

stolen from her of forming the nearest and dearest tie of all.

At the time this sketch of her opens, Miss Penny was enjoying her holidays, if she might be said to enjoy them. As a matter of fact, she would have preferred to do without them; they were so colourless and uneventful, and she had some friends. Her poverty made her proud and her reserve made people think she was indifferent. Still, she had her little occupations, and these sometimes led her into poorer quarters than were her own.

It so happened that her last half-year's teaching had been more profitable than had been the rule of late, and she had not only promised herself a new dress which should be bought in the town, instead of being taken from her own *magasin de nouveautés*, but that she would even take a day in the country, gather wild flowers, and dream dreams among the green fields and under bluer skies than were seen here in the smoky town. It was an odd thing, but nevertheless true, that the poorer Miss Penny became the more extravagant grew her dreams, and the visions her brain conjured up were a sort of compensation to her for the pleasures in which her life was lacking.

She had fixed upon the shop she meant to honour with her patronage, had made her choice of a material which had been sunning itself in the window for some days, and in imagination saw herself, deep in added self-respect and gratification, making an impression on all the giddy creatures of the Lottie type as she should take her maternal stroll down the High Street, music roll in hand.

All these pleasant prospects, however, were destined to be nipped like first nips the young shoots in the nights of early May. The dress material was bought by someone else, the day in the country was put off until such time as little Miss Penny should be able to save up another small sum, and the money that was

to have been thus spent was disbursed in another fashion, but not upon herself. She must perforce have recourse once more to her private *magasin* and be her own modiste. So she opened the ottoman box and looked in.

"Ah!" sighed she, kneeling down in front of it and leaning her hands in contemplation upon the edge. "Ah, there is very little left! I fear I shall have some trouble in making up a costume this time, but I must do what I can. Really, Margaret Penny, I'm quite ashamed of your selfishness in having planned to spend so much money on yourself!"

She turned over the contents, and bringing out a heap upon the floor began to spread them forth for careful inspection, holding commune with herself meanwhile after this fashion—

"What can I have the pleasure of showing you, madam? This blue check is sweetly pretty and very durable. I'm sorry we have not a longer length, but I have another remnant here of black merino, and you can have no idea what a very *recherché* appearance it would give your costume if the front breadth were made of this blue check, and the back and sides of black merino, joined, let us say, by tabs of black with big beaded buttons, and I can show you the very thing. Well, Mr. Shopman, I believe you're right, and I think I will settle on that. And about a cape, madam, can't I persuade you? No—no, thank you. I'll make the old one do. There's a nice bit of black lace edging here which I'll take and a purple ruching; it is rather faded, I see, but perhaps that is all the better, as it might not suit the blue check, you see. Well, now, I think I'm pretty well fitted out, and all I want is a bonnet, but that is so easily made up. A black feather which I can curl up with a touch of the scissors, and this spray of yellow flowers that only need pulling out a little, and the thing is done. So that is all this morning, thank you, and as I keep a running account here, there's no more to be said. Good-day."

Miss Penny tossed the rest of the goods on to the counter, into the ottoman box I should say, closed the lid with a snap, and sat down to work forthwith, humming to herself the while in a thin, cracked voice as cheerfully as possible, feeling she had transacted a good morning's shopping.

The result of her toil was the effect produced on Lottie and her companion at the railway-station, and the person benefited by Margaret Penny's act of self-renunciation was a cousin of Lottie's, only she did not know it. A child consumed by wasting sickness whose parents were too poor to provide her with the tempting, strengthening food she required. The case came accidentally under Miss Penny's notice, and her tender woman's heart melted into softest pity at the sight.

"She's not long for this world," said the mother weeping, "as anybody may see, and it goes to my heart to think I can't give her the little comforts and good things she wants until she wants them no more. Wine and jellies, the doctor said, but how am I to provide them?"

It went to Miss Penny's heart too. She went home and abstracted from her little store a few coins day by day. Then the dress money went too in the same way. The mother poured out her thanks profusely, but that was nothing. Miss Penny felt uncomfortable when she was thanked. The child whose path was smoothed downhill gave her smiles and love, and finally took the little tale to Heaven. The Father knew it, for He had seen all and He did not forget Miss Penny.

