

Spring in the Alley.

SHE stooped and told him that the spring was born;
A ring of triumph in her fresh young voice;
For she, poor child, was in her life's glad morn,
And the soft sunshine made her heart rejoice.
"Wert thou not longing for the Spring?" she said:
But the pale sufferer sadly shook his head,
And gazed with sunken eyes upon her face,
Till its pure beauty filled his soul with peace,
Then smoothed her locks, and in a fond embrace,
Clasping her slender form, he whispered:
"Cease
To sing the praises of the young Spring flowers;
Child of the narrow court! they are not ours!"
O'er the despondent sufferer bending low,
Till her fair tresses swept his throbbing brow,
With tender glistening eyes, and cheeks aglow
With joy and hope, she softly told him how,
Not very far away, the golden bees
Wooded the white clusters of the hawthorn trees.
She spoke of twittering birds, and raised her eyes,
Bright with the glory of poetic thought,
To the dark ceiling that shut out the skies,
'And lowered upon her, as she vainly sought,
With words of loving sympathy, to cheer
The flickering life that suffering made so dear.
For O, that life, unlovely though it seemed,
Was the dear object of her fondest love;
Volumes of witching poesy she dreamed,
Morn, noon, and evening, as she bent above
His weary form, yet neither light nor bloom
Could tempt her footsteps from that dingy room.
Oft when she heard his hollow cough, she wept
In the still midnight—how it wrung her heart!
Yea, she could hear it even when she slept,
And often wakened with a feverish start,
Beseeching God, in many a tearful prayer,
To ease the pain that she so longed to share.
Blithely she carolled when the morning sun
Rose o'er the alley like a blushing bride;
Or grave and silent, like some meek faced nun,
Plied she her needle by the sufferer's side—
And O, it was so sweet to toil for him
Till her hands trembled, and her eyes grew dim!
Till from those weary hands her work would fall,
And her dim vision could distinguish naught
Save the black spiders crawling on the wall,
And the dead violets she herself had bought
With the few coppers she had stored away
From her poor scanty earnings day by day.
For when before the market-stall she stood,
Her little purse clasped tightly in her hand,
She needs must purchase—for each dowy bud
Seemed like a messenger from fairyland;
And well her fine poetic fancy knew
The sheltered places where the violets grow.
And when she raised them to her eager lips
With the pure rapture of a little child,
The dewdrops twinkled on their azure tips,
Till the young dreamer bent her face and smiled
With the sweet consciousness that they would bring
Into the meanest slum a breath of Spring.
Returning home, her joyous footsteps fell
Like the soft patter of the Summer rain;
And O, one weary sufferer knew it well,
And moaned a welcome from his bed of pain!
Close to his breast she crept, and kneeling there
He twined the violets in her sunny hair.
Charmed from his fretful mood, the sufferer laid
One thin white hand upon her worn gray dress;

"Dear child!" he murmured, while the sunbeams played
At hide and seek amid each wandering tress,
"Withdraw the blind—let in the rosy morn;
I, too, am grateful that the Spring is born!"
—Fanny Forrester, in *Chambers' Journal*.

Tim, the Heroic Newsboy.

"EVENING Telegram, fourth e-dition!
All about the bulls an' bears, totterin'
dynasties an' furrin' affairs! Telegram,
sir? only a penny."

Above the tumult and roar of Broadway the shrill little voice piped its song in the ears of hurrying humanity. The shadows are beginning to fall, and the lamp-lighter, intent on duty, ran past with his ladder and link. Two living, breathing tides surged in opposite directions through the great thoroughfare. Each looked out for himself; no one thought of his neighbor.

"Evening Telegram, fourth e-dition!"

The little thin voice in its sharp staccato was alone sufficient to conjure in the mind of the imaginative a picture of hunger and want, and youth without childhood, coupled with the experience and sorrow of age. All this in addition to the legion woes of his tribe, a chanced glimpse of the pinched little form conveyed. He was a boy of a dozen years perhaps, with a freckled face and a pair of honest blue eyes, whose whole vitality seemed to have centered in a remarkable shock of brick-colored hair. He stood pressed against a lamp-post, with his bare feet drawn close for safety and the ragged jacket buttoned to the chin. Under his arm was a bundle of papers, and a grimy little hand flourished one in time to his shrill little tune: "Buy a paper, sir? Telegram; only a penny!"

But somehow the hurrying crowd cared little for the news, and the pennies accumulated slowly in the ragged pocket. He counted them over now and then, spreading them out on his palm: "One, three, seven, ten, fifteen! No dinner to-night, Tim, if you don't do better'n this."

For a moment his face would fall, but he would sing a line or two of "Sweet by-and-by," and then, as if the inspiring words had given him fresh courage, begin again, "Fourth e-dition, Evening Telegram."

Still the crowd surged on—the labourer to his humble home, where all his treasures were gathered and in which his joy centred; clerks and shop-girls dragging their weary bodies on blistered feet to the doubtful refreshment or comfortless boarding-houses; gentlemen of leisure sauntering to their clubs; women whose sole vocation in life was to be as "the lilies of the field."

The honest blue eyes staring out of the hungry, freckled face, scanned them all as he offered his paper with nice discrimination to those only whose mien was inviting.

The shadows fell swiftly now, and a myriad of gas-jets burst into light, while a sudden cry of "Fire!" caused the struggling streams of life to rush yet more frantically each in its own direction.

