

TOO LATE

OR

THE BRIDAL FEAST.

There was joy in a land where a lone heart was breaking.
Brighter never were smiles at a festival board;
But one, fairest there, in seeming, partaking
Of all that was bright in the smile of her lord.

In a word, a half word,—in the change of her cheek,—
In a heave of a bosom that sank with a sigh,—
In all that concealment, contention bespeak,
Too oft, for a moment, unmasked to the eye.

Had a parent's mistrust of where happiness lies
Forbidden the young bosom its first cherished flame,
Had the poor heart been taught, to its cost, there are ties
That, abandoned and broken, still bind it the same!

Had a moment of pique, or of passion prevailed,
Had a world with its tinsel deceits led aside,
Had the heart that temptation for years had assailed,
In vain, bent at last at the altar of pride!

Though forbidden its pains, its regrets to declare,
Though in duty condemned recollection to smother,
Would that bosom have fain turned from all that was
[there],

To have dropped but one tear on the breast of another!
Ascot, E. Townships, P. Q. FRANK JOHNSON.

MOZART;

OR,

THE YOUNG MUSICIAN.

It was on a fine morning, in the month of April, in the year 1762, that two children—one a girl about eight years old, and the other a boy, perhaps two years younger—descended the vine-covered hill of Kosoheez, at the foot of which rushes tumultuously the beautiful and rapid waters of the Moldan, which are finally lost in the ancient forest of Bohemia.

Instead of tripping along with the careless gaiety of their age, the two children, holding each other by the hand, walked side by side, with thoughtful looks and downcast eyes; uniting the gravity of mature age with the charms and innocence of childhood.

Their attire betokened poverty; the color of the little girl's frock was faded, the clothes of the boy were much worn, and patched at the elbows and knees with different colored stuffs; but nevertheless, the neatness with which their fair hair had been combed, and their fresh-washed hands and faces, seemed to indicate the love and care of a mother.

They each held in one hand a piece of bread, which they looked at now and then, but did not touch. As soon as they reached the foot of the hill, and were about to enter the shade of the forest trees, the little boy broke the silence.

"Did you notice, sister," he said, "the manner in which mamma gave us our breakfast this morning; and how she sighed when I said, 'Nothing but bread!'"

"Yes; and she was crying!" said the little girl. "I saw her tears; and her look, which seemed to say, 'There is nothing but bread in the house, and you must be content with it.' But what are you crying for, Wolfgang?" added Frederica, while she shed tears herself.

"I cry because you cry," said Wolfgang; "and also because I have only dry bread for my breakfast!"

"Poor fellow," said Frederica, drying the eyes of her brother with a kiss; "may you never have a greater grief. But why do you not eat your bread?"

"I am not hungry," answered the boy.

"Ah, you would not want begging to eat, if there was something nice upon your bread!" said his sister.

"No, indeed," answered the boy, "I am not hungry!"

The little girl drew her brother towards her, and, parting the hair from his forehead, she said, "I would give you a kiss, and tell you what I was thinking of this morning, only I am afraid you are too little to talk to of such things!"

"Too little! and you are so big, you!" said Wolfgang, with a tone of affected pity.

"But I am bigger than you!" said the little girl.

"By an inch or two; so you need not be proud!" answered the boy.

"And I am older than you!"

"By a few months!"

"By some years, sir. But let us reckon, and not quarrel about it!" said Frederica, good-humoredly. "I was born on the 30th of January, 1754."

"And I was born the 27th January, 1756," said Wolfgang.

"That makes two years!" said the little girl.

"All but three days!" said the boy.

"Yes, all but three days!" repeated the girl.

"But let us think what we can do to help our parents."

"What are you talking about, sister?" said the boy; "what can we do?"

"That is what I am thinking of. O Heaven! what can we do?"

"Let us pray to God, sister; and then, perhaps, we shall think of something," said Wolfgang.

"You are right, brother; let us pray," answered the girl; let us kneel down under this tree; God will see us!"

"And hear us too," said Wolfgang. "Mamma says that God always hears children who pray for their parents!"

"Ah! then He will hear us favourably!" said Frederica, clasping her hands.

Wolfgang knelt down beside his sister, putting his head on the ground, and joining his hands. "Sister," he then said, "shall we not pray also to our great saint, John Nepomucene, to assist us?"