Some while afterwards, the little one being gone home, Lottie learned who it was that smoothed the pebbly, down-hill road for her young cousin, and full of contrite shame, she vowed never again to judge by appearances, and that if ever there came the chance to do Miss Penny a good turn, she must be at hand to do it.

SOME SOPRANO SONGS FOR GIRLS.



On these days it is surprisingly difficult to select really satisfactory ballads for girls. We turn over numbers of new songs, some perhaps with beautiful music, yet the words are much too sophisticated in sentiment; then again inferior music may be wedded to poetry which is entirely suited to a girl's ideas and age; in fact only too seldom have we the good fortune to find both words and music all that we can desire for more youthful songstresses. To save our girl singers many a fruitless search and not a few disappointments in obtaining new songs, we will mention some soprano, mezzo and contralto solos which may be useful and pleasant to them. The soprano first.

"Spring Songs" as usual abound, but we single out one by Lita Jarratt (Ascherberg), which is decidedly effective, with a pretty accompaniment, flowing but facile; "The Year's at the Spring," by Dorothea Hollins (Novello) also, is a joyous inspiration, and "The Return of Spring," by Edgardo Levi (Ascherberg) is very bright too. Following the seasons, Cécile Hartog's "A Summer Song," rushes freshly and delightfully along to an accompaniment as happy as the words which are by Ellis Walton (Mrs. Percy

Cotton). This is one of "An English series of original songs" worth noting, issued by Messrs. Weekes. "Summer Love," by Marie James (Houghton) is a tuneful and graceful air for low soprano to words by Heine (English and French). "Time's Gift" has a trite but wise moral of a rose and a thorn, and is original and piquant, it is by J. M. Capel (R. Cocks). "Love the Rover," by Gerald Lane (R. Cocks), is in the same style and is bright, easy and interesting to sing, with a pretty refrain; also "Lady Betty," by Lionel Elliott (J. Williams) goes with quaint grace and much charm in minut time; both these last are for rather low sopranos. "Children's Dreams," by F. Cowen, and "A Crumpled Roseleaf" (Cocks) are two simple little songs full of tender, loving feeling, the latter teaching a gentle lesson in contentment. "Oh! Where Do Fairies Hide Their Heads," on a dainty melody of Bishop's arranged by H. Bedford (Metzler) is sweet and unpretentious, and of the same genre are "A Fairy Song," by F. Cowen (J. Williams), with a more difficult but exceedingly graceful accompaniment repaying study; also "Blue Bells," by Eva Lonsdale (Cocks), a light and charming ditty.

"Somebody's Dolly" (Houghton) sounds childish, but the composer's name, Noel Johnson, is an assurance of its true worth, and we find this a short poem of child-life, full of tenderest pathos in the words (by Gunby Hadath) and the simple harmonious music. "Tatters," by Gerald Lane (Cocks) is a dear

little song, setting forth how Tatters grew rich and well habited, but—

"Fortune little matters
If love goes by."

Very fresh and original is "Who'll Buy My Lavender," by Ed. German (Boosey), with the neatest, prettiest words, by Caryl Battersby, which are suited by the music to a nicely, but being thoroughly good and above the average ballad. Alfred Cellier's "Song of the Lute" (Metzler) has also good study in it and is more classic than ordinary songs. "Stars," by Franco Leoni is a lovely tenor song, really, but it is equally effective for a soprano, it is sustained, and not long. Descending from these heights to plantation songs, two very pretty ones are by Walter Slaughter, "Caroo" (Cramer), which is simple and touching, and "De Little Coon" (Ascherberg); both have especially telling choruses. Edith Cooke's easy and amusing "Two Marionettes," has an instructive climax!

Some excellent songs in a popular style, with a slightly sacred tendency, are two of Bryceson Treherne's: "The Children's Thanksgiving," and "The Heavenly Dream" (Morley), both with additional organ, violin and cello accompaniments; "The City of Rest," by C. Francis Lloyd (Keith Prowse); "The Watchers," by F. Cowen (Cocks); "The Angel of the Dawn," by Lindsay Lennox (Morley), and "Life's Heritage" by A. E. Armstrong (Cocks).

MARY AUGUSTA SALMOND.