"In the sweet by-and-by" sung the newsboy, watching with his bright blue eyes the efforts of a beautiful young woman to free herself from the crowd. As she neared him Tim put out his hand and touched her sleeve.

"Move this way, lady; come here on the curb by the lamp-post, an' stand

still for a minute. I won't let you get hurt."

"O thank you, my boy; I am so frightened," she answered, slipping into the place made vacant, while he put his little form between her and the struggling mass of humanity.

"There's nothing like a Broadway crowd this time o' day, lady. But the rush'll soon be over. The cry of 'Fire!' made it worse, and everybody's a-goin' to dinner just now; leastways everybody wot's got any dinner to go to," he added gravely.

One pretty arm, clothed in its blue velvet sleeve, was wound round the lamp-post for safety, but as Tim finished she slid it down without removing it, and laid that hand on his ragged shoulder, saying, "Do you ever have to go without dinner?"

"Very often, lady," he made answer, looking with honest admiration in her sweet face.

"How is it to-night? Will you have a good dinner?"

"Not very, I guess, 'less I sells enough papers to pay for my stock an' dinner too, and I ain't done that yet, lady."

"Are you very far off?"

For answer he held up his bundle of papers, and spreading out the pennies on his hand, counted again: "Three, eight, ten, thirteen, eighteen, twenty-three; not a very sumptuous dinner to-night, lady."

"Will this help toward it?" she asked, laying a bright silver dollar among the small coin.

"It will pay for a feast, lady—clam soup, roast beef, huckleberry puddin' an' all," he answered, with an unction that showed the pretty young lady how little he was accustomed to such fare. But he picked up the silver coin from among the others, and held it out to her. "I'm very much obliged, lady, and it's uncommon kind in you, but I couldn't take it, cos I likes to earn what I eats."

"But you have been of service to me, my lad, and you can be still more, if you will go with me across the street and call a coach. Then you will have earned the money."

"Thank you, lady, but it's worry big pay for a little work."

Then they threaded their way through the lessening stream of people, Tim always a step or two in advance to clear the road. When they reached the middle of the street an engine drawn by a pair of powerful black horses, frantic for the fire, came dashing past with breakneck speed. Tim turned and saw his companion's danger, threw himself forward with reckless heroism, and thrust her back, while the great beasts bore down and trampled him beneath their feet.

When he opened his eyes hours afterward, and found himself in a wonderful place whose floor was covered with rich carpets and walls were hung with tapestry, himself lying on a couch whose softness and luxury brought a sense of ease to his crushed form, he could only look with wonderment at all this beauty, touched with a soft, rose-colored light, and whisper:

"There's a land that is fairer than day."

In a moment light feet passed around the bed, and the sweet face was bonding over him. "My dear child, are you easier now?"

But his memory was clouded still. He thought he had reached "the sweet by-and-by," and the beautiful face was

that of a seraph, until she began smooth his shock of brick-colored hair with her soft hand. Then a light came into his eyes, and he whispered: "You are the lady wot I met on Broadway who gave his life for her."

"Won't I get woll, lady?"
"I fear not, my dear boy; but me, where is your home?"

"Home!" He repeated the word if it was a stranger to his vocabulary, and yet the next sentence, spoken fully, showed that he felt dimly all the sweet possibilities it embodied.

"Home? I haven't no home, lady, leastways, none to speak on. I sleeps in a flat-boat down at the wharf, an' never goes there till after 'dark an' the cops is scarce."

"But have you a father mother?"

He shook his head negatively.

"What is your name, my child?"

"Tim."

"What else?" she asked.

"Nothin' else, as I knows on."

"Could you eat something, Tim, or drink a little tea, if I feed you?"

"No, thank you, lady; I ain't hungry or thirsty any more."

"But you saved my life, dear Tim by giving your own in place. I can never repay you, because you cannot live, and I want to do something for you. Think and tell me, is there any thing you would like me to do?"

She had covered the little hand lying on top of the silken quilt with her own soft, rosy palm, and bent over him waiting. A tremor of delight ran through all the bruised little form at the touch; the honest blue eyes looked into her sweet gray ones above as he asked, "Do you sing, lady?"

"Yes, Tim."

"Then I'd take it worry kind, dear lady, if you'd hold my hand an' sing me 'Sweet by-and-by.'"

A little group gathered outside the half-open door saw a slender arm clothed in blue velvet slide gently beneath the shock of brick-colored hair, while the other palm held close a grimy little hand; then all the room was filled with the sweet voice:

"We shall sing on that beautiful shore
The melodious songs of the blest,
And our spirits shall sorrow no more—
Not a sigh for the blessing of rest."

With the last seraphic burst the last grain of sand had slipped through the hour-glass, never more to begin its work again until inverted in

A land that is fairer than day.

THERE is many a wounded heart without a contrite spirit. The ice may be broken into a thousand pieces. It is ice still. But expose it to the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and then it will melt.—*Middleton*.

"You object to my taking the pledge," said a reclaimed man to an acquaintance who believed in freedom in everything, and that a man should drink when he wants to. "Why, man, strong drink occasioned me to have more to do with pledging than ever teetotalism has done. When I used strong drink I pledged my coat, I pledged my bed, I pledged, in short, everything that was pledgeable, and was losing every hope and blessing, when a temperance friend met me and convinced me of my folly. Then I pledged myself, and soon got my other things out of pledge, and got more than my former property about me."