

"THERE'S PANSIES--THAT'S FOR THOUGHTS"

It was a little pansy faded and crushed between the well creased folds of a letter. But it came as a message of love from dear ones dead and gone, as an echo of the long ago; it was a reminder of boyhood days, a souvenir plucked from soil made sacred by memories of the loved and lost.

A sweet-faced girl of the "seventies," now the mother of a daughter of her own, had visited the old home where many little ones had spent their happiest days; to several of the now grown-up "boys" she wrote: "I went to Grandma's—now owned by strangers—and had a drink out of the well. Seeing the old place made me think of you, so I gathered a few flowers to send to you, but they are so wilted this morning I will just enclose a sample."

A very welcome "sample," indeed! And how appropriate that a little pansy "purple with love's wound" should serve as a messenger to make the call to Dreamland, prompting the soliloquy: "This is the place. Stand still, my steed—let me review the scene, and summon from the shadowy past the forms that once have been."

The Pansy! "That's for thoughts." Aye, and tender thoughts they are!

"I send thee pansies while the year is young,
Yellow as sunshine, purple as the night;
Flowers of remembrance, ever fondly sung
By all the chiefest of the Sons of Light;
And if in recollection lives regret
For wasted days and dreams that were not true,
I tell thee that the 'pansy freaked with jet'
Is still the heart's-ease that the poets know.

Take all the sweetness of a gift unsought,
And for the pansies send me back a thought."

It is not a wild guess that if one who like Sam Jones, "don't care much for theology or botany, but loves religion and flowers," were asked to name his favorite blossom, he would answer in the words of a woman who knew:

"Of all the bonny buds that blow
In bright or cloudy weather,
Of all the flowers that come and go
The whole twelve moons together,
The little purple pansy brings
Thoughts of the sweetest, saddest things."

Just how the name of "the heart's-ease," or "pansy," happened to be given this little flower is a matter for the imagination.

"Heart's-ease! One could look for half a day
Upon this little flower and shape in fancy out
Full twenty different tales of love and sorrow,
That gave this gentle name."

Miss Deas in her interesting little book called "Flower Favorites," says: "From old Parson Herrick we gather that in his day the pansies were among the sweet smelling, old-fashioned flowers that went to compose the bridal nosegay, and in his quaint way he relates how once the pansies were 'frolic virgins who for want of sweethearts ran mad and died,' whereupon

"Love in pity of their tears
And their loss in blooming years,
For their restless here-spent hours
Gave them heart's-ease turned to flowers."

A German legend is to the effect that once upon a time the pansy had a delightful perfume; that, growing in cultivated fields and sought after both on account of its scent and supposed healing properties, the corn and vegetables were in consequence being continually trampled and destroyed. Now this so grieved the tender hearted flower that it prayed to the Holy Trinity to take away from it its perfume. The prayer was granted, and from that time the pansy is known as Dreifaltigkeit's Blume, or "Flower of the Trinity."

Primarily the name "heart's-ease" belonged to the wall flower. That it should have been transferred as an alias to the pansy is explained by Miss Deas on the ground that at one time both these flowers were comprehended among the violet tribes.

The pansy has a greater variety of names than any other flower. We know it commonly as

"pansy" and occasionally as "heart's-ease," but Miss Deas tells us that among other names by which it is known are "The Lady's Flower," "The Bird's Eye," "Pink of my John," "Kit-Run-the-Street," "Flamy," "Cull-me" or "Call-me," "Seed Pansy," "Horse Pansy"—horse signifying as a prefix simply large. Nursery tradition sees in the center of the pansy a little woman and in some parts of England it is known as "Three-Pretty-Faces-Under-One-Hood." In the north of England it is sometimes called "Stepmother." In Germany it is frequently styled "Stiefmutterchen," and in some parts of Germany the yellow species is called "Schwagerin," or "Sister-in-Law," typifying jealousy. In some parts of the Rhineland the people give this little floral favorite the fond name—in Bavaria bestowed upon the honey-suckle—Jelanger-je-heber, "the longer, the dearer."

Though the simplest of flowers, the pansy is famous in song and story. Shakespeare called it "Love in Idleness." Leigh Hunt styled it "the Garden's Gem." Ouseley called it "the Angel of the Flowers," saying: "The beauteous pansies rise in purple, gold, and blue, with tints of rainbow hue mocking the sunset skies."

In George Chapman's "All Fools" this dialogue appears:

Cornelia—"What flowers are these?"
Gazetta—"The pansy this."

Cornelia—"Oh, that's for lovers' thoughts."
Milton wrote of "the pansy freaked with jet," and called it one of the flowers that "sad embroidery wears," naming it among those he would have the valleys produce in order to cover the hearse of Lycid.

