



### The Family Circle.

#### MY BOUQUET.

A slender glass, and tall, all pencilled o'er  
With graceful wheat, and pointed leaves,  
Which seem  
(So shadowy-sweet are they, while yet so clear)  
Like the faint tracings of a flowery dream.

While drooping o'er the rim, and softly stirred  
By the sweet breath of summer zephyrs  
stealing  
Thro' the wide casement, tender feathery ferns,  
And waving grass, their outlines fair revealing:

Serve as a foil to stateliness, which rears  
High above all, on glistening "emerald  
stalks"  
Its gorgeous chalices, and "carmine mouths;"  
Haughty as when it bloomed down garden  
walks.

For stateliness like this there is a name,  
For burnished glow with golden tints be-  
tween,  
Our English tongue the fierce and gentle wed,  
Sly cruelty with loveliness of mien.

This name I leave for you to puzzle o'er  
And mystery of my rare bouquet reveal;  
Some blessings are too common to be prized,  
The "every-day" rich beauty can conceal.

If you, my dearest, can the blossoms guess,  
With brush and color make the riddle plain,  
And clothe with all the richness they possess  
My glass of flowers,—I'll fill the glass  
again!

L.

### JANET MASON'S TROUBLES.

(From the Sunday Magazine.)

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

So, often when it rained they used to sit under porches, or in other covered places, and chatter away to one another by the hour together. There was one place in particular—a carpenter's yard—to which they often went. They had stolen cautiously into it one day during a heavy shower, hoping to attract no notice, but one or two of the men who were at work had noticed them, and spoken kindly to them, and one of them had given Janet a hunch of bread, which she and Tabby divided and ate as they stood amongst the shavings.

"Why, what do you two little women do wandering about the streets?" the man had said good-naturedly to them. "You ought to be at school, learning your books."

"Mother says we're to go to school presently," answered Tabby demurely; "but she don't like to send us now, 'cause we're so shabby!"

"Ah?" said the man pityingly, "you are shabby, to be sure." And then a little while afterwards, as they were going away, he called to them,—

"Well, are you coming to see us again another day? You may if you like." And so they did come again; and presently as the weather grew colder, they got to come oftener, and the men would nod kindly at them as the two little figures came peeping in at the open door, and would let them sit down upon the heaps of wood, and stay there as long as they pleased to stay. It was such a quiet place that Janet liked it; it was so warm and sheltered, too, as the days grew cold. She was almost happy sometimes as she and Tabby sat talking there together. She used to go back to the streets, and to the work there that she loved so little, when these peaceful hours were ended, very sadly and unwillingly.

But Tabby, on her side, as you may guess, loved the excitement of the streets best. "It's so dull anywhere else," she would say. "There ain't nothing a going on. Now I likes things to be always a going on. When lots of people's a passing up and down you never know, you see, when you may get something." By which, of course, Tabby meant you never knew when you may either beg or steal something; for begging and stealing were the two thoughts that were perpetually in Tabby's mind,—they were the two great occupations and interests of her life.

She was always thinking of what naughty clever thing she could do to get food or money. She used to tell such dreadful stories to the people from whom she begged, that it made Janet's hair stand on end to hear her. She always said that she had six or eight brothers and sisters at home, and that her mother was ill with fever, or that her father had died last week, or that they had not been able to pay their rent, and that their landlord was going

to turn them out of doors to-morrow; and she would implore the people to whom she told these things to come home with her, and see how true they all were, with such a piteous voice, and such an eager, pleading little face that, in terror lest anybody should do it, Janet's heart would jump into her mouth. Sometimes Tabby would get a little money by telling these naughty fibs, but often the people to whom she told them only shook their heads and passed on. For the most part they used not to believe Tabby's stories; they had heard too many stories of the same sort to believe them. On the whole I think, poor little Janet's sad and simple "Will you give me a penny, please?" was more effective than Tabby's made-up tales; but then Tabby, you remember, had two strings to her bow, and if Janet earned most by begging, Tabby's exploits with that second string of hers often threw Janet's small successes quite into the shade.

One day the little monkey was so fortunate as to snap up two half-crowns as they rolled over the door-step of a shop. A customer inside the shop had dropped her purse, and all the contents went tumbling out upon the floor, and these two half-crowns went Tabby's way as she chanced to be standing at the door, and in an instant were safe in Tabby's pocket.

"Oh, Tabby, give them back!" cried Janet in an agony. "She'll give you something. I daresay she'll give you a shilling if you do."

But Tabby had already bolted to the other side of the street, and treated Janet's proposal as if it was the proposal of a lunatic.

"Oh, my eye, won't we have a day of it! Oh! I say, what shall we do? Did you ever go to a theatre?" cried Tabby, flushed with a sense of possessing unlimited wealth.

