The Touch of the Master's Hand

By Myra Brooks Welch

'Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer
   Thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin,
   But he held it up with a smile:
"What am I bidden, good folks," he cried,
"Who'll start the bidding for me?"
"A dollar, a dollar"; then "Two!" "Only two?
   Two dollars, and who'll make it three?

Three dollars, once; three dollars, twice;
   Going for three....." But no,
From the back of the room, a gray-haired man
   Came forward and picked up the bow;
Then, wiping the dust from the old violin,
   And tightening the loose string
He played a melody, pure and sweet,
   As a caroling angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,
   With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said: "What am I bid for the old violin?"
   And he held it up with the bow.
"A thousand dollars, and who'll make it two?
   Two thousand! And who'll make it three?
Three thousand once, three thousand twice,
   And going, and gone," said he.
The people cheered, but some of them cried,
   "We do not understand.
What changed its worth?" Swift came the reply:
   "The touch of the Master's hand."

And many a man with life out of tune,
   And battered and scarred with sin,
Is auctioned cheap to a thoughtless crowd,
   Much like the old violin.
A "mess of pottage," a glass of wine;
   A game--and he travels on.
He is "going once, and "going" twice,
   He's "going" and almost "gone."
But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd
   Never can quite understand
The worth of a soul and the change that is wrought
   By the touch of the Master's hand.