

Family Department.

A HEART'S YEARNING.

"Lord, all my desire is before thee." Psalm xxxviii, 9.

"He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Psalm xxxvii, 4.

Master, my heart is out of tune!
A poor, discordant thing;
With chords that do not chime aright,
And notes that falsely ring;
With many a harsh and jarring tone,
And many a broken string.

Master, my will is out of joint,
A feeble, fluttering thing;
It cannot reach the azure heights
Of thy sweet will, my King;
But, striving, falleth evermore,
Like bird with broken wing.

Master, my life is out of touch
With thee, the Risen One;
A streamlet severed from the sea,
It floweth sadly on,
No tide of resurrection life,
Flooding its waters lone.

Master, I kneel before thy feet,
With empty heart and hand;
Save for this fire of longing, Lord,
Which thou hast lit and fanned,
I scarce have words to tell it thee,
But thou wilt understand.

To thine own golden keynote, Lord,
Tune thou this heart of mine!
And shape my will's poor wavering flight,
Till it be one with thine,
And dwell within me till I reach
The Father's house divine.

—Selected.

THE LORD'S PURSEBEARERS.

CHAPTER III. (CONTINUED.)

It was a prosperous day, as it always was when little Lucky was with them. Very few of the passers-by went on without arresting their steps for an instant, and that instant made them victims to Tatters' plausible prayers. Some of them gave their pennies unsolicited, that being the usual price of the sympathy they felt; but if any allowed Tatters to begin to tell her story, it was barely possible to escape with the toll of a penny. In many instances silver was given to her for the sake of her sickly little girl and decrepit old father. So successful was she that she would not let Isaac go near a spirit-vault, or indulge her own craving there, as long as her harvest was so abundant.

"No, no!" she said, when he complained, "they aren't such simpletons some on 'em, as not to smell us; and what's the good o' singin' hymns and things, if they can smell as we've just come out of vaults? You wait a bit longer; we'll have a burst-out afore we go back, but not till it's too dark for us to see. It's been a rare good day, this has."

It was growing dusk in the early winter evening, and they were about turning out of a long and pleasant road, where the rents of the houses would be from a hundred to two hundred a year, when a lady came with a quick step along the causeway, close beside Isaac shambling in the gutter. Joan was singing in a somewhat wearied voice,

"In heaven above, where all is love,
There shall be no more sorrow there!"

As if the girl's voice had appealed directly to

her heart, the lady, who was hurrying along, stopped suddenly in the full light of a lamp and beckoned Tatters to her. Little Lucky, worn out with the long and weary hours, lay faint and moaning in her arms; and Tatter's eyes were glistening with tears as she lifted them to the lady's face.

"It's for my poor old father, lady," she said plaintively, "and my little girl, as is only twelve, and my poor baby as is dyin' in my arms o' want and the night comin' on fast, and no roof to shelter us, and not a morsel to cross our lips all day. You ask my baby, lady, as is too little to tell lies. Darlin', you've had nothing to cross your lips all day?"

"No," said little Lucky faintly.

"Oh, that is shocking!" exclaimed the lady; "is it possible that no one has given you food or money to-day?"

"We've had a penny give us three times," answered Tatters; "I wouldn't tell you false for all the world, lady. Father's always been a religious man, and he used to beat us if we told lies. We couldn't dare sing them hymns if we were tellin' lies, for fear God Almighty 'ud strike us dead like Sophia. And we must get as much as ninepence for our lodgin's, that's three pence apiece, for me and my baby count as one. We can do without victuals; but father's old, and baby's dyin', and we must get a roof over us. I wasn't brought up to beggin', and it goes against me dreadful; but, oh, I'm afeared o' the night closin' in on us, and no roof over our head."

"Is your husband living?" asked the lady.

"He died in the hospital jest afore my baby was born, lady," replied Tatters; "and I did the best I could, but we were forced to sell everything. I'd work my fingers to the bone if I could get it, and so should my little girl there. She's come of a good stock, and we've brought her up as well as we could. Father's a very religious man."

"Do you know any thing about our Lord Jesus Christ?" inquired the lady in a low and almost timid tone.

Tatters felt herself at a loss. This was ground so seldom trodden on that she was not sure of a safe footing. She made a slight unperceived signal, and old Isaac came forward, standing in the full light of the lamp, which fell on his long white hair and pallid face.