"Yes, to St. John Nepomucene!" answered Frederica.

"Then do you begin, sister, and I will follow," answered the boy.

The little girl then said her prayer, and ended by asking for the intercession of the Bohemian saint, the little boy repeating the prayers after her; and both were so earnestly engaged with what they were about, that they did not perceive a man, of somewhat advanced age and of noble and distinguished appearance, who stood at some little distance from the tree beneath which they knelt.

"Our prayer is finished, brother," said the little girl.

"And granted, too," said Wolfgang, rising in his turn.

"Already!" exclaimed his sister.

"Yes, I thought of something while you were praying!" answered Wolfgang.

"Then St. John Nepomucene must have whispered it in your ear!" replied his sister.

"I do not know whether it was St. John Nepomucene or not; but this is what came into my head: You know I have a little talent for playing on the piano; but, indeed, if mamma had not so often said that we must not be vain, I should say that I do not compose badly. And you, Frederica, though you have not so much power over the instrument as I have, yet for your age you do not play so ill!"

"There's a conceited child!" said Frederica.

"Do not interrupt me, dear Frederica, or I shall forget what I thought of. Now, let us set out some fine morning, and walk, and walk a long way. Sometimes we shall come to a castle, and then, Frederica, you shall begin to sing, and somebody will come to the gate; and then the people of the castle will say, 'Oh the poor children!' and ask us to come in and rest ourselves; and then I shall go to the piano—"

"If there is one," interrupted the little girl.

"As if there was not pianos everywhere in these days!" answered the boy. "But you provoke me with your interruptions. I say then I shall go to the piano, I shall get up on the stool, and I shall play, and play, and everybody will be enchanted. They will embrace us, and give us sweetmeats and playthings, and to you they will give necklaces and ribbons; but we shall not take them, and I shall say: Pay us, if you please, that we may take the money to papa and mamma."

"Ah, you little rogue, how ambitious you are!" cried Frederica, throwing herself on her brother's neck.

"But that's not all," said Wolfgang; "let me finish that story. The king will hear us talked about, and send for us. I shall wear a beautiful coat, and you will have a beautiful dress, and we shall go to the king's palace. There they will take us into a saloon full of beautiful ladies, the like of whom was never seen, and gentlemen all in embroidery, and furniture all gilded, and a piano. Such a piano! the case all made of pure gold, with silver pedals, and keys of fine pearls, and diamonds everywhere. Then we shall play, and the Court will be delighted. And they will surround us, and caress us, and the king will ask me what I should like, and I shall say: Whatever you please, king. And then he will give me a castle, and I shall have papa and mamma to live there, and—"

A burst of laughter interrupted, in the midst of his recital, the intrepid young performer on the piano. Wolfgang frightened, looked at his sister, then, turning his eyes, he perceived the stranger, who, hidden behind a tree near to the children, had not lost a word of their conversation. Fearing that he was discovered, he approached them, saying:

"Do not be afraid, my children; I wish only to make you happy. I am sent to you by the great saint, John Nepomucene."

At these words the brother and sister exchanged a look, and then turned their eyes again upon the pretended messenger of the saint. This survey was doubtless satisfactory; for the little boy, running towards him, took hold of his hand, and with a charming simplicity, exclaimed: "Ah, so much the better; are you going to grant me my wishes?"

"No, sir; not all at once," answered the stranger; then seating himself on the spreading roots of a tree, and bidding Wolfgang stand before him, while his sister, older and more timid, kept a little aside, he said: "I shall give you whatever you wish, on condition that you answer me truly all the questions I am going to put to you; I warn you beforehand, that if you tell a lie, I shall know it!"

"Sir, you must know that I never told a lie in my life," replied Wolfgang, a little offended.

"That is what we shall see," said the stranger.

"What is your father's name?"

"Leopold Mozart."

"And what is his employment?"

"He is *maitre de chapelle*; he plays on the violin and on the piano; but best on the violin."

"Is your mother alive still?"

"Yes, sir."

"How many children are there of you?"

As the little boy remained silent, his sister answered this question.

"There were seven of us, sir; but now we are only two, my brother and myself."

"And your father is poor, my dear child?"

said the stranger to the little girl.

