still hanging to it, sadly parched and shriveled: some of its leaves and blossoms were quite dead, and a bit of its stem dreadfully bruised. How she longed to be once more in her old haunts, or just a little nearer to the refreshing water! A few more hours and death would surely come! for the breeze had lulled, and the oppressive heat of noon lay was setting in. Suddenly a storm arose, and a drenching rain fell in torrents. Oh! how eagerly the languid wanderer drank the refresing drops! And then a friendly breeze wafted it down the sloping bank, and the rivulet already swollen with the rain, rippled nearer and nearer, and at last bathed its little rootlet: then the current became stronger, and the Forget-me-not, floating on its surface, went drifting along, it knew not whither, unable to stay its course.

Night closed in once more upon the tranquil valley, and the stars looked down rejoicingly over it; for the weary traveler had at last found a resting-place amongst its kindred. Though bowed and broken, and shorn of all beauty, there was life in it still, and a power of endurance, till then untested, had been called forth and strengthened by it wanderings up and down in "the wide, wide world;" for the good World-Father can bring good even out of evil; and the humbled flower sighed no more for a sphere other than that which unerring wisdom had assigned to it. So the guardian Spirit wafted upwards a hymn of praise, unalloyed by regret or discontent, only the lily-bells drooped more humbly as they mourned for their fallen sister, who returned to them no more!

THE VILLAGE BELLE;
OR, THE DEFEATED BULLY.

BY FRANK FAUGETT.

Robert Marvin was a tailor. He was an honest, industrious man, always cheerful and contented, well-known and well-thought of by all the people of the little village of Stockdale, wherein he resided.

Now, Marvin had a daughter, a merry, romping, rosy-cheek girl of eighteen summers, with a plump form, and a bewitching grace that captivated every one with whom she came in contact. She was beloved and admired by all who knew her and as a natural consequence had quite a number of suitors. Prominent among these was one Morton Baxter, a swggering, self-conceited braggard, who had been paying his addresses to Isabella Marvin for more than a year, and who, it was generally believed, was the chosen one of her host of admirers. Indeed, as it was declared by the gossips, (for, be it known, dear reader, even the little village of Stockdale was not exempt from this scourge,) it was an understood thing that at some time not far distant, Morton Baxter and Isabella were to be united for life."—But the older and wiser folk said that Robert Marvin's daughter would never throw herself away on such a scapegrace as Baxter. Be this as it may, however, he still continued his visits to Mr. Marvin's house, and being an adept in the art of dissimulation, he completely succeeded in blinding the eyes of both him and his daughter, as to his real character—which he had been careful should never be permitted to display itself in their presence; so that notwithstanding he was spoken of as "an unprincipled villain, destitute of every vestige of honor and morality," Isabella, judging solely from what she had seen of him, believed the whole thing to be a gross slander. But this state of affairs was not destined to last forever.—A circumstance soon occurred to dispel the illusion that had so long been hovering around her.

About this time there came into the village a young man, a carpenter, named Oscar Westbrook, He was quiet and unassuming, although by no means unsociable, and soon became quite a favorite with the people of Stockdale. He was warm-hearted and generous to a fault, always ready and willing to lend a helping hand to those who were in distress. He found many warm friends among the young men of the village, who loved him for his kind heart and pleasing manners. He was an agreeable companion, and many were the parties given by the young people of the place to all of which he was an invited guest.

It was on one of these occasions that he first beheld the face and form of Isabella Marvin. He was engaged in conversation with a friend, named Henry Wilton, who, perceiving her, turned suddenly to Oscar and said:

"By the way; Westbrook, there is Miss Marvin, the belle of the place; allow me to introduce you."

"With pleasure," said Oscar.

The friends immediately repaired to the front of the room, where Isabella was, and after the customary forms of introduction had been gone through with, Wilton left them to themselves, and the two were soon engaged in conversation.

"You have not been long a resident of Stockdale, I understand," said Isabella.

"But a short time has elapsed since first I came here, it is true, yet I have found both the place and the people so agreeable that I feel almost as much at home as though I had lived here all my life," replied Oscar.

"I am glad you find the place so agreeable. I doubt not you have made many friends since you came among us."

"I am happy to say that I have," replied Oscar, naming several young men of the village whose acquaintance he had formed. "You, I believe, are a native of Stockdale, Miss Marvin?"

"I am—I was born and raised here; I am familiar with every spot for miles round.—My mother died here, and lies buried in the church-yard near the foot of the lane. I don't think I could ever feel contented away from here."

The conversation was here interrupted by the appearance of Morton Baxter, who hastily advanced to Isabella's side, and allowing his indignation to get the better of his discretion, he said angrily, and in a tone loud enough to be heard by Oscar, whom at the same time he regarded with an impudent stare:

"Miss Marvin, I think your conduct in thus engaging in conversation with a man who is almost a perfect stranger to you is, to say the least of it, very unbecoming you as a lady, and you are, in my opinion, making yourself entirely too familiar on so short an acquaintance as yours has been."

"Why surely, Morton, you cannot be so selfish as to wish to deprive me of the privilege of indulging in a conversation with a friend," said Isabella, who having never seen him display so much temper before, was greatly astonished thereat.

"A friend, indeed," said Baxter. "You soon make friends. I suppose he has become quite enamored of you, during your pleasant conversation."

"Mr. Baxter," said Isabella—a painful suspicion at the same time crossing her mind that perhaps report had not been so much at fault in regard to Baxter's character as she had at first supposed—"you do me injustice, and by your accusations you are liable to compromise both Mr. Westbrook and myself. I do not acknowledge your right to dictate to me whom I shall converse or associate with; I am not answerable to you for my conduct."

