

population, the observant eye perceived some face or form that suggested better times long past, or bright possibilities still to come.

At one of the tallest tenements the carriage stopped. Thomas, the coachman, had evidently been there before, and was not put out of countenance by the staring crowd of small children, as he sat motionless on his box, his whip held at that severe angle which is the etiquette of his class. The old lady descended without assistance—it was her pride that she needed none—and Hope wonderingly followed, too amazed and chagrined to speak. Threading the hall (it might better be termed alley) on the first floor, they entered a region of almost total darkness, filled with odors quite foreign to Hope's aristocratic nostrils. She stumbled after her grandmother, compelled to cling to the greasy and dirty banister, for they were now mounting the stairs. Flight after flight did the wonderful old lady ascend, with an alertness which seldom survives the age of sixty. At last light dawned on them from an opening in the roof. They had reached the top floor.

Walking to the back room Mrs. Osborn hesitated a moment, and then knocked gently at the open door. A low voice said, "Come in." They entered and found themselves in a small room, which fortunately faced the south, and caught what breeze was stirring and the slanting beams of the late afternoon sun. The room was very poorly and meagerly furnished, and was carpetless, save for a piece of drugget in the middle of the floor. It had but one occupant besides themselves. A young woman, apparently about twenty, lay propped up with pillows on a sofa bed. Near her on a rude stand by the open window stood a flower pot holding a small rose-bush in bloom. There was but one rose, but it seemed to look full in the white face of the young woman, as though to breathe upon her the light and fragrance it had inhaled from shower and sun.

"How do you feel to-day, Miss Dale?" asked Mrs. Osborn.

A bright smile came over the face of the invalid. It was one of those smiles whose very happiness is sad, because it tells, in spite of itself, of suffering endured, complaint repressed. She extended a hand so wasted, that it seemed almost too feeble to wield even the slight implement with which she had been working.

"I am about the same," she replied. "But I am so glad I am no worse."

"This is my grand-daughter, Miss Trenery."

Again the same bright smile, the same extension of the wasted hand. Hope took it very gently.

"I knew that she would like to see your work, and that you would like to have her

see it," continued the old lady, as she and Hope seated themselves.

"Oh, how beautiful!" exclaimed Hope, as Miss Dale held up a cup of dainty texture, upon which she had evidently been adding the last touches to an exquisitely painted flower. Hope took it from her and held it, with murmurs of admiration, at different points of view, observing at the same time, the palette, the brushes, and the various artist's materials by which Miss Dale was surrounded, all arranged in ingenious convenience so that she could still paint, although confined to her bed.

"You see," said Miss Dale, noticing the look of compassionate inquiry in Hope's eyes, "I'm alone all day——"

"All day?" interrupted Hope.

"Yes. Sister and I live here all alone. She gets up at half-past six, and gets breakfast, and fixes and tidies up the room." (Hope glanced around and remarked how very neat it looked.) "By that time it was half past seven—time for her to start. She has to be at Mr. Dumble's by eight."

"Who is Mr. Dumble?"

"That's her employer. He sells magic-lantern slides, and all those sort of things, and Susie paints them. Susie is my younger sister. She leaves at six in the morning and doesn't get home till half-past six. So you see I am alone all day long. I am so glad when half-past six comes!"

"I should think so! And do you paint all day long, and every day?"

"Isn't it a good thing that I can? Susie doesn't earn enough to keep us both. She can't earn more than five dollars a week, doing her very best. I can make almost as much by painting these and other things."

"What other things?" asked Hope, with growing interest.

"All sorts of china ware, as well as fans, cravat-boxes, handkerchief-boxes, and things of that kind. Susie paints hardly anything but magic-lantern slides. Some of them are so funny, especially during a political campaign. But there are days and days when I can't paint." Here an involuntary sigh gave a plaintive punctuation to her words, and her smooth brow contracted with an expression of pain.

"Miss Dale is, as you see, an invalid," remarked Mrs. Osborn, gently, answering Hope's sympathetic glance.

"Ah, if I could only use my legs," said Miss Dale, her smile returning. "I shall, some day."

"I am glad to hear that," exclaimed the young visitor. "I hope it will be very soon." But the next moment she regretted having expressed that wish, for Miss Dale replied:

"Oh not in this world! But at the