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The Grey Review.

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POETRY.

Lost Love.

The heart of the simplest woman
Is a mystery unrevealed,
And the love that seems most transparent
Is most hopelessly concealed.

We care not for the love while we have it;
We know not of love till it's lost;
We scatter its treasures broad-handed,
Nor reckon the ultimate cost.

Lo! a hand comes forth from the shadows,
A touch that I knew of old,
That could crown the loftiest fancies
With an aureole of gold.

And I think how that hand so loving,
That craved but to lie in mine,
Oft met an impatient gesture,
Or found no responsive sign.

And from yonder painted canvas
I catch the wistful look,
So timidly, mutely jealous
Of the love that I gave my book.

And I only too well remember
How I chafed at the dumb reproach,
And swore that no thought of woman
Should on MY pursuits encroach.

Was I blind, or mad, or but heartless?
The face and the hand are gone;
The light of my love has vanished;
I am utterly alone.

The brain that her glances kindled
Is blighted and dead and chilled,
And the gorgeous dream of the future
Can nevermore be fulfilled.

I loved as a man who is selfish,
She loved in a woman's way;
And man's love compared with a woman's
Is as darkness unto day.

As a spendthrift scatters his birthright,
I wasted the dower she gave,
And too late I find my ambition
Has followed her into the grave.

POLLY'S PLUNDER.

She had been christened Paula, but Polly was all that ever usage left for the name. Usually she cared very little about the matter. Polly suited her well enough when she was perched in the cherry tree, wading in the brook, or racing with Dick through the meadow grass to see which would catch and mount one of the horses in the pasture. But this was one of Polly's "blue days" when her world revealed its sawdustiness with painful distinctness. The warm sun shone through the vines of the old porch, where she sat shelling peas, only shelling peas, while other girls rode by in carriages and had beautiful times. She had discovered that she detested shelling peas, that her hands were brown instead of white, that her hair wouldn't curl, and her nose would turn up,—that last was a chronic tribulation; and then there was her name!

"Polly," said Dick, pushing his shaggy head through the open kitchen window, you look as forlorn as if your young affections had all been nipped in the bud."

"I don't see why I should look any other way," said Polly, shortly.

"Neither do I," acquiesced Dick with cheerful alacrity. "What's the matter now?"

"Nothing new," affirmed Polly, disconsolately. "Everything is just as it always has been; and always shall be, I suppose,—coarse and common. I can't wax flower or talk French; I can't even learn to play on the piano, though I do so love music, and I'm growing old—"

"Dreadful old," interposed Dick. "Fourteen is such a miserable betwixt and between age, too,—not old enough to be a pretty big girl and too old to be a pretty little girl,—sort of leaves a body nowhere, swinging between things, like the man that fell out of the apple tree and couldn't get to the ground because his coat caught on a lower limb. Then there's your nose, too, it just goes looking up exactly like a bantam chicken hunting a place to roost."

"I know it," responded Polly with discouraging meekness. "I'm brown and ugly; I can't have anything, and I never shall be anybody in the wide world only Polly Bowen."

"A beauteous face is vanity,"
sang Hepsibah's high, nasal voice in the kitchen.

"Hear that now?" questioned Dick, slyly. "How do you suppose that she found that out? Couldn't possibly have been by experience."

But Polly was too deep in the valley to smile, and after watching her face in vain for any gleam of fun, he continued meditatively, "I'll tell you what, Polly; if you haven't much chance for anything respectable, you know, you might join a circus, and have your name printed Mam'selle Paulina Bowena; for the way you can mount a horse is something stupendous."

That was too much. Polly's nose took a still higher elevation; she flung the last of the peas where the pods belonged, and faced about hotly!

"You just tease, tease all the time, Dick Bowen! I don't believe the boys ever feel any want about anything; they'd just as leave be good for nothing as not,—and most of them are. Besides, I wish you'd stop talking to me."

"Whew! Now, if that isn't just a fellow's luck when he is trying to be consoling," muttered Dick.

Polly caught up her bonnet and hurried away along the narrow winding path down the hillside.

"Nor let your angry passions rise,"
sounded after her in Hepsibah's shrillest, and most exasperating tone; for Hepsibah seemed to consider it her mission to sing fitting morals to all the family proceedings. Polly only put her small brown hands ungraciously over her ears and ran away the faster down where the great trees grew thick and close, throwing deep shades down to the bottom of the hill, where the old spring house stood, grey and mossy, beside the clear, cold stream.