"Oh, yes; very poor, sir. See!" she said, showing the morsels of bread, which neither she nor her brother had touched, "this is all the bread there was in the house. Papa and mamma have not kept any for themselves. Every time

that mamma gives our breakfast, and says, 'Go and eat it in the fields, my dear children,' it is that we may not see that she has not any for herself."

"Poor children," said the stranger, greatly moved. "Where do your parents live?"

"Up there on the hill, sir, in that little cottage that you see the roof of from here," said Wolfgang.

"Did not that house belong to Dusseck?" asked the stranger.

"A musician, like our father—yes, sir," said the little girl.

"Poor children, repeated the stranger, drying a tear. "Tell me, when I saw you both praying, what did you ask for?"

"Me, sir," said the little girl. "I asked that I might know the way to earn some money for my parents, so that my brother and I may not every day have to breakfast alone. Wolfgang tells me that he has thought of a way to get money, but I am afraid—"

"If what Wolfgang says is true, that you can both play so well on the piano, it is very likely you may earn money, and I may be able to help you."

"My brother is so good a musician," said the little girl, "that not only he can play at first sight any piece that is presented to him, but he composes pretty little pieces besides; papa says so."

"And what age is your brother?"

"Six years old, sir; and I am eight."

"And this child composes already?" exclaimed the stranger.

"Does that surprise you?" cried Wolfgang, laughing. "Come to our house, sir, and you shall see."

The stranger drew out his watch, reflected for a moment, and then said, in a tone half serious, half jesting, "My dear children, the great Nepomucene, that revered saint of Bohemia, orders me to tell you to go home to your parents, stay at home all day, and before night you shall have some news. Now go."

The stranger was retiring, but Wolfgang took hold of his coat.

"Just one word, sir," he said, "before you go back."

"What are you going to ask, brother?" interrupted Frederica, wishing to hinder her brother from speaking. He then whispered something in her ear, to which she replied, "No, no, Wolfgang, it would be rude; I do not want it."

"What is it, my dear child?" said the stranger.

"She wants me not to ask you if the great Nepomucene won't send mamma some dinner," answered Wolfgang, so quickly that Frederica had not time to stop him. "He can, I am sure, sir."

"Without doubt, your mother shall have it," said the stranger. "But what else do you want? Speak out, do not be afraid."

"Well, then, a new coat for papa; he has not been able to give his lessons some days past, for want of one."

"And then—"

"And then, a new gown for mamma! it would become her so well!"

"Is that all?"

"Enough, brother, enough!" said Frederica, with the delicate susceptibility of a well-bred child.

"Leave me alone, sister, I am only going to ask for something for you!"

"I do not want anything; you are asking the gentleman for too much!"

"Though I am pleased with your sister's modesty," said the stranger, "I authorize you to mention whatever you wish for."

"Well, then, what I want is a large house, and servants so that mamma shall not be fatigued with doing the work, and then—then, that is all, I think!"

"But you have asked nothing for yourself."

"Oh, there is no need, sir; give papa all what he wants, and I shall want for nothing."

"Charming and admirable child!" said the stranger. "Farewell; very soon you shall see me again."

As he uttered these words the stranger rose, and disappeared so quickly among the shades of the forest, that the children remained in surprise.

"What! do you think, Wolfgang, that he will send us some dinner?" said Frederica, as with her brother she took the road home.

"To be sure!" said Wolfgang, in a confident tone.

"As for me, I am afraid the gentleman has been making game of us," said the little girl.

"Ah, we shall see about that!" replied the little Mozart.

As soon as our two children had re-entered their home, a woman, still young and neatly attired, said sorrowfully to them—"What, have neither of you touched your bread?"

"We were not hungry, mamma," said Frederica.

"What, then, has made you lose your appetite?"

"Why, think, mamma!" said Wolfgang, "I and my sister have seen a messenger from the great Nepomucene, whose history papa has so often told us!"

"Indeed! tell us how that happened, Master Wolfgang?" said a good-natured looking man, who just then entered, and whom the two children saluted by the name of "good little papa!"

"Only fancy, good little papa!" said Wolfgang; "a tall, beautiful man, with a beautiful face, who looked like a king indeed!"

"And how did you know that he was a messenger from the great Nepomucene?" inquired the *maitre de chapelle*.

"Oh, he told me so!"

"And what proofs did he give you of it?"

