

times; her illness had made room for others as destitute as herself, and they had not one stitch of work to give her. With a sinking heart, but praying, to keep her courage up, the poor women toiled on from shop to shop, till it became late; and, what with tears and the darkness, she could hardly see her way home.

"If Mr. Hart had himself been there," she said to herself, bending to the strong wind, and drawing her scanty shawl closer about her form, "I know he would have given me work."

As she whispered thus through her chattering teeth, a tall gentleman passed by her; and as he did so something fell to the side-walk, and lay upon the crusted snow. Sarah paused; she heard the noise made by the little packet, and a strange impression led her to search for it. Oh, joy! it was a purse, heavy, and fil'd to the brim; yellow and shining lay the gold within, as she carried it to a lighted window.

"My poor boys, they shall want food no more," she cried; "this is gold. I think that God must have put it in my way, for he saw I was in despair."

Suddenly, like a flash of lightning, the thought occurred to Sarah that the treasure was not honestly hers. But a moment she lingered, pressing the money with numbed fingers, the sorrowful tears chasing down her thin cheeks; then starting forward to find the owner of the purse, she walked hurriedly up the street, fearful that the temptation, should she arrive at her poor room, and see her hungry children, might prove too strong for her honesty.

Opposite the great hotel, as she stood thinking which way to take, she saw the stranger enter. She knew him by the long hair which curled to his shoulders, and, timidly crossing the street, she made her way into the hall, and there, bewildered by the light, knew not what to say. Till twice asked by a servant what she wanted, she could do no more than describe the stranger by his tall stature and flowing hair. But he had already gone out again; she must call on the morrow,

they said, and ask for Mr. Ashcraft.

The next morning, having eaten nothing—for she could not touch a piece of the gold—she was admitted into the room where sat the stranger. He arose as she entered, and gazed with a curious air till she presented the purse. Then he started with pleased surprise, laid down his paper, took the gold, and carefully counted it over.

"It is all safe," he said; "you have not taken—"

"Not one piece sir," she cried, eagerly, trembling as she spoke.

"You seem poor," remarked the stranger.

"I am poor," she replied.

"Got a family, I suppose?"

"Four little boys, sir; I am a widow."

"Humph! so I suppose—that's the old story."

"Ask Mr. Hart, the tailor," cried the widow, stepping forward a little, "he knows that though I am poor I am honest."

A bright red spot burned on her cheeks as she spoke, and she forced back the tears.

"Now confess," said the stranger, rising and walking to and fro before the fire; "tell me, did you not expect a large reward for this?"

"I did think, perhaps—" and she turned with quivering lips to the door,

"Stop, stop!" cried the stranger; "you know you would never have returned the purse, had you not expected to be well paid for it."

"Sir!" said the widow, her voice rising beyond its usual tone, and her thin form erect.

The stranger paused, holding the purse in his hand; then drawing forth a small coin, offered it to her.

For a moment she drew back; but then remembering that her poor boys were hungry at home, and in bed because there was no fire, she burst into tears as she took it, saying, "This will buy bread for my poor children," and, hurrying away, she buried the bitterness of that morning in her own heart.