

THE LORD'S PURSEBEARERS.

CHAPTER X.—JOAN'S DAY-DREAM.

The winter months passed quickly away to Joan, as she wandered with old Isaac Chippendell from one town to another on the south coast. She found herself for the first time free from the irksome tyranny of Tatters, or any other woman; for Isaac discovered that he and Joan were almost as successful in winning money from careless almsgivers now they were singing alone, as when a woman and an infant had been added to make up an attractive group, and the profits for himself were much larger. Her singing, clear and wild as a linnets, awoke in his heart a long-slumbering love of music; and he began to be more careful in his method of singing with her, and more willing to creep into any church where they heard the voices of a choir, or the once familiar notes of an organ. He had sat in the singing gallery in the old church at home when he was a boy, and the chants and psalms were like household words to him. They carried him back to the days when his mother was living, and Roger, his twin-brother, was singing at his side; and now and then the tears would gather under his red eyelids as his quavering voice joined in the words, "I will arise, and go to my Father!" Joan also felt some silent chord touched in her girlish heart as she listened to the rolling tones of the organ, and felt their vibration through every nerve.

It was not a hard winter for them in any way. The old man with his silvery long hair and beard, and his fine well-cut face, and the bright-eyed smiling girl, who sang as the birds sing, with her whole heart, attracted a good deal of attention along the busy strand of Brighton. There were several efforts made to reclaim them from their life of vagabondage and beggary, but whenever these efforts became too strenuous Isaac quitted Brighton for a few weeks, and tried their fortune elsewhere. Once a pension of ten shillings a week was offered to him on condition that he would let Joan go into an orphanage; but what was ten shillings a week to a man who now and then pocketed as much in a day for doing nothing but loiter through the gay streets singing a hymn? Even Joan was not greatly charmed by the prospect of giving up her free, adventurous life. She felt no shame at receiving alms, and she loved her liberty. Her ideas of sin were very elementary. Getting drunk was no sin in her eyes; it was only a curious and mysterious pleasure enjoyed by those who were no longer young. The only sins she was quite sure of were thieving and starving helpless little creatures like Fidge and little Lucky.

But as their faces became too well known, even in Brighton, their receipts fell off; and neither Joan's fresh young voice nor Isaac's tremulous tones could arouse enough pity to make it worth while to remain there. The smaller towns were still more quickly drained. Joan put off their departure from time to time, in utter reluctance to return to their miserable haunts in London, but Isaac was bent upon going back to them. He fancied he had learned a few tricks at cards, which he was eager to put into practice in his old dens. There was no danger to fear from Roger now; he must have gone back to Comptonthorpe months ago, and any search after Joan must be over.

Yet, thanks to Joan, it was late in May before they made their return to London, and the streets were no longer foggy and muddy. But the summer light only served to make plainer the squalid poverty of the entangled net-work of buildings in which Joan found herself again. The air was close and windless, and the foul atmosphere seemed stagnant in its impurity. As she went slowly along the narrow alleys and lanes, to seek for her old lodging with the bedridden woman, whom she had left last November, the

noisome odor from the sewers and the sickening fumes of the spirit-vaults were intolerable to her. They seemed more intolerable, when, learning that her poor old friend was dead, she went back to the lodging house where Isaac stopped. There was nothing for her but to stop in the same house.

That night, spent among depraved and shameless women, developed a plan that had been working in Joan's brain for some years. It seemed to her as if a sweet and sorrowful voice, like her mother's when she lay dying and said, "God take care of my little Joan!" was calling to her all the night long to save herself from being lost.

For the last year or two, there had been an ambitious dream in her mind of setting up in business for herself as soon as she was big enough. She longed to have a hurdy-gurdy, and dress herself like the strange girls who played them, and earn her own living, and perhaps make her fortune in that way. Yet as she pondered over her difficulty her promise to little Lucky that she would run away with her some day came back to her mind. Little Lucky would be the next best thing to an organ; and they two together, if they were once out of this hateful London, would soon get sufficient to buy one. She almost shouted out for joy at the thought of it.

(To be Continued.)

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I could hobble around on crutches, and nerves of my hands and feet through long confinement to bed. I could hobble around a little on crutches, but was well nigh helpless. At this stage a second doctor was called in who declared my trouble was spinal complaint. Notwithstanding medical advice and treatment I was sinking lower and lower, and was regarded as incurable. I was now in such a state that I was unable to leave

my bed, but determined to find a cure if possible, and sent for one of the most able physicians in Ottawa. I was under his care and treatment for three years. He blistered my back every three or four weeks and exerted all his skill, but in vain. I was growing weaker and weaker and began to think the end could not be far off. At this juncture a friend strongly urged me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I yielded to his solicitations, and by the time six boxes of pills were used I found myself getting better. I used in all thirty boxes, and they have accomplished what ten years of treatment under physicians failed to do. Thanks to this wonderful medicine, I am able to attend to my duties and am as free from disease as any man in ordinary health is expected to be. I still use Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and they are the medicine for me, and so long as I live I shall use no other. If I had got these pills ten years ago I am satisfied I would not have suffered as I did, and would have saved some hundreds of dollars doctor bills. It is only those who have passed through such a terrible siege as I have done who can fully realize the wonderful merit of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills."

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