"What proofs!—that is what we are going to see!—he will send you a coat, and a gown for mamma, and something for my sister—and a good dinner for all of us!"

M. Mozart could not help laughing at his son's simplicity.

"And do you believe all this, my dear child?" he said.

"The friend of St. John Nepomucene told me so, papa."

"Ah, he was making game of you!"

"Making game of me?—why, papa!—Oh, no. If you had seen him, you would not say that; his face is so good-natured. I can tell you, too, that instead of this poor little cottage, we are to have a palace. Oh, since I have known that, I do not like this little, dull room!"

As he uttered the last words, the little Mozart cast a look of disdain about him. In fact, the chamber served at once for kitchen and parlor. On one side was a capacious fire-place, with stoves suspended upon hooks within the wide chimney; and on the other, a piano, above which a violin was hung against the wall; in the middle was a table of some dark wood, and about it a few rush chairs.

"Ah, so we shall have a palace, shall we?" said M. Mozart, good-humoredly.

"Yes, papa; a palace and plenty of servants to wait on us. But what are you doing, mamma?" said the child to Madame Mozart, who was beginning her preparations for dinner.

"Why, you see, while you are waiting for the servants, I am getting the dinner ready!"

"The dinner, when I tell you they will send us one ready cooked, all ready cooked!"

The father and mother began to laugh, when they heard a knock at the door.

It was a covered cart, out of which came a cook, his assistant, and all the accessories of a first-rate dinner.

"We come from the person whom Master Wolfgang Mozart met at the entrance of the forest," said the cook, as he entered. Then he placed upon the table, as his assistant brought them out of the cart, various dishes ready dressed, some bottles of wines, and all the materials of an excellent dinner.

"Can you not inform me, my good friend, who was the person who sends you?" said M. Mozart to the cook.

"I cannot satisfy you, sir," said the man, respectfully.

The *maitre de chapelle* insisted.

"Well, then, sir, your son knows who sent me," said the cook.

"Yes," cried Wolfgang, "and Frederica knows him, too; it was the messenger and friend of the great St. John Nepomucene!"

"For heaven's sake explain this mystery," said M. Mozart to the cook.

"Sir," replied the man, "I can tell you nothing, except that the dinner is paid for—you can eat it without hesitation. If you wish to know more, let your son place himself at the piano, and improvise a sonata, then the person will appear. Do not ask me any more questions, for I must not answer them."

The dinner being served, the cook retired with his assistant, mounted his cart, and drove away. Little Wolfgang was the first to break silence after the departure of the cook.

"Well," he said, "did not I tell you?"

"Ah, brother!" said Frederica, "I thought that the strange gentleman was making sport of us, but now I see myself that it was not so."

"My dear children," said Master Mozart, "let us sit down to the table. The generous man who has sent us this dinner is, doubtless, a good friend who has been sent to us, even though he may not be the messenger of St. John Nepomucene. Let us drink his health—his name is unknown to us, but the remembrance of him will always remain in our hearts!"

You may suppose how merry they were over that repast; the family of Mozart had never dined so splendidly. As to the children, they had never seen such a feast; and they were still in the midst of their joy, when the clock in a neighboring convent struck two. Wolfgang bounded from his chair.

"Where are you going?" inquired his mother.

"To compose a sonata, to make the gentleman appear, who gave us the dinner."

Then he placed a little stool, upon which he stood, before the piano, for he was so little that his elbows did not reach the keys.

At first he ran up the scales, with an energy and precision extraordinary in a child so young and feeble; then he passed to the modulation of chords, and finally improvised a theme so sweet, so soft, that the *maitre de chapelle* and his wife remained dumb with surprise. Then, as he abandoned himself to the exuberance of the infantine imagination his fingers flew over the keys; touched with the hand of a master, they would now utter their full sound; then gently pressed, caressed as it were, they would give forth tones so expressive, that tears stood in the eyes of Mozart and his wife.

Softened, moved beyond expression by the melting sounds which Wolfgang drew from his instrument, they all forgot not only the dinner, but the promised visit of the stranger.

"Come hither that I may embrace you, Master Wolfgang Mozart!" cried the *maitre de chapelle*, with the enthusiasm of a father and an artist; "with the help of God, our Lady, and the great St. John Nepomucene, thou wilt be