

think such nice dressed gentlemen would do so. What if they should have to beg some day. My father used to dress as fine as they do when he kept the *Cafe de l'Imperator*."

"And where have you been since they abused you so?"

"I crept up in a cart in Pearl-st., I was so sick, after the tobacco and the kick, for it was very hard."

"Could you not get home?"

"No, Sir. Besides, what if I could, and my mother had been drinking. She would kick me again, perhaps."

"What, then, are you going to do to-night? You cannot sleep in the street; it is too cold."

"Won't you let me sleep?"

"With your cousin Juliana?"

"No, Sir, not that; she is clean, and I—I wish I was. Won't you let me sleep on the floor?"

"You shall have a place to sleep to-night; and to-morrow, if your mother is willing, you shall come and live with cousin Juliana, and be dressed as she is, and learn to sew, and when you get big enough"

"Her mother will prostitute her, as she did her older sister, to a miserable old pimp for ten dollars."

"Tom, Tom, what is that?"

"The truth, Sir. Have I ever told you a lie since I have been in your house?"

"Well, well, Tom, take Madalina to the housekeeper, and give her somewhere to sleep to-night, and to-morrow morning you shall go to her mother, and see what she will do."

"Lord, Sir, I must go to-night. She will be off with her hook and basket, poking in the gutters after rags before the stars go to bed. These rag-pickers are early birds. I have known them walk four or five miles on a morning, to get to their own walk."

"Own walk. What is that?"

"All the city is divided up among them. Each must keep to his own walk. If one should trespass upon another, he would get a wet cloth over his mouth some night when he was asleep, and nobody would know or care how he died."

"The Coroner's Jury would inquire into the matter."

"Coroner! fiddlesticks! I beg your pardon, Sir, but I did not mean to answer you that way, though I did know that coroner's juries care the least of anybody how such fellows die. The verdict would be 'accidental death,' 'found dead,' 'died of visitation of Providence,' or if the murderers got a chance, which they might do easy enough, to chuck the body in the dock, the verdict would be 'found drowned,' no matter if he had a hole in his head as big as my fist."

"They could not carry the body from this neighborhood to the river without being detected."

"Could not they. How did Ring-nosed Bill and Snakey Jo carry Pedlar Jake from the Old Brewery to Peck-slip and send him afloat?"

"What, dead?"

"Yes, Sir, they put too much opium in his rum to get him to sleep so they could rob him, and he did not wake up, and so they walked him off."

"Walked him off, how?"

"They stood him up and fastened one of their legs to his each side, so that when they stepped his feet traveled too, and so they went along talking to him and cursing him for being so drunk, till they got to the dock."

"Where were the Police, do they never notice such things?"

"Lord, no Sir, they steps round the corner when they sees a drunken man coming, particularly if he has one of his friends with him."

"And do you think, Tom, that the rag-pickers would murder a fellow creature who trespassed, as they call it, upon their grounds, without compunction of conscience?"

"Conscience, Sir, what do they know about conscience? The 'Padre' keeps their conscience."

"But the law, is there no law in this Christian City?"

"Law, pshaw! what has your book-law to do with rag-picker's law?"

"True enough; or 'Father Confessors' gither."

The next morning Tom made his report. At first it was a positive refusal. "She can make sixpence a day, and pick up enough to eat."

"Well then she shall pay you sixpence a day. She can soon learn to sew and earn more than that. Juliana does it every day."

"But she shall not stay there nights. They will make a Protestant of her."

"That was not the sticking point," says Tom, "if she stays here, she cannot make a — of her there. The best I could do was to let her go home nights and come days. That is better than nothing. The poor little thing won't have to go begging, and be burnt and kicked, and vomited with filthy tobacco cuds, and then whipped if she don't bring home sixpence every night for her mother to buy rum with. If she cannot earn it here at first, I will, and we will get her away entirely, after a while."

Noble Tom. Glorious good boy. What a heart! How long is it since thou wert as one of them, kicked and cuffed, and groveling drunk in the gutter? Who thought then that thy rags and filth covered such a heart? Who knew of the virtuous lessons given thee by a pious mother, and how after years of forgetfulness, sin, wretchedness, misery, that that good would vegetate and bring forth such sweet flowers and good fruit, as we are now tasting in these good deeds and kind words. What if nine of the fallen whom we lift up, fall back again, so that one stand, who shall refuse to lend a helping hand? Let us lift up the lowly and make the haughty humble. Why should they do evil?"

Madalina, though still suffering from her brutal treatment, was a happy girl when she found that she was not to be driven out to beg in the streets.

But she could not understand why her mother wanted her to sleep at home. Tom could. "Too young? Pooh! before she is a year older, she will be lost." Too true. Before she had been in "The Home" six months, she had learned to read, write, and work, and had grown much in stature and fine looks. We would have placed her in some good family, but her mother would not consent. She still complained of her breast and had frequent turns of vomiting. She always felt worse in the morning, "because," she said, "that was such a dreadful place to sleep."

Sometimes she did not come for a few days; her mother made her stay at home and sew. She had learned to work, and her services were worth more at that than begging.

One night she came in in great haste crying.

"What is the matter, Madalina?"

"My mother has had an offer for me."

"An offer for you. What is that?"

Tom looked daggers. "I told you so."

"What is it, my good girl. Tell me all about it."

"My mother bid me go out with her this evening, both of us dressed in our best. She said she had an offer for me, and she was going to meet the man in Duane-st. 'What does the man want of me mother?' I said. 'Oh, he will make a fine lady of you, and you will live with him.' 'But I don't want to live with him; I had rather live with Mr. Pease at The Home. I had rather live where Tom is, for Tom is good to me.'" Young love's first happy dream! "But we went on, and I held my head down, and felt very bad. By-and-by I heard my mother say, here she is, and I looked up a little, and saw two gentlemen, that is, they were clothed like gentlemen, and directly one spoke to the other — 'I say, Jim, she will do—give the old woman the money, and let us take her up to Kate's.' Mercy on me, that voice."