The Family Circle.

AN ASPIRATION.

Oh ! for a heart in harmony
With all Thy will, my God,
Whether with mercies I am crowned,
Or chastened by Thy rod.

A heart that vibrates to the truths
Writ by the pen Divine,
Where all Thy glorious attributes
In veiled effulgence shine.

A heart attuned to those sweet strains
Struck by the Choir above,
Who chant the everlasting song
Of their Redeemer's love.

A heart like Nathanael's free
From guile or self-conceit;
A heart like Mary's, that delights
To sit at Jesus' feet.

A heart, oh ! how unlike it now,
No longer prone to stray,
But loves, with filial, true delight
Thy precepts to obey.

With such a heart, so sweetly tuned,
Heaven is begun below,
Dear Saviour ! by the Spirit's power,
That heart on *me* bestow.

J. A. TABOR.

Colchester, July, 1873.

JANET MASON'S TROUBLES.

(*From the Sunday Magazine.*)

CHAPTER X.

It had been September when they first met. Gradually, as the winter came on, this wandering homeless life became more and more comfortless. Sometimes it was so cold and bitter in the streets that they were forced to return home before night came, for their thin, ill-clad bodies could not bear the biting blasts or the chilling rains, the whole day long; but, whatever the weather was, they were obliged to spend a large part of each day out of doors, for you know they had either to beg or steal in order to get their living, and they could only either beg or steal in the streets. So every day, in rain or wind or snow as much as in sunshine, they had to turn out and stay out until they had earned their bread.

They had to earn their bread, and they had to earn their lodging too. Perhaps you have been thinking that it was rather a kind thing of Tabby's mother to let Janet sleep all these weeks beneath her roof, even though she did not feed her. And so it would have been, no doubt, if she had given house-room to her for nothing. But to give house-room to her for nothing was not what she did at all. She let Janet sleep in her corner on the floor; but she made Janet pay for sleeping there. If the child came home with two or three pence in her pocket, those two or three pence, before she left the house again, had to find their way to the pocket of Tabby's mother. If she came home penniless, she got a box on the ears—or it might be more than one—and a torrent of abusive words. She had to pay pretty dearly for that hard bed of hers. All through the day the thought of the unearned price of it used to be a weight upon her mind. Often when she came in late in the evening, if she had failed to get the money that was needed, she used to lie awake for hours, tremblingly looking forward to the blows and the foul words that would be given her in the morning; for it was in the morning that these scenes usually took place, it being a rare thing for Tabby's mother to come home till after both the children were in bed.

Of course she cared about the blows she got far more than Tabby did. Tabby, too, used to be expected to bring money home, and used to be rated and beaten if she did not bring it. But, you see, she had been accustomed to be rated and beaten all her life, and so a few blows, more or less, never much troubled her, and as for bad words, I am sorry to say that if her mother gave bad words to her, Tabby was quite able to give them back in full measure, and cared no more about doing it than she cared about snapping her fingers. So, whether she brought money back with her at night, or whether she came in without a halfpenny, it never much disturbed Tabby. "She can't do nothing but turn me out of doors, and I'd just as soon she did that as not." What do I care? I does for myself without no help from her," she would exclaim, with saucy independence. And indeed she was right—in part at any rate—and there was little doubt that, pretty well from the time when she had been able to stand upright, her mother had been of about as little use to Tabby as ever a mother had been to any one in this world.

And yet, though Tabby was right in part, she was not right altogether. She said that her mother could do nothing worse than turn her out of doors. She thought that she could not when she said that; she was a fearless little thing, never afraid of hard blows, accustomed to bear pain like a Spartan; her mother might beat her, and shut the door in her face; that was all that she could do, Tabby thought. But Tabby lived to find that she was wrong.

For several days it had happened that both the children had had a run of ill success. I don't know whether it was the bad weather (it was very bad, wet, wintry weather) that kept people indoors, or whether the cold made them cross and hard-hearted, but poor Janet had begged and begged almost in vain for three long days, till she was sick of doing it, and except a little fruit from a green-grocer's shop, and a roll or two from a baker's barrow, Tabby had not been able in her special way to earn a single thing. They had only between them in the course of these three days got ninepence halfpenny, and the whole of that ninepence halfpenny (and it was little enough) they had been obliged to spend in food. For two nights they had gone home without a farthing to give to Tabby's mother, and when on the third night they still had nothing, Janet sat down upon a doorstep, and burst out crying at last in her distress.

As she was crying, some kind-hearted person in passing stopped, and asked her what was the matter, and gave a penny to her. She had been sobbing out to Tabby, "Oh, don't let us go back yet she'll beat us so. Don't let us go till we get something." And then, almost as she was saying this, the penny was put into her hand, and the sad sobs began to stop, and the poor little face began to brighten again.

"It isn't much, but it's ever so much better than nothing, isn't it?" she said, with a feeble little glimmer of a smile. "I wish it was in two halfpennies, and then we could each take one; but if we wait a little longer perhaps we may get another—don't you think we may? Oh, if some very kind person would only come, and give us—give us sixpence!" cried Janet, almost breathless with awe at the extravagance of her own imagination.

