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turns," still less to prepare a gift for her. The usual noises from the street met her ear, the shouts of children, the shrill outcry of quarrelsome women, the noise of a hurdy-gurdy grinding out its oft-iterated tune outside the nearest public-house—sounds which only made her feel more lonely.

Suddenly a fresh sound broke in, the sound of singing, but not of the usual street order. She went to the window and peeped over the wire blind. A procession was approaching. There were clergy and choristers with banners, and nursing sisters in their neat uniforms, followed by a strangely mixed crowd. Among them she recognized the lady who had called on her, and Mary Jane marching joyfully by her side. The words they were singing, already familiar, reached her ear: "One there is who loves thee." Loving because one was loved—was that what religion meant?

When Miss Peabody came down the next morning, breakfast was in perfect readiness, a bunch of chrysanthemums adorned the table, and ere she could express her surprise, Mary Jane greeted her with: "Many happy returns of the day, Mum."

"How do you know it is my birthday?" asked Miss Peabody, too surprised to thank her.

"I see'd it in the Bible that lies on the drawers upstairs, said Mary Jane. Miss Peabody forgot to reprove her for praying.

"Did you get these flowers because it was my birthday?" she asked huskily.

Mary Jane nodded. "The green-grocer got them for me," she said; "they're fresh from Convent Garden this morning."

Miss Peabody could only respond by a kindly touch on her maid's shoulder, but it forged between them a lasting bond.

* * * * *

That birthday was an epoch in Martha Peabody's history. She still lives at 96 Ramsden-road, but the house is a home now, a centre of light and neighbourly comfort for the dwellers in the crowded tenements which adjoin it.—Eglanton Thorne.

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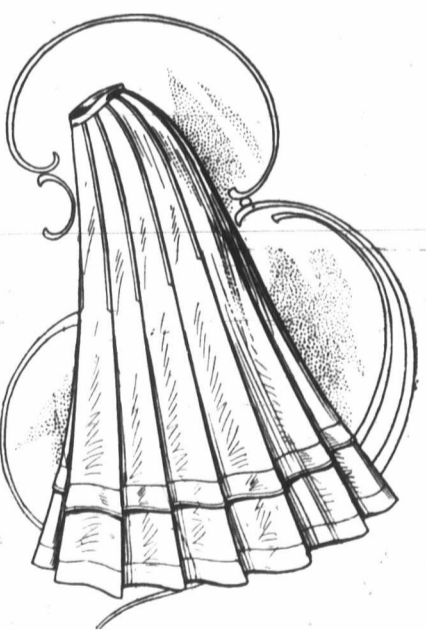
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