She never paused until she had unlocked the door and entered the building; for unromantic though it might be, this was Polly's favorite retreat, and the little wooden bench she had placed there had been her sanctuary in many a troublesome time. She seated herself upon it now, and brushed away the angry tears from her eyes, and presently some quieter, softer ones gathered in their place. Dick needn't have made fun of it, she was unhappy, she said to herself. She was tired of the heat and the work and the everyday; she wanted some beautiful things in her life. And she leaned her head against the wall, and pitied herself so profoundly that gradually she grew comforted. It was cool and quiet there, and the water murmured dreamily. Polly closed her eyes and imagined herself in a great, cool parlor such as she meant to have some day. There was lovely pictures around her, when she chose to look up and see them, and the rippling of the stream was the sound of a fountain. She would arouse herself presently, sweep in her silken robes across the great room to play on a grand piano, that coveted piano!

Polly could not forbear opening her eyes just then, and drumming an anticipatory tune on the wooden lid of one of the milk jars near her.

There was a rustling in the grass, a crouching sound on the pebbly shores of the brook. Was that teasing Dick coming after her? He shouldn't laugh at finding her there alone,—"retired to her cloister," as he called it—and see that she had been crying, too! She sprang to the door, closed and locked it, swiftly but noiselessly, and listened. Nearer came the sound,—footsteps surely, but scarcely like Dick's rapid tread; and what possessed the boy that he was not whistling? Polly mounted her bench and peered through a tiny hole in the door, to see what had come over the intruder, and discovered not one, but two,—an old man leaning heavily upon a crutch, and a woman carrying a basket and a bundle.

They seated themselves in the shade, directly in front of the spring house door, and began to talk in coarse, guttural tones, of which Polly could not understand one word. Presently came a sound that she could comprehend—the cry of a baby; and then she saw that it was an animated bundle which the woman held. The strangers were not prepossessing in appearance. Their unintelligible words sounded rude and harsh, as if the conversation was an unpleasant one; and the young watcher fancied the woman did not seem very tender or kind to the baby. She began to wonder how long they would stay, and so keep her a prisoner. After all, they might only be poor travellers; she had half a mind to open the door, offer them some milk to drink, and go on her way back to the house.

But just then Polly's spying eyes grew suddenly very round, for the old man flung away his crutch, with some muttered sentence pulled off his gray hair and venerable beard, and walked down to the brook for a drink, neither aged or infirm, but young, and decidedly villainous looking.

"O my!" murmured Polly, slipping softly down from her post of observation and not daring even to watch any more. It seemed a long time that she sat there and waited, hearing snatches of that miserable jargon outside. But by and by the baby's low, fretful cry died into silence, and at last the other voices ceased also. There was a slight bustle and moving about, as if they were preparing to depart, and then the sound of retreating footsteps. Polly bent her head eagerly to be sure that they were really going; then she ventured to peep from her outlook in the door, but they had passed out of sight. She waited a few minutes and cautiously unlocked the door.

"Why, they have left their basket! forgotten it, I guess," she soliloquized as that object greeted her view. A mischievous wish that the man might have left his false hair and beard in it flashed through her mind. "If he only has he shall not get them again." and lifting the basket she carried it inside the building. It seemed heavy enough to hold a good many things. Polly raised the lid cautiously and then sank down beside it in astonishment, for nestled within lay the baby fast asleep. What a place to put it! And had they really intended to leave it?

She had no opportunity to ponder the question or pursue her investigations; there was a sound of returning steps, and she had barely time to close the door and lock it, before the two foreigners came again to their old resting place.

Poor Polly leaned against the damp wall trembling in terror and perplexity. She had unwittingly stolen the baby, and she dare not return it; for what might that evil looking man do, if he discovered her there, and found that she had been a witness to his proceedings? She wished for the first time in her life, that her nook was nearer the house, so that some one could hear her if she called; she wished Dick would come. What if the dreadful pair should stay there for hours? What if the baby should wake up and cry? She shuddered, and her heart beat so loudly that she fancied it must be heard through the stone walls.