Tennyson gave the pansy some attention in his "Gardener's Daughter," and Bret Harte wrote in "The Mountain Heart's-Ease:"

"By scattered rocks and turbid waters shining,
By furrowed glade and dell,
To feverish men thy calm, sweet face uplifting,
Thou stayest them to tell.

The delicate thought that can not find expression,
For ruder speech too fair,
That, like thy petals, trembles in possession,
And scatters on the air."

Swinburne paid a tribute to this little flower when he wrote: "Heart's-ease or pansy, pleasure or thought, which would the picture give us of these? Surely the heart that conceived it sought heart's-ease."

Bayard Taylor in "Home and Travel" wrote: "Pansies in soft April rains fill their stalks with honeyed sap drawn from earth's prolific lap."

E. B. Browning wrote, "Pansies for ladies all—(I wis that none who wear such brooches miss a jewel in the mirror)."

Robert Buchanan boasted of "Hugh Sutherland's Pansies," telling how they grew:

"From blue to deeper blue, in midst of each
A golden dazzle like a glimmering star,
Each broader, bigger than a silver crown;
While here the weaver sat, his labor done,
Watching his azure pets and rearing them,
Until they seemed to know his step and touch,
And stir beneath his smile like living things;
The very sunshine loved them, and would lie
Here happy, coming early, lingering late,
Because they were so fair."

The pansy was not unknown to Shakespeare and in Hamlet he makes Ophelia, fantastically dressed with straws and flowers, say: "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, Love, remember; and there is pansies, that's for thoughts;" Laertes remarking, "A document in madness—thoughts and remembrance fitted."

In "Midsummer Night's Dream" Oberon, the fairy king, sends Puck, his favorite page in search of "the little western flower" in order that he may drop the blossoms' liquor as a love-philtre on the closed eyes of Titania, his queen. The king, addressing his page, says:

"That very time I saw (but thou couldst not),
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took—
At a fair vestal, throned by the west;

And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quenched in the chaste beams of the watry moon;

And the imperial vot'ress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy free.
Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell;
It fell upon a little western flower—
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound—

And maidens call it love-in-idleness.

Fetch me that flower; the herb I shew'd thee
once;

The juice of it, on sleeping eyelids laid,
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again,
Ere the Leviathan can swim a league."

The pansy figures even in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress Christiana and her children, entering the Valley of Humiliation, espied a boy feeding his father's sheep. "The boy was in very mean clothes, but of a fresh and well favored countenance, and as he sat by himself, he sung. 'Hark,' said Mr. Great-Heart, 'to what the shepherd's boy saith.' So they hearkened and he said:

"He that is down, needs fear no fall; he that is low, no pride; he that is humble, ever shall have God to be his guide.

"I am content with what I have, little be it or much; and, Lord, contentment still I crave, because thou savest such.

"Fullness to such a burden is, that go on pilgrimage; here little, and hereafter bliss, is best from age to age."

"Then said the guide, 'Do you hear him? I will dare to say this boy lives a merrier life, and wears more of that herb called 'heart's-ease' in his bosom, than he that is clad in silk and velvet."

The pansy emblemizes the "content that is our best having." Many of those who were boys and girls thirty or forty years ago will remember a little story that appeared in one of McGuffey's readers; it is a story that might well be read and re-read to the children of today. It is related that one bright June morning the king paid a visit to his garden, and found there many complaints and great grief. The king made inquiries of a number of flowers as to the reason for their sadness. Discontent was the lot of all save one. The rose, ungrateful for its own great beauty and fragrance, was sad because it was not like one of its neighbors. Another flower was sad because it was not a rose. The apple tree was sad because it could not bear peaches, the peach tree because it could not bear pears. After the king had made his way through the garden and listened to complaint after complaint, he came to the little pansy, every line of whose calm, sweet face spoke of contentment. "Why are you so happy while all the rest are sad?" asked the king. The pansy replied: "Dear king, I am happy because I know you wish me to be only a little pansy; and I am trying to be the best little pansy that I can."

The most important lesson for the children of today may be learned beside the pansy bed.

RICHARD L. METCALFE.

Senator Burton has resigned. The attention of a couple of New Yorkers is called to this senatorial precedent.

The anthracite operators refused to advance the wages of the miners on the ground that it would increase the price paid by the consumer. The miners agreed to accept the old wage, and then the operators raised the price 15 cents per ton. A people that will stand for that sort of thing get it regularly.

The packers are awfully arraid that this meat investigation business will work an injury to the stockmen who raise the cattle. Their anxiety to protect the stockmen reminds one of the extraordinary efforts of the railroad magnates to protect the interests of the "widows and orphans" who hold railroad stock. But isn't this anxiety dodge rather overworked?