It was all in vain that Janet pleaded and protested; in the triumph of her heart Tabby danced along the pavement, and leaped and sang; and—let me confess the worst at once—that night she and Janet did go to a theatre with part of their ill-gotten gains, and saw a play there that, in spite of her shame and misery, remained stamped upon Janet's mind and heart for years to come, like some beautiful dream of fairy-land. For days afterwards the children talked about it, and acted bits of it to one another, and recalled the wonderful things that they had seen—the ladies and gentlemen in their gorgeous clothes, the marvellous creatures who had danced in gold and spangles, the groves of flowers, the mountain torrents, the moonlit gardens, the blaze of light. It was all to Janet a great and wonderful new world, of the like of which she had never before conceived.

"I wonder how people ever get to do such beautiful things! How clever they must all be! How can any little girl ever be so clever as to dance like that?" she said to Tabby over and over again.

"Oh, anybody could do it," answered Tabby, in whom the bump of veneration was not much developed. "Anybody could do it as was taught. I could, I know. There ain't nothing I likes better than dancing," and Tabby began to point her foot and pirouette.

"But you see you go tumbling over on one side at once," said Janet, a little bluntly, "that isn't like what they did a bit. Why, they went spinning round like tops. Oh, wasn't it wonderful? And waving their arms about—Oh, Tabby, didn't they wave their arms beautifully? Wasn't it like music?" cried Janet in an ecstasy.

"Well, anybody could do it, I know," repeated Tabby—"of course I means after learning a bit. You can't do nothink without learning. But if I'd got the right kind o' frock on, and them little white boots you'd just see. Oh, I wish we was a going back to-night!"

"So do I," said Janet, fervently.

"If I could only get a little more money—" "Oh, no!" cried Janet with a face of distress.

"Well, you don't suppose we can go without money, do you?" asked Tabby scornfully.

"No—oh no, of course not,—but I mean—oh, Tabby, don't let us go with stolen money any more. It's so dreadful! I know I was happy last night, in spite of it being wrong—but oh, please don't let us do it again!" cried Janet, with her heart on her lips.

"Well, you are a rum 'un," said Tabby. "You never knows how to enjoy anything. Why, if I was always a thinking of what was right and what was wrong, I wonder where I'd be."

"But I don't know how I can help it," said Janet wistfully.

"Just do what you like, and never think nothing at all," replied Tabby, giving this large and philosophical advice in such a light and off-hand way that Janet was quite quenched and extinguished by it, not knowing how to argue a question that—hard as it might be to her—Tabby's rapid mind seemed to have seen to the bottom of so neatly and entirely.

And indeed I am afraid that in their talks together poor little Janet was often silenced and perplexed by Tabby's swift, decided way of dealing with all sorts of knotty moral points; for, you see, nothing was ever a mys-

tery to Tabby; she never let any difficult questions puzzle or disturb her; she never dreamed, or hesitated, or repented, or wondered over things, as Janet did. Her theory of life was a very simple one. She never troubled herself about right or wrong, or good or evil. She had only two rules by which she regulated all her proceedings, and these were—to do all she liked, and to take all she could—the same rules by which the wild beasts guide their ways in the forests, and by which the birds live in the air, and the fishes in the sea.

Do you wonder that, being a lawless little creature of this sort, she should find any pleasure in the society of a child so different from herself as Janet? Well, Tabby too used to think this odd.

"I wonder how I come to take up with you?" she said to her companion speculatively one day. "It's rum, ain't it? for you ain't a bit my sort. I'm up to anything, I am, and you, you couldn't say 'Bo' to a goose. You're such a poor-spirited thing—I can't think how you're to get on all your life—only drunk people and fools always get took care of some'ow, they say." And Tabby nodded her head cheerfully at the end of this address, and looked as if she thought she had made a speech that Janet must find particularly pleasant and comforting.

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But, oddly enough, Janet's poor little face did something that was not at all like brightening as she heard it.

"I'm sure I don't know how I am to get on," she answered sadly. "I suppose I should have been dead before now if I hadn't got with you. You—you've been very kind to me, Tabby," said Janet timidly.

"Oh, bother kindness," replied Tabby scornfully, and tried to look as if she did not care a straw for what Janet had said; but, though she tried to look so, yet in point of fact she did care for it, and perhaps she remembered Janet's speech long after Janet herself had forgotten that she had made it; for little street vagabonds like Tabby don't in a general way give much indulgence to their feelings, but yet most of them have a warm corner somewhere in their wild gipsy hearts, and Janet had unconsciously begun to steal into this warm corner in Tabby's.

Was it altogether because she was so helpless and feeble? I can't tell you; nor, if you had asked her, could Tabby either. I don't think we ever know much about why we love one person, and why we don't care about another. At any rate Tabby did not. She was too much a child to reason about almost anything; she was in most things too much like a young wild animal ever to think about anything. She only knew as time went on that she liked to be with Janet—even though Janet (in her sight) was no better than a weak and useless creature. She got into the way of thinking her quite weak and useless, and with the charming openness of childhood she used to her face to declare her opinion of her, in the simplest and frankest way in the world.