Outside there was a hurried search, ejaculations of surprise and mutterings of wrath. The two accused each other angrily. Polly was assured of so much from the tones. Twice they came to the door, tried it, and shook it violently; but it was firm. The baby slept quietly, and Polly held her very breath in death-like silence, so they turned away again. Then they held a brief consultation over what must have seemed to them a most mysterious disappearance, since they had seen no living creature near the place; and concluded it by gathering up the few articles of baggage belonging to them and departing at a much greater speed than they had done before.

They would certainly return, Polly thought, and she listened and waited. But the wind in the trees and the murmur of the brook were all she heard after that; and at last she turned the key and emerged from her imprisonment. The little child was still slumbering in its basket-bed, and Polly looked down upon it with anxiety and remorse in her own brown eyes. It seemed hard to leave such a tender little creature there alone, but she must not take it again beyond the reach of those to whom it belonged. The open wicker work cover would admit the air freely, so she fastened it down and bore the basket to a cluster of drooping bushes, where it would escape observation from a casual passer, but would probably be speedily found by any one searching for it. Then she hastened homeward.

"Come back to the vain world once more," questioned Dick, mischievously.

"Yes," said Polly, briefly. She was tired, excited and bewildered, and felt in no wise inclined to recount her adventure. How could she tell sensible Uncle William and solemn Hespibah that she had been crying in the spring-house because her nose didn't suit her and she hadn't a piano? And what had possessed her to touch the basket? She hoped its owners would find it, and nobody would ever hear anything of the affair, she said to hetself, over and over again, that long day; glancing out nervously through the open doors and windows, and expecting, she scarcely knew what. She tried to reassure herself as hours passed; but she was troubled and ill at ease.

"Must be some queer sort of bird, or something, down there by the spring," remarked Dick, late in the afternoon, as he brought up a pitcher of milk for Hepsibah. "It sounded exactly like a child crying. I heard it two or three times, but couldn't see anything."

Then Polly's trouble began afresh. It was her baby, she was certain of it. Those people had gone away and left it entirely; and O, what should she do? Dread of going near the spot baffled fiercely with her remorseful compassion for the little one left so long without food or care; but the latter conquered; and, near sunset, having surreptitiously warmed a little milk on the kitchen stove, Polly slipped away. Sweet blue eyes looked up at her, and baby put up a grieving lip, and drew a little sobbing breath as it was lifted from its hard bed. Polly drew it into her arms, kissed the tiny rose-leaf of a hand, and nestled the little soft cheek to her own with instinctive motherliness that baby understood and appreciated at once. It appreciated the supper, too; and Polly grew more and more in love with the stolen treasure, the longer she fingered with it. But her perplexity increased with her tenderness.

"If I take it home, I'll have to tell all about it, of course; and I can't do that," she reasoned. "Besides, if they find what sort of people they belonged to, they'll just send it to the poor house—I know they will."

Polly had exaggerated ideas of the horrors of that asylum, and to have this little one sent there when she was the cause of its unprotected condition, was more than she could bear. But something must be done with it in her arms, swaying softly to and fro, and trying to discover some way out of the difficulty. Presently the lids drooped over the blue eyes, and baby went unconcernedly to sleep, leaving its young nurse to settle the question of its future as best she might. If only some one else had it—some one who would know what to do, and would be kind to it. Then a brilliant thought flashed across Polly's brain. She would take it to the minister's; everybody knew the minister, and if those people ever came to look for it, they would be sure to hear of it there. It would be well cared for there, and nobody need ever know that she had anything to do with it.

She drew a long breath of relief and laid the little sleeper down upon the grass while she proceeded to examine the basket, to see if anything could be removed that would make it lighter for so long a pilgrimage. Under the small quilt that had served for a bed, were an old wallet and a handsome ebony case. The first held only papers, no money; and the case was locked, so that Polly could not learn its contents. But as it was of considerable weight, she took it with the wallet, and, running down the hill a little way, deposited them in a hollow stump. She replaced the quilt and baby in the basket and bore it as near to the house as she deemed safe, and waited impatiently for the sun to set and the moon to rise.