"Oh yes," Tatters was saying, "me and father, we often talk of Jesus."

"It's our only comfort, ma'am," responded Isaac, baring his white head and standing humbly with his hat in his hand; "many a time in the day I say to myself, 'Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!'"

The sweet, kindly face on which their cunning eyes were fastened saddened as he spoke, with an expression of deep pain mingled with perplexity. She opened her purse and looked closely into it.

"That is all the silver I have," she said, taking out one shilling and sixpence; "but it will perhaps be enough for to-night, and to-morrow you must come for breakfast to No. 70 Mrs. Clapham, No 70 Silverdale Road. You will remember it? And then we must see what can be done to help you out of this miserable way of living."

The lady hurried away to escape their reiterated blessings and Tatters held the silver in her open palm, looking up into Isaac's face with a grin.

"Whatever 'ud become of us if rich folks weren't such flaming fools!" she exclaimed; "but now we've done, Isaac; and you and me'll go get a tippie, whilst Joan takes Lucky home. She'll get back in an hour almost, and it 'ud take quite that long to go to a station and go by train. Little Lucky's well worth her money; and there isn't a better old beggar in all London

than you, Isaac; and that I allays did say, and will say. It were you as drew all that silver. I can't never talk religion. But come along, and you get sharp home with Lucky, Joan. Don't go a-dawdlin' along the streets."

Joan turned weariedly away, but as soon as they were out of sight she sat down on a doorstep with Lucky in her lap. Her grandfather had given her sixpence as her share of the spoils; but she would not buy anything to eat so long as Lucky was in her charge. The little child nestled closely to her, and now and then patted her cheek, or clasped two of her fingers with tiny and feeble hand.

"Sing to me Doan," she said at last. With a low and weary voice Joan complained; the hymn she sung was little Lucky's favorite and the child joined in the chorus in thin and piping tone:—

"Jesus loves me this I know,
For the Bible tell me so.
Little ones to him belong;
They are weak, but he is strong.
Yes! Jesus loves me."

"Does he really love me, Doan?" asked little Lucky after a short pause of mingled pain and pleasure.

"Oh yes," she answered, "hymns always say true."

"And do he know about Fidge and me, and Mrs. Moss?" inquired Lucky.

"Oh dear! no, of course he don't," replied Joan confidently. "He'd send somebody to take you away in a minute if he did. Or p'raps he's very busy or very tired. Or p'raps the folks he sent have forgotten, you know. But he's sure to see after you and Fidge some day, and Mrs. Moss'll catch it then. Now we must go on; and you lie as comfortable as you can in my arms, and I'll talk as we go along."

"Tell about your mother, Doan," said the child, settling herself with a sigh of content.

"I'd a real mother once," answered Joan as she tramped along the streets eastwards, "and we did not live in London, but a long, long way off in the country, where there were fields, and trees, and flowers, and birds a singin', and the sky was blue; and there were no streets, and no hungry folks, and no spirit-vaults, and no lodgin'-houses and no drinkin' and cursin', and swearin', and no Mrs. Moss. And mother used to wash me, and put me on a beautiful clean frock, and go with me over the fields to a big beautiful church where the bells were ringin'; and there was a organ makin' music inside, and grandfather used to sing, oh, so grand! It's nothing like what you can think of, little Lucky."

"An' your mother died!" said Lucky with a little sob, for Joan always sobbed when she heard this question.

"Ay she died," was the answer; "somehow everything was changed, and we were in London, and first father died and then mother, and grandfather came and took me away, and we've been beggars ever since. We weren't beggars before, and I can't make it out, now I'm growin' bigger, what made grandfather turn into a beggar all at once! Some day I'll go and search for that beautiful place, and I'll never leave it again, never!"

"Take me," pleaded the child in her arms.

"S'pose I steal you away some day," whispered Joan "when we a sent home like this. Spose we get right off, you and me, from grandfather, and Tatters, and Mrs. Moss. We could go a-beggin' for ourselves, and keep all the money. And we'd take care of it, little Lucky, and not drink it away; and you should never be clemmed no more."

"But I shouldn't be little Lucky then," she said with a certain precocious pride in her own reputation. Mrs. Moss says it's because I'm so starved I'm little Lucky, if I grew fat and big, rich folks wouldn't be so sorry forme."