

overcoat for Mr. Balatzky and shoes for Dennis; and then, suppose, there's so much left over, that father could hire an open waggon some warm day in spring, and I could ride back and forth on the ferry boat and see the water and the ships and lots of sky; and suppose there should be a little breeze and the waves should have white caps, and look just the way father says, and suppose—and suppose—. But we need not follow him. Imagine the supposings of a child who has only a hospital and a garret for his realities.

The light grew stronger. The birds began to sing. The sun would be out soon, and for one blessed hour would shine in the garret.

It was a tenement house now, between enormous factories, but it had once been the home of a rich New York merchant. The garret had held rare and costly gowns, and chests full of valuables; but the garret had not then been the soul of the house. It was different now. Shut in on every side by 'sky-scrapers,' there was little chance for sunshine to enter, except through the garret scuttle, and 'twas toward this shrine, where lay the merry, loving, wise little cripple, that the feet of those in the darkened rooms below daily turned.

There were steps on the stairs. The first of the pilgrims had come.

It was Mrs. O'Grady, with a blanket under her arm, and a cup of tea in her hand.

'The top o' the mornin' to yer, darlint, and I'd been up sooner but for the childer. Kitty fell through the fire-escape wid her foolin', and if the widdier woman below had not been airin' her bed, it's through to the pavement she'd gone! They do be havin' me crazy. And your father left his overcoat at home. Dear-a-me, is the man mad? It's grip he'll be havin'. I ought to have been sooner up with the blanket. Ye can have it all day, and now let me mother yer up a bit!'

She helped him as he drank the tea, and then, with great tenderness, washed his hands and face, made the bed, lifting the little body back and forth, and then with a small brush arranged the clinging curls. 'Faith, then, it's like a canary ye are, wid yer yellow fuzz, and you a peekin' out through yer cage a-makin' gladness for the whole house. Now, don't be thankin' me! Phat could I do without the wise head of yer? Wasn't it you cajoled the old man out of jinin' the strike? And didn't it turn out the way ye said?' And so Mrs. O'Grady ran on as she bustled herself about the room. That half-hour every morning was the bright spot in her busy day.

Mrs. O'Grady had been gone but a short time when old Balatzky, the cobbler from the basement, came in. He had a piece of work which needed more light, he said, as he sat down under the scuttle. Every one in the house avoided Balatzky, for he had an unpleasant way of running round with an open razor, when he had been drinking; but Max had never seen this seamy side. His Balatzky was a kind old man, full of stories of wonderful experiences, in nearly every country of Europe. There never was such an eager listener as Max. His glowing eyes, his moving, varying face, the twisting of his bird-like hands, all were in such contrast to the rigidity of his body. You knew just what an active boy he would have been if Nature had not been thwarted.

Balatzky, flattered and praised by such enthusiasm, talked this day, with a wit and eloquence which had been fatal to him, as a university student.

The gaunt, half-starved Pole from the sweating shop below, who came every day to fix the birds, and breathe something beside the vile, fetid air of his own den, stood

outside the garret door and listened. The shouts of merry laughter from within seemed to lift the burden from his poor, dulled mind; his leaden, joyless heart, his over-worked body. Away in the past—had it ever been?—he had laughed like that, and the memory of that lost happiness softened and changed and humanized the hopeless face framed in its coarse black hair. 'May the Almighty bless him!' he said in his heart, as he opened the door.

Old Balatzky gathered up his work to go. 'Don't go, Mr. Balatzky,' (Max was the one person who called him 'Mr.'), 'do tell Stanislaus the joke you played on that Vienna policeman!'

But Balatzky was through and he went limping back to his dark basement with a smile under his grizzled beard, and a sense of being necessary to some one that filled his old socialistic heart with comfort.

Stanislaus gave fresh water and seed to the birds, who were going wild over the sunshine, which now began to stream into the room. Max had to shout his jokes to be heard, but Stanislaus's faint smiles repaid him. The Pole had his dinner—a piece of black bread and a meagre bit of meat—which he offered to share with the child, but Max refused.

'Oh, the Bowery!' came ringing up the stairs.

'Ah, it's Dennis, you know. He washes glasses in Cavanagh's saloon.'

'Hello, kid, how goes it?' roared Dennis, as he burst open the door. Dennis was a Bowery tough in the bud; but Max in his innocent little heart thought all his coarseness fun.

'Jest see what Cavanagh's sent you! A big pail of clam chowder from the free lunch counter! Here's a lot of crackers and cheese; so hump in and enjoy yourself.'

