

about aimlessly at intervals, to be ever and anon thrown out of work. At no time do they appear to be flush of money. Every room in the row is crowded—each chamber, generally speaking, being a separate home, and sometimes a joint home; but it is not a drunken, noisy neighbourhood. Its pale, pinched occupants are glad enough to work when other people are taking holiday, and take doleful, silent holiday when other people are at work. Just within the archway opens the dark side-entrance to a pawnbroker's. It is conveniently placed for the inhabitants of the row. Their shoulder-rubbings have made the three golden balls painted on the doorposts as dim and dingy as the world, which seems so bright a globe to many, must appear to them. Some one or other of them is almost always slipping into the dark doorway with something or other covered up from sight. Furniture, flat-irons, tools, boots, flannel petticoats, Sunday gowns—almost everything they possess which is hypothecable—they have so often hypothecated, that, when they get them back, they must feel that they only enjoy a precarious, usufruct of them, and that the pawnbroker is the real proprietor.

The narrow flagged pathway in front of the houses swarms with ragged, yellow-faced children, and the dirty step of almost every open doorway holds a resting row of tiny nursemaids, some of them very little bigger than the babies which they lug about like kittens. The children are the only noisy people about the place, and though, like other children better off, they wrangle a good deal over their play, as well as laugh, it is a relief to find in that depressed place any sign of life vigorous and self-satisfied enough to venture to be loud—to think that, at any rate, the little ones have a *chance* of doing better than their parents have done, poor as that chance may be.

Through often looking down into the row—Bolingbroke Row, let us call it (it has an aristocratic name like that)—I have got to learn its ways, and take an individual interest in its inhabitants. It has a very fluctuating population. Little eddies of shabby life are ever ebbing and flowing there. A good many of the rooms in Bolingbroke Row, though miserable enough now, are large, and their tenants cease to be able to pay the rent. Accordingly they drag their squalid household goods, and pathetic little household gods, down the broad, shallow staircases, push, and pull, and carry them along the flagged pathway, to the hand-truck or the donkey-cart that is waiting at the end, and trudge out with it under the archway to seek another refuge and patronize another pawnbroker. Rooms do not remain long empty in Bolingbroke Row, although its rents are exorbitant. There are too many poor people in the neighbourhood anxious to get a home of any kind. Fresh tenants generally come in on the same day—to go out similarly in their turn; and so the dreary wheel rolls round.

Of course, however, there are some "old residents" in the Row. One white-haired old woman in faded black—still neat-looking, in spite of its darned rustiness—whom I had frequently seen com-