"Well, there's never no telling when you may get nothing," replied Tabby, "only there ain't many as gives sixpense, so it ain't likely. But what does it matter?" exclaimed Tabby, contemptuously. "If we ain't got no money, we ain't, and there's the end of it. It's uncommon wet and nasty here, I knows, and I'm a getting as sleepy as tuppence. Oh, I say, come along. You give the penny to her, and that'll keep her tongue off you, and—bless you, d'you think I mind mother's jaw?" And with that Tabby got up from her seat, and the two children, wet through, and cold and hungry, threaded the streets slowly home.

They begged from a good many more people as they went along, but nobody gave anything more to them, and when they reached their journey's end the penny that was in Janet's pocket was still the only penny that they had.

"I wish we could divide it," Janet said wistfully again, and then before they quite got home she offered the whole coin to Tabby. "It doesn't matter which of us has it, you know," she said faintly, trying to look as if she was not afraid to go home empty-handed; but Tabby laughed and pushed the little hand back.

"Don't it matter, though! You'd sing out another song if you'd got mother's eye upon you. I ain't a going to take it. What's the odds what she says to me? Do you think I can't give her as good as I gets?" cried Tabby scornfully, and skipped up the dark stairs as lightly and boldly as if she was bringing home a pocket full of pence.

The room was empty, when they reached it; it was usually empty, even when they came in late. The work that Tabby's mother did, when she did any work at all, was charing, and though she used to end her charing, at such times as she was doing it, pretty early in the evening, yet she never came home early, and rarely came home sober. At ten at eleven, at twelve o'clock, she used to come in, and sometimes when she came she had been drinking so much that she hardly knew what she was doing.

It was almost twelve o'clock to-night before she returned, and the children had both been a long time in bed; but they had been talking, and Janet was frightened and excited, and they had not been to sleep. They were still both of them wide awake when she came home at last.

Perhaps if it had not been so, the thing that happened then might not have happened. Possibly, if they had not begun to talk together the woman would have gone to bed, and have slept herself sober, and in the morning her temper might not have got the better of her, as it did now when she was half beside herself with drink. But instead of finding Tabby asleep, unhappily she found her awake, and began to talk to her, and then from talking to her she began to scold her. She found out soon enough that all the money the children had brought back was that one penny in Janet's pocket, and then she began to rate them and storm at them for their idleness. As she worked herself up into a passion Janet, cowering with fear and wretchedness, lay silent in her corner; but Tabby, as bold as brass, sat up in bed, and gave back all the abuse she got. It was a bad, miserable, sorrowful scene. It was such a scene as one is ashamed to think about or speak of, and that I would not tell you about at all if it were not that I am obliged for my story to tell you the end of it. The end was this—that the wretched woman, goaded at last by some bitter thing that Tabby said, caught up a brass candlestick from the table and threw it at her.

The candlestick struck the child upon her chest, a great blow that sent her down upon her back with a gasp and cry. The woman looked at her stupidly with her drunken eyes as she fell, and did not go to help her. It was only Janet, trembling and as white as death, who started up and ran to the bed-side.

"Oh, Tabby, are you hurt? Oh, Tabby! Tabby!" cried Janet in an agony of terror, for Tabby had got her eyes closed, as if she was stunned, and for a few moments she did not move or speak.

"I think she's broke me right i' two," she said at last, gasping, and in a strange voice, as if she had no breath. "Feels like it, any way. Oh, lor, I'm so sick!" cried the poor child, looking up and trying to rise, and crying out again with pain as she did it.

Perhaps, in spite of her apparent indifference, and mad and reckless as she was, the unhappy woman felt something like alarm at what she had done, for after a minute she got up and came to Tabby's side.

"Lie still, can't you, and stop that noise," she said. "You ain't killed yet. There—lie on your side; you'll be right enough by morning. It's your own fault if you're hurt. Well, if you won't lie on your side, lie on your back—only hold your jaw."

She moved the child from one position to another, and poor Tabby lay gasping in a curious way, but did not speak any more. Not another thing was done for her. The woman undressed and got into bed, and Janet too went back to her own bed in the corner, and then all the room was quiet, and Janet presently fell asleep, and knew nothing more till it was day.

When she awoke Tabby was sitting up in bed, with a scarlet spot of color on each cheek, and her mother, still lying by her side, was breathing heavily. Janet got up, frightened a little at Tabby's look.

"Oh, are you all right?" she asked hurriedly. "I mean—where you were knocked?"

"Don't seem like it," answered Tabby shortly. "I can't lie nohow, and I can't tumble about neither. I ain't had a wink o' sleep."

"Haven't you? And *I've* been asleep all night," cried Janet, remorsefully.

"Well, it wasn't likely you'd be anything else, was it? *You* wasn't knocked down with a candlestick," said Tabby, quite unconscious of what was in Janet's mind, and never dreaming, poor child, that because she was in pain anybody else should have given up their natural rest to look after her.