'Oh, Dennis, how good you are! I know you spoke of it first to Cavanagh. It's just like you, to be so nice and modest.' Dennis turned away with a grin. He nice and modest!

'Here, Sheeney, there's enough for you, too, and plenty left for Daddy Canary when he gets home. So stir your stumps, and get some spoons; for I've got to go back.'

The chowder was hot, and there was plenty of it, so Stanislaus went away fed and comforted.

The afternoon wore away and brought at its close his father.

'Yes, Max, it's all right. I sold him for eight dollars!' he said, in answer to the eager eyes. The boy's face glowed with delight.

'Oh, Daddy! now we're sure of the rent; and I've got such a supper for you! Cavanagh sent me a big pail of chowder, so make a fire and heat it.'

When his meal was over, the father drew his rickety chair, and began:

'Wellman took all the birds—there's a demand about Easter—and after helping him a while I walked up-town with Mr. McGinty. I did as you said, and before long I had a crowd around me, and I put Mr. McGinty through his tricks. He never did better. Just as he was through I heard some one call me, and I saw a boy beckoning from a carriage, and the boy was so richly dressed I hoped at once.

'Make him do his tricks again,' he said, and then, when it was over, he asked the price, and said to the footman, who stood beside the door: 'Bronson, run into the shop and find Aunt Grace, and ask her for eight dollars. Tell her I want to buy a bird;' so when the man had gone, he said to me:

'"Was it hard to teach him?"'

'"It took time," I said; "but my boy is very patient."

"Did your boy train him?" said he.

"Yes," I said, "he's a cripple." He was going to say something else, when a lady came out with the footman.

"Do you really want him, Lloyd?" she said; "you won't look at him to-morrow!" But the boy seemed angry, and muttered something about his own money, and "telling father;" so she paid me, and they drove away.

Max drew a long sigh. 'I'm glad I wrote that note, if he's that kind of a boy.'

It was three days later. Max was alone, and the sun was not out. There came a strange footstep on the stairs, a knock at the door, and then a voice said: 'I say, hello!' 'Hello!' said Max, cheerfully; 'come round in front where I can see you.'

A boy about his own age, erect, handsome, and dressed in a serge sailor suit, came to the foot of the bed, and stared at him in astonishment. A flash of recognition crossed Max's face.

'Are you the boy who bought Mr. McGinty? Sit down. The chair won't tip, if you sit on the corner. How glad I am to see you! You didn't mind my note? I was so afraid he'd be neglected,' and Max chattered on, with sheer delight.

Lloyd Ormiston had seen strange sights this morning; but this was the strangest of all—a boy, alone, in a cage, in a garret, and—happy!

'I say, what ails you?' he said, bluntly.

A faint flush ran over the sensitive face. 'I have spine disease. I fell when I was a very little boy. Then I went to the hospital. They were very kind; but they could not keep me, for I'm an incurable,' said the child, gently.

'I don't believe it,' said Lloyd, angrily; 'they don't know everything!' Besides, they've not seen you lately. I bet Uncle Joe could cure you! You see if he don't. I'll have him here to-morrow with father. You don't know what father's like. He can do anything. So can Uncle Joe. He'll have you walking in a year. He has cured worse cases than yours!'

It was a wan, frightened face that looked at Lloyd, as he stormed in his spoiled, impetuous way.

'Don't say that, please! I'm—I'm used to it now; and it would be so awful to hope;' but Lloyd was not used to opposition, and his boyish heart—warm under its thick coat of discontent and selfishness—had gone out, in an unknown way, to this 'shut-in.'

They talked all the afternoon. Lloyd full of plans—such preposterous plans, that Max shouted in merriment, and yet the other seemed so masterful that the boy half believed him.

'I suppose I've got to go now. Aunt Grace is such a fuss! I'll be down to-morrow with father and Uncle Joe, and don't you dare think "incurable" again!'

He had opened the door, when he stopped, and said, brokenly:

'Do you mind if I kiss you good-by? You know neither of us have mothers!'

Never since the cholera scare had there been such excitement in the tenement house. The ten O'Grady's could have fallen through the fire-escape and no one would have noticed them. Max Turner could be cured. A great doctor from Fifth Avenue said so; but that was not all. The cage was being taken off now, and Max was to go away in the fine carriage, that stood in front of ninety-six. The doctor and his brother, Mr. Ormiston, were going on a cruise in their yacht, and Max was to be taken along with Mr. Ormiston's boy. Max's