A strange, lonely walk it was that the little maiden took that night. Arms and heart bore a heavy burden; but she pressed resolutely forward until her destination was reached. She reconnoitered the premises carefully, then, advancing to the step, placed the basket where it would be in full view, rang the bell vigorously, and away with a flying speed that even her light feet had never attained before. She reached home almost breathless; but she had scarcely been missed. Hepsibah remarked, disapprovingly, that it wasn't wholesome to be a-walkin' round the garden in the moonshine;" that was all, and Polly answered nothing, but slipped away to bed. Broken slumber and odd dreams were hers that night; and when Dick returned from an errand in the village next morning, she saw at a glance that his eyes were full of news, and bending her head low over her sewing, that her face might not betray her, she waited for the story that was sure to come. A baby had been left on the minister's door step, Dick announced, a real live baby; and no one had the least idea in the world where it came from, though they were trying every way to find out who brought it. Hepsibah exclaimed and questioned with her wonted solemnity; but Dick concluded indignantly.

"I say it was just a shame for anybody to leave it there, when the minister has so many babies of his own, and not salary enough to go half way round before this one came."

Polly had not thought of that before. It seemed to her that she hadn't thought of anything, through the whole miserable transaction, until it was too late, and that every step had been the very worst one she could have taken. And now the affair had become so complicated that she must let it take its own course. "Oh, I can't tell I never will!" she whispered to herself, over and over again, while her heart was wrung with visions of the direful privations the minister's family might suffer. She grew to feel like a wretched criminal as the day went by and no claimant came for the little foundling. The talk and wonder died away in the village, but the secret pressed more and more heavily upon Polly's soul. It darkened all her waking hours and haunted her sleep, until she didn't eat nothin', and was just spindlin' away, Hepsibah affirmed.

More than once Polly had searched through the papers of the old wallet, hoping to find some information concerning the young stranger; but they were only notes and memoranda—nothing that she could understand. Then her thoughts turned to the ebony case; she had lifted it, and her curiosity grew with her baffled efforts. Baby's whole history might be in that case; it might hold precious jewels that would relieve the poor minister, and make baby grand and happy for always.

She must know its contents, she decided at last, and visited the old hollow stump one day, provided with the three or four small keys the house afforded, and a hatchet to be used in case these failed. Fortunately, one of the keys proved available, and revealed an interior of velvet, on which reposed various highly polished little knives, lancets, and other instruments of steel. Polly gazed upon them in amazement.

"Well, I didn't suppose they fixed them up like that," she said.

Too deeply engrossed she was to hear a step upon the hill-side, or notice the form that approached, until a voice startled her.

"Can you give me a drink, little maiden? Hello!"

The young man came to an abrupt halt, and gazed upon the case with more surprise than Polly had shown. His pleasant voice changed instantly.

"How came you by that?"

Polly closed her lips resolutely, and answered not a word.

"I have a right to ask, since it happens to be my property," continued the stranger, "I wouldn't own it then—a set of burglar's tools like that," burst forth Polly, defiantly.

"Not so much tools for breaking in houses as for mending broken bones, little lady," said the gentleman, smiling, but instantly growing grave again. "The charge of burglary would come with better grace from me, for that case was stolen, months ago many miles from here. If you tell exactly how it came in your possession, it will help me to trace something far more valuable, that was stolen at the same time.

"A Wallet? a baby?" questioned Polly, her lip parting breathlessly.

Then reading an answer in the face where astonishment, hope, and fear were blending, she poured forth her story, stammering, colouring, yet eagerly—confused and ashamed, but growing wonderfully lightened and comforted as she unfolded her burden.

"And—O dear! it was all so wretched and miserable, and I didn't know what to do; but I don't believe it was so much wicked as a dreadful blunder." she concluded, with crimson cheeks and tearful eyes.

"Blunder!" echoed the stranger. "Well, I suspect there are such things as providential blunders; and if this was one at all, it must have been of that sort; but I know a heart broken young mother who will call it by a different name. You have saved my sister's child."

Then he told her briefly how the little one had been left, in an open parlor of a distant city home, and, when the mother and nurse returned, it had disappeared, and the most careful search had failed to discover any clue to its whereabouts. The mother's grief was slowly destroying her life, and her brother had persuaded her to take this trip with him, in the hope that it might arouse her from her melancholy, and benefit her failing health. How the young doctor rehearsed her story, what he told and what he did not tell, Polly never knew. But she thought that he must have managed it in some marvellous way, for the minister's family and her uncle William did not appear at all horrified, and nobody else seemed to know much about it, only baby's mother, and she caressed and thanked her as if she had done something grand and heroic, instead of dreadful. The next day brought her a beautiful piano, with a scarcely less beautiful note from Mrs. Grey, begging Polly to accept the gift from one to whose life she had restored both sunshine and music.