"You ain't got no more wit than a grass-hopper," she would tell her. "I never knowed such a head-piece. Why, I think you'd stand before a brick wall, and never know you seeed it. One 'ud think as'ow you'd been born the day after to-morrow!"—and her contempt for Janet's mental powers and acquisitions generally was so profound, that even poor Janet, little as she had ever been accustomed to think of herself, fell in her own estimation lower than ever, quite quenched and humbled by her companion's scorn.

And yet, in spite of her companion's scorn, she stuck to Tabby, and Tabby—which was odder still perhaps—stuck to her, and as the days went on the two children were almost inseparable. Many a curious thing, I am afraid, was poured by Tabby's unscrupulous little tongue into Janet's ears; but, if Tabby often talked naughtily, Janet, happily for her, brought so pure and innocent a mind to the reception of Tabby's stories that the badness of them for the most part never hurt her, simply because she did not understand it. Some things that Tabby told her she knew were wrong, and some things she wondered at, hardly knowing if they were wrong or right; but the naughtiness of a good many she never took in or comprehended at all;

for there are some natures to which evil is slow to cling, and Janet's was one of these.

So she listened with open ears while Tabby talked, and sometimes Tabby, seeing the innocent large eyes fixed on her face, would, as time went on, instinctively keep back some naughty word that she had got upon her lips, or would leave out some naughty bit in the tale that she was telling, or would occasionally even stop abruptly, with a feeling that she did not comprehend, and not tell the thing at all that she had meant to do.

"You're such a baby! I never knowed anyone so green!" she would exclaim irritably, sometimes, after she had checked herself in this way. "I can't think how I put up with you at all. But there, you can't help it, I suppose; so come on, and let's have one o' your stories. Let's hear some more about the pony and that old pa o' yours." And Janet, having grown accustomed by this time to the peculiar way in which Tabby gave her invitations, would placidly obey this order, and soon be chattering away about the things she loved so dearly to look back upon, with all her heart in every word she spoke.

It was a pleasant thing to Janet to talk about the years of her past life, and it was little wonder that she liked to do it; but it was a wonder, perhaps, that Tabby took any interest in hearing her, or cared, after she had finished her own highly flavored tales, to listen to the tame and quiet stories which were the only kind that Janet could tell. And yet she did care to listen to them. That quick little eager mind of hers, that craved continually for food, and got so little with which to satisfy it, seized on this novel idea of Janet's quiet country life, and from its very contrast, I suppose, to everything that she herself was familiar with, in a curious kind of way became attracted to and possessed by it. Before the children had been together many weeks she was never tired of making Janet talk to her of all the things she used to do, and as Janet poured out her simple tales the other's bright imagination formed pictures of the places and the people and the scenes that were described to her, till, if you could have talked to her, you almost would have thought that she knew them all as familiarly as Janet knew them and had ridden the little brown pony through the shady lanes, and played in the old garden, and climbed the apple-trees, and taken tea in the Rectory parlor, and been acquainted with every old man and woman in the village as well as if she had spoken with her own lips to every one of them.

At first, indeed, for a time she used to look on these mild pleasures of Janet's with a good deal of contempt. She would sneer when Janet told her about the quiet walks in the sweet woods, about the ferns and wild flowers that she used to gather, about the church where her father preached.

"I wouldn't have to go to church for something," she would tell Janet. "Just fancy me a sittin' in a pew! I say if I ever was to go, I'd holler out!"

"Oh no, you wouldn't!" Janet would remonstrate in a shocked voice.

"Yes I would, just for fun, to see what they'd do. There's nothing I ain't up to. I'd—I'd think nothing o' running up the pulpit stairs and pinching the parson's legs," Tabby would recklessly exclaim. And indeed, her conversation on this subject, and on various other grave subjects besides, was altogether of so irreverent a sort, that Janet, in the early days of their companionship, used to flush all over as she heard her till the blood tingled to her fingers' ends.

But as the weeks went on, somehow Tabby got to do something else than sneer at and make jests of the things that Janet cared for. That life that Janet had led seemed a queer enough life to her, but yet presently something, perhaps, in its simplicity and purity and gentleness, touched the wild, little lonely heart. It was as if she was hearing stories of another world,—of a world where nobody had any trouble, where no one ever fought or quarrelled, where the flowers were always blossoming and the trees were always green, and everybody was gentle and kind and good (for, looking lovingly back upon it all, this was what that lost world of hers seemed now to Janet's tender memory); and as she listened to these tales I think they gradually came to make a kind of dreamy far-off sunshine for her beyond the squalor of her present life, beyond its cold and hunger, beyond its blows and bitter words.

"If you and me keeps together till the summer comes, wouldn't it be a lark to go somewhere for a bit where there's fields, and trees!" she said one day to Janet. "I shouldn't care to stop long, I dare say; but wouldn't it be a game to go for a week or two, and see'em cut the corn or make the hay!"

"Oh, wouldn't it!" echoed Janet fervently, with the color in her face.

And then the two children, as they sat side by side, began to talk of how they would try to do this thing, and to go away into the