

on its loathsome bed as if the breath had already fled from the miserable little body. The child who showed some sign of life had a white, pinched face, with scanty fair hair upon her head, and large sharp eyes, which looked keenly, yet timidly about her.

"There's my little Lucky, bless her!" said Mrs. Moss, "she's certain sure to draw silver for you from the rich folks, if you're going west. But for my part I'd as soon stay round here and carry Fidge with me. Only show his arms and legs, and there's hardly a soul as won't give you a copper for a sight of him."

"For God's sake, Mrs. Moss," he cried, "don't famish the child like this! Little Lucky's starved enough, but Fidge makes my blood run cold. I'd not carry Fidge about with me if I was paid well for it."

"There's lots of folks as will," she answered with a cruel sneer. "Do you think I do it if it didn't pay me? But take your choice; Fidge is fourpence an hour, little Lucky sixpence; and you leave a deposite for either of 'em. Only not if Joan goes along with you; not one of 'em shall go out again with Joan; never!"

"She ain't a comin'," said Tatter; "and if she did, I'd never let Lucky out o' my arms; I wouldn't if I was to be struck dead for it. Don't let's waste time now we have made up our minds. Gi'e us some decent toggery, Mrs. Moss, and you fork out the tin, Isaac."

"And Lucky's not to have bit or sup while she's away," stipulated Mrs. Moss. "I've fed 'em as much as they ought to have till bedtime. You tell Joan I'll whip Lucky right well if she eats anythink; and I know; they can't gull me, and I'll make her smart for it. You hear, Lucky?"

The little girl had been listening eagerly, turning her eyes from one to the other as they spoke; but doing it stealthily, with a dread of being noticed. She quivered as Mrs. Moss threatened to whip her; and looked up for a moment into the woman's cruel face. She did not attempt to move, and when Mrs. Moss picked her up from the miserable bed, it was plain that the sickly little frame was too feeble to walk. As her owner dressed her in a few clean rags, scanty enough to display the thin legs and emaciated neck, white and bloodless as of a child long suffering from insufficiency of food, Lucky stood clasping the back of a chair, and trembling with fear of the savage hands so near to her.

"She's no heavier than a baby," said Tatters as she took Lucky into her arms.

"There's many babies as is heavier," replied Mrs. Moss, "but there isn't many as earns their own livin' as well. She's worth her weight in gold to me."

CHAPTER 111.

IN LUCK.

Mrs. Moss followed her customers to the door when they were fairly equipped for their day's occupation, and peered out into the fog to catch a glimpse of Joan. But it was too thick to allow of anything being seen,

and the girl was prudently waiting round the nearest corner. Little Lucky uttered a low cry of delight when she found herself transferred from Tatter's arms to the close, warm clasp of Joan's, and her feeble little hands fondly patted Joan's cheek.

"Are you very clemmed, little Lucky?" she asked in a pitiful voice. "Don't ask me, Doan," said the child mournfully; "she knows when you've give me somethink, and she says she'll make me smart if you do. Don't you ask me to have nothink to eat all day, Doan."

"But I couldn't eat nothink if you don't little Lucky," answered Joan; "there now, don't you cry; be a little woman like me. And I won't have nothing to eat all day. I'll promise you, for fear I'd be forced to give you some of it, and get you whipped. There's somethink inside me as won't let me eat whilst you're clemmin'. Grandfather and Tatters 'ill do nothink but drink; and you and me'll not stand to look in at the bread-shop windows—no; not if Tatters curses and swears ever so; it's too aggravatin', that is. I'll sing my best for 'em, Lucky, but we'll not stop near the windows that make you so sick. And we daren't give you nothink, if the folks are ever so kind. Are you always hungry, little Lucky?"

"Always and always," said the child.

"And little Fidge?" asked Joan. "Worse than me," said little Lucky; "he's hungrier than me, and cries worse, and that makes him hungrier. Mrs. Moss says boys are worse than girls; and she puts somethink on his eyes to make 'em smart, and then he cries again; and it's mis'able to live with him. I don't like Fidge, he's so dirty."

"Oh, we're all dirty," replied Joan cheerfully; "but you was always a little Miss Pertickler. O little Lucky, you should see the rich children in the park, and then you'd know how dirty we was. Lor! I feel as if I was all grim with dirt, I do, when I see the beautiful, grand children dressed up like little angels. If you and me ever have a holiday I'll take you there to see 'em, and we'll have a feast under the trees, and it 'ill be like heaven."

"When Mrs. Moss is dead," said little Lucky triumphantly.

"Ay! when Mrs. Moss is dead," repeated Joan.

It was as old Isaac had foretold; as they advanced westward, and mid day drew nearer, the fog gradually lightened, although it did not altogether clear away. It was a long tramp across London on the slippery and greasy pavements. When at length they reached the quieter streets, away from business, where they were more likely to receive alms, Tatter's took little Lucky into her own arms, and tenderly laid the small, wan face to rest against her shoulder, while Isaac shrank into a yet more feeble and broken-down old man than he actually was. Joan's clear, young voice was admirably suited for street singing, and she had been carefully taught such favorite hymns and tunes as would most quickly catch the ear of any com-

monate Christian who might be passing by, or sitting within the comfortable homes on each side of the quiet street. Old Isaac's voice, quivering with age yet tuneful still, joined in with hers; while Tatters, who could not sing at all, kept her eye steadily on every person and every window within sight.

(To be continued.)

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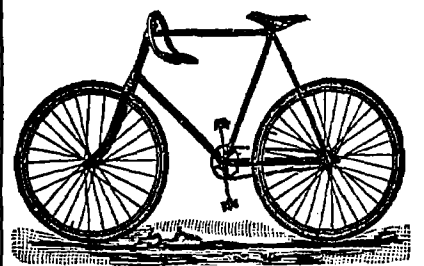
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