

FEBRUARY.

By MARY ROWLES JARVIS.

FEBRUARY-FILL-THE-FLOOD

Met with Hope this morning,
Where, amid the rain and mud,
She was seeking leaf and bud
For the world's adorning

Brown twigs bending o'er the way
Watched them pass together,
Brown roots that beneath them lay
Heard their talk ring, blithe and gay,
Through the wild, wet weather.

Sped the news the tree-tops through,
Rose the sap abounding;
Now, against the far-off blue,
Lovely outlines limned anew
Show the buds are rounding.

Like a child that wakes aglow,
Yet in dreamland lingers,
Through the bed-clothes of the snow,
Spring thrusts upwards from below
Chubby crocus fingers.

Brambles of her coming prate
On the sodden moorland;
Gorse and heather desolate
For her footsteps wake and wait,
On the rocky foreland.

Snowdrops ring the music out
Round each sheltered hollow
Winter faces right-about,
Hope has come, and who will doubt
All sweet things shall follow?



IN A MOTHER'S STEAD.

By A. M. BELLERBY.

CHAPTER I.

"Of course I will answer it, mother, but it doesn't seem any use," and a weary sigh broke from the lips of the girl of nineteen, who uttered the words in so hopeless a tone.

"My dear, I wish I had brought you up to business, or something with a brighter outlook; but I had no idea there were so many governesses, or so few engagements, for them in the world."

"You did what you thought best, mother. Perhaps this may come to something," and Katharine Skrine took up her pen to write, for about the fortieth time, an answer to an advertisement for a governess. Though she tried to speak more hopefully, the many disappointments of altogether unanswered letters, or of others—that seemed likely at first, coming to nothing—after six months of hope deferred, were beginning already to print two little lines on the young face. A pleasant face it was, with its fresh complexion, grey eyes and slightly-parted lips; a quaint look was added to it by the brown, curly hair having been cut quite short after a fever. Mrs. Skrine's very limited income made her obliged to part with her eldest daughter, despite their feelings; but having no know-

ledge nor experience of its being needed, Katharine had received no special training for teaching, and of course, in these days, found it hard to obtain any engagement without.

However, her letter was sent; and after two or three days came a more satisfactory reply than usual, in a large scrawling hand, stating that Mrs. Mathew was in need of a governess for her two children, and she thought Miss Skrine would suit.

Before long all was settled; and the mother and daughter's grief at their first long separation was softened by the relief it meant to their straitened means.

"Thirty pounds a year, just think, mother dear! Why, I shan't want it nearly all for myself, and you will have one less to keep at home, too!"

Katharine danced round the room in her exuberance of spirits.

But it was a different matter to say goodbye to that mother and the younger brothers and sisters, and Katharine subsided into a good cry in the corner of the empty third-class carriage.

Her spirits did not rise on the journey, for the day was chill and foggy; the passengers, who afterwards got in, all had a depressed look; and long before Birmingham was

reached, the heavy cloud that hung over it seemed to settle down on Katharine's heart. It was the first time, too, that she had ever travelled alone; the size and noise of New Street station overwhelmed her, and as the dire thought arose that no one might meet her, but that she must look out her luggage and cab alone, the tears were coming again into the clear grey eyes, when a quiet voice said—

"Can I help you in any way; is anyone with you? or have you luggage?"

And poor Katharine, looking up, saw through a mist the grave, bearded man who had proffered his help.

"Oh, thank you. I do not know if anyone is coming to meet me; I have one box."

"Which end of the train is it, where do you come from?" and the gentleman had taken her bundle from her.

"Nuneaton; I didn't notice which end."

"Then are you Miss Skrine? If so, you are the very person I have come to meet."

"Yes. Oh, how good of you. Are you—are you Mr. Mathew?"

"Yes," he replied with a quiet smile: seeing a porter, Katharine's luggage, and placing her in a cab with a rapidity which was most reassuring.

"The man knows me very well, and where