"Indeed," said Baxter; "then I suppose I am to infer from that, that you will make friends of whom you please, without regard to what I may say, but we'll see, my lady, we'll see. Time will show."

"Yes, we will see," said Isabella, drawing her fine finger up to its full height, the rich blood mantling her forehead; "time will show that you Morton Baxter, who have thus presumed to take upon yourself the office of my guardian, will never have it in your power to control my actions.—You have this night opened your heart, and revealed your character in its true light. I now release you from all claims I may have upon you, and shall expect you to do the same by me. From this time henceforth, all intercourse must and shall cease."

"Hussy!" said Baxter, in a voice hoarse with rage; "Hussy, how dare you answer me thus? how dare you?"

"*Hold*, Mr. Baxter, I command you to desist," said Mr. Westbrook, who now thought it time to interfere. "I deem it my duty to protect this lady from your insults. You are unreasonable; you are exercising an authority which you have no right to. I entreat you to leave for the present, and when you are yourself again, she will, I have no doubt, be willing to listen to any reparation you may desire to make. Go I beseech you."

If Baxter was angry before, he was now doubly so, and with a face almost black with rage, he turned to Oscar and roared out.

"Who are you, you meddlesome, insignificant upstart, that dare to interfere with me? You deem it your duty to protect Miss Marvin from insults, do you? Try it, if you dare, you rascal, and I'll break every bone in your body."

"Mr. Baxter, go away, I beg of you, you are angry and excited, and know not what you say or do. I have no desire to pick up a quarrel with you, yet I would be unworthy the name of a man were I permit Miss Marvin to be exposed to such abusive and insulting language as you have just used toward her. If it occurs again in my presence you shall repent it."

"Curse you for a miserable puppy, a sneak, a villian, and a vagabond. I laugh at your threats, and defy you to do your worst. If it is a fight you want, I'll accommodate you—I'll flog you to your heart's content—I'll beat you so your own mother wouldn't know you."

"Morton Baxter," said Oscar, sternly, "you have forfeited all claims to that courtesy which is due one man from another, and I advise you to say no more. I do not wish to fight you, as I told you before; yet, if you provoke me too far, I will not be answerable for the consequence. Once more I say beware."

"Coward," said Baxter, "you refuse to fight, eh? Perhaps that will tempt you." At the same time he aimed a heavy blow at Oscar.

But the young man was prepared for him; and instantly striking a scientific pugilistic attitude, that showed he was by no means ignorant of the art of self-defence, he skillfully avoided the blow, and, by a dexterous movement, he succeded in planting his fists directly between Baxter's vissionary orbs, in acknowledgement whereof the bully measured his length upon the floor.

He was soon assisted to his feet by some of the company, and advised to go home; but now rendered furious by the blow he had received, he yelled out:

"Let me at him again. It was only by chance he was enabled to strike me. He can't do it again. Let me at him, I say," and with a sudden rush he broke from those who held him, and made a dart at Oscar as though with the intention of annihilating him on the spot.

"*Villian!*" said Oscar, as he warded off the blow, "*stand back?* As I told you before, I did not come here to raise a fight.—The quarrel is of your own seeking. You insulted me without a just curse: you have seen that you are no match for me; and I warn you once for all, to take yourself off before you get into a difficulty."

But this only served to anger him the more, and, for the third time, he sprang at his antagonist with the ferocity of an enraged tiger, when Oscar, wishing to bring the unpleasant scene to a close, squared off, and before Baxter was aware of his intention, he struck him a stunning blow in the ear, which laid him prostrate without sense or motion.

The last proof of the hardness of Oscar's knuckles completely satisfied Baxter. He had no desire to prolong the combat in which he had been so badly worsted. He lay for some time totally powerless; but at length he revived, and, as soon as he was able he gathered himself up, and sneaked from the place like a whipped cur.

He was completely cowed. His fighting propensities were entirely overcome; and ere the morning's sun arose, the villian, the invincible Morton Baxter had taken his leave of Stockdale, to which he never returned, but where he went to, remains among the people thereof a mystery to this day.

The party soon after broke up, and the company repaired to their respective homes. Oscar accompanied Isabella to her father's residence, and he, when he heard from his daughter a statement of the whole affair, took the young man by the hand and said, with considerable emotion:

"Mr. Westbrook, you have this night done me a service for which I can never sufficiently express my thanks. I had hoped and expected that at some future time I should see Morton Baxter the legal protector of my daughter, but I thank God that, through your instrumentality, his villanous character has been revealed in time to avert the fate that would otherwise have awaited her."

Oscar assured him that he had done nothing more than his duty, and that he felt amply compensated therefore in be ing cognizant of the fact that he had been the means of saving Isabella from a life of sorrow and misery.

The conversation was continued for some time, but at length Oscar took leave of father and daughter, not, however, until he had received a special invitation to call soon and take tea with them; an invitation he was by no means loth to accept, as he was ever ready to profit by any opportunity where he might be thrown into the company of the lovely Isabella, for whom he now evinced a decided predeliction.

This visit was followed by others, and at length rfter some time had been spent in courtship, he made her an offer of his heart and hand, and dear reader, he was accepted.

In due time they were married, and the match having been heartily sanctioned by Mr. Marvin; and Isabella has often been heard to say, that she never had cause to remember with regret the day whereon she was deprived of her bragadocia lover, as it was the means of making her the happy wife of a fond, true and loving husband.

Flattery is a sort of bad money to which our vanity gives currency.