Polly was so happy in the weeks that followed, that she ceased to worry about her nose. "In fact so many charming things were turning up that it was quite in the fashion," Dick declared.

Mrs. Grey herself gave her music lessons and was her friend and counseller in countless ways were a motherless girl needed help that Hepsibah was too ignorant to afford. Then, too, that precious baby was hers to hold and to fondle as much as she chose; for the mother lingered long among the hills, and liked the place so well that she decided to make it a summer resort.

It is supposed that Polly has grown to be somebody in four years since that. At least Dr. Lisle seems to consider her musical proficiency something wonderfull, and comes to see her with great frequency and regularity. Dick, who has arrived at an age when he is particular about his back hair, and devoted to his neck-ties, is beginning to call the medical gentleman "part of Polly's plunder."

Normanby Council.

Council met at township hall, on the 9th inst. Present,—A. S. McEdwards, Reeve; John Kœnig, first Deputy-Reeve; Noah Wenger, second Deputy-Reeve; Andrew O'Farrell and Henry A. McMahon, Councillors.

Minutes of last meeting read and assented to.

The Reeve presented a petition which he had received showing some hundred and fifty names thereon asking for a by-law to be submitted to ratepayers of township granting a bonus of thirty thousand dollars to aid in the construction of Stratford and Lake Huron Railway through the township.

Moved by Mr. Wenger, seconded by Mr. O'Farrell, that by-law No. 6, of 1878, be introduced and read first time.—Carried.

By-law read first time.

Moved by Mr. Wenger, seconded by Mr. Kœnig, that by-law No. 6, of 1878, be read a second time and blanks filled up.—Carried.

By-law No. 6 read second time and blanks filled.

By-law will be published in paper printed at Neustadt village. Copies will be posted through township.

Moved by Mr. Kœnig, seconded by Mr. O'Farrell, that bill from *Examiner* office, for printing and publishing to date, be paid, amounting to $48.—Carried.

Moved by Mr. Kœnig, seconded by Mr. Wenger, that expense of preparing voters list of 1878, to amount of $30, be paid.—Carried.

Moved by Mr. Kœnig, seconded by Mr. Wenger, that $2,000 be expended on roads, being $500 to each division, and that each councillor act as commissioner in his respective division.—Carried.

Moved by Mr. Kœnig, seconded by Mr. Wenger, that treasurer borrow $1,000 to pay jobs of road work, said sum to be paid back when sufficient taxes are collected and not later than December next.—Carried.

A petition from parties in N. E. portion of township was overlooked last meeting. Attention of Council being called thereto, following action was taken:

Moved by Mr. Wenger, seconded by Mr. Kœnig, that Mr. McMahon examine and report on work called for by petition.—Carried.

A by-law was passed imposing rate of 1878, in full 6¼ mills to $, as follows: County rate, 4 mills to $; Township rate, 1¼ mills to $, and General School rate, 1 mill to $.

On motion made and seconded Council adjourned until Wednesday, the 14th day of August, 1878, to meet at township hall.

W. H. RYAN, Tp. Clerk.

MOUNT FOREST.—A public meeting was held on the 10th inst. for the purpose of considering the advisability of taking steps for the incorporation of the place as a town, and also for recommending that some action might be taken for the purchase of a new cemetery. A motion was carried that the Council be instructed to take the necessary steps to procure at the next session of the Ontario Legislature a special act of incorporation as a town, including in addition to the present territory those portions set forth in a plan prepared by Hugh Wilson, P. L. S. It was also carried that the Council be instructed to purchase a site for a cemetery, provided a suitable plot at a reasonable price can be secured.

George Harris, aged about 15, son of Mr. J. Harris, lot 9, con. 16, Grey, lately took his gun and went in quest of a woodchuck, which had been seen in the vicinity. After a fruitless search he made up his mind to return home. Having occasion to cross a fence, he first got over, and then proceeded to draw the shot gun through between the rails, when the hammer struck, emptying the contents of the firelock into the lad's thigh, coming out at the back of the flip. It is believed that some of the small shot glanced off the thigh bone and entered the boy's bowels, as he expired four or five hours after the accident.

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