"I've been a thinkin' that I don't know how I'm to get my clothes on though," said Tabby in a whisper after a few moments' silence. "I'm a going to try—before *she* wakes—But I'm blest if I likes the thoughts of it. I'm so thirsty too, and there ain't a drop o'water."

"I'll go down and get some," exclaimed Janet quickly; and she went and brought a jugful, and the thirsty little lips drank it eagerly.

"Seems to me, you know," said Tabby confidentially, when she had finished her draught,—"I don't know what it is,—but seems to me that something's broke in two. Just you feel. Look—put your fingers here. Don't you press too much! There, now—aint't it?" cried Tabby triumphantly.

"Oh, I don't think it can be! Oh, Tabby, it would be dreadful!" said Janet, with an awed and frightened face.

"Well, I shouldn't mind whether it was broke or not if it warn't for the pain," said Tabby. "That's what bothers me. But p'raps it'll be better when I'm up. We'll have a try any way." And the child got out of bed and began to put on her clothes.

But she could not put them on without help. She could not stoop to put on her boots, and Janet had to put them on the little stockingless feet for her; she could not bend her arm back to fasten her frock.

"Oh, Tabby, you aren't fit to be up. You ought to go back to bed," Janet said frightened; but Tabby used some strong expression, and declared that she would see Janet at Jericho before she went to bed any more, So then Janet held her tongue, and presently the children went down the stairs together and out into the street.

It was their habit generally to vary their course as much as possible, so that passers-by, and above all policemen, might not get to be familiar with the sight of them; so sometimes they would begin to beg quite close to their own house, and sometimes they would go a long way before they asked for money from anybody. They often used to wander for miles along the endless noisy streets, for Tabby had a curious instinct for always finding out her way, so that they rarely lost themselves, or failed to be able when they wanted to return home.

But this morning they had only walked along a couple of streets when Tabby stopped and said she thought she would like to sit down somewhere.

"I don't seem to ha'got no breath somehow," she said. "Ain't it queer?"

"I wish I could get you somethin nice and hot," Janet said anxiously. "That would do you good—wouldn't it? Suppose you sit down for a bit, and I'll go on alone."

"Well I think I'll have to," answered Tabby.

So she sat down on a doorstep and Janet left her there for half an hour, and at the end of that time came back with a bright face.

"I've got threepence," she said. "Aren't I lucky? A woman gave me twopence, and a man threw me the other penny. Come along now. You can walk to the coffee place at the corner, can't you?"

"Oh, yes," said Tabby.

So they went to the coffee place at the corner, and Tabby got her cup of coffee, and looked as if she enjoyed it.

"I think that will do you good," said Janet, complacently watching her as she drank it.

"It ud do anybody good," answered Tabby. "Taste it."

So Janet took a modest sip, and pronounced it delicious.

"Take some more," said Tabby.

But Janet would not take any more. "You ought to have it all, you know," she said, "because you're not well, Do you think you'll be better now?"

"Oh, yes," said Tabby, "I'm a great deal better. Come on. I think I can go anywhere now."

(*To be Continued.*)

A MODERN RUG.

BY OLIVE THORNE.

I want to tell you how a few English girls make a thousand rugs. A monstrous feat! Well, I know it, though they do have some help before the rug is ready for use. Yet, after all, these few girls make them just as much as you make your friends a pair of slippers when you cover a canvas with embroidery and send it to a shoemaker to be soled. You never think of sharing the credit with the man of leather and waxed-ends, nor with those who made the pattern.

Let me show you. A young woman sits before an embroidery-frame, with a pile of worsteds beside her and a pattern in her hands. Her frame has an opening about a foot square, and is not unlike the embroidery-frames on standards over which our good old grandmothers and great-aunts used to tire their backs and wear out their eyes, except that it stands up square before her, and, instead of canvas, is closely filled up with fine steel bars.

A curious embroiderer she is, for she has neither needle, thimble, nor scissors. Instead, her implements are a colored pattern, pile of worsteds, cut in lengths of twenty feet, and three little girls. She looks at the pattern, selects a thread of worsted for the first stitch in one corner of the picture, draws out the end and hands it to Girl No. 2—one of the small ones. Girl No. 2 passes the end of the worsted to another small assistant, No. 3 who stands behind the frame. Girl No. 3 fastens one end of the thread to the steel bar of the embroidery-frame in one corner, then walks down the room five or six yards, to where there stands another frame, exactly like the first one, when she draws the thread tight and fastens the other end to the same corner of this second frame, leaving it stretched between the two. While she has been doing this Girl No. 1 has selected the color for the next stitch, handed it to No. 2, who passed it on to No. 4, standing on the other side of the frame. She fastened it on next to the first stitch, and walked down on her side to fix the other end to the second frame, as No. 3 did. By this time No. 3 is back, ready for the next thread; and so the work goes on, thread by thread, till the four girls have filled the foot-square frame with fifty thousand threads, twenty feet long.