

hanging in rags, the plaster torn off in places, with its broken furniture, its almost empty cupboard, and its strange little occupants. In one corner stood a rusty stove, but the fire was almost out, and the chilliness of the sharp November day penetrated into the room. A bed stood in the opposite corner. Scattered over the ragged coverings were several bright cards, an old top, a little model of a boat, and a toy lamb, its once white wool now the color of the dirty coverlet. On the bed lay the two children—the one, strong, sturdy, the picture of health, though ragged and unkempt—the other, pale, wasted, deformed. A long, slanting ray of the afternoon sun had lost its way among the dark alleys and high tenements of the great city, and crept furtively across the floor, kissing the sufferer's white forehead, and tinging the tangled hair on the pillow with its golden light. When a baby, a blow from a drunken father had injured his spine, and the child had been a helpless cripple for some time. He was growing gradually weaker, and it was plain that his sufferings would soon be passed. The little brothers were all in all to each other—they lacked a mother's loving care, for the coarse, drunken creature they called mother, and who went out washing in her sober moments, dishonored the name. Bobby was a bright, good natured lad about ten years old, making an honest, though dangerous living, by selling newspapers at the wharves. A kind-hearted lady had noticed him there, taken him to a mission school, and had gained a firm hold of the child's brave, loving heart.

"Now, Bobby," pleaded Dicky,—"the story." "Well," started Bobby, "here goes for the one Miss Wes' told us fellows last Sunday. An' it's a true one, mind ye, Dickey. My, warn't it lovely! She said as how there is a place called the City uv the King, an' the streets is all pure gold and pearl—like her ring—an' not a bit like our dirty alleys. An' the sun is alwuz shinin', Dicky, so warm and bright-like, an' it ain't ever cold, or folks ain't never hungry. An' the habitant—that means one as lives there, Dicky'll not say, "I am sick," an' there's no pain or anythin' bad, an' God, that is Him as built the city, Dicky, and is the King'll wipe all tears. An' nobody's ever drunk and kicks ye to bed, but is kind and smilin'—like Miss Wes'. She said as how there is a river runnin' through the middle, es clear's glass, and trees on both sides, 'th all manners o' fruits. An' there 's no night there."

"Oh, Bobby, Bobby," burst out the child, sobbing, who had listened with wide-open eyes. "I wants ter go there—I do, I do!

My back do hurt so, and I'm-so-tired. Can't ye take me there, Bobby?"

"I dunno, Dicky, I ain't sure where 'tis, mebbe I kin find out, don't ye cry, Dicky,—there's a good boy."

But the brave lad found it hard to keep back his own tears.

"Take me there, Bobby," pleaded the little cripple. "Can't ye go and find out now? Mebbe Miss Wes' 'll tell ye. An' come back an' carry me, Bobby,—I ain't very heavy,—are I?"

"I tell ye what," said the boy thoughtfully, "I'll hev to go fur the papers now, an' arter I'm sold out, I'll go to Miss Wes', (I been to her house once afore) an' ask, and we kin start to-morrer mornin', firs' thing. Mebbe Jim Sanders 'll give us a lift, part uv the way. How'll that do, Dicky?"

"Oh, it'll be fine!" cried the child, clapping his almost transparent hands, while his dull eyes sparkled. "Don't be long. I'll be still and wait for ye. An' be back 'fore its dark, will ye, Bobby? I'm so 'fraid."

"All right, Dicky, now I'm off, jes' you keep chirp, and singin', and we'll get to the City o' the King to-morrer, if Bob Higgins kin find a road," and kissing the pale face, he skipped out of the room and down the rickety stairs to the street,

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"Ev'nin' Mail!—Sun!—only a cent!"—All 'bout the railway accid'nt! Ev'nin' Mail!" Bobby's cheery voice rose above the din of the crowd. "Here, Mister, here's yer change!" and the lad darted through the almost impenetrable masses of carriages and drays, collected about the large wharf, after a careless customer. But a stumble—a driver's shout—the sound of horses plunging wildly—a child's scream—and then—

They tenderly carried the little crushed form into a neighboring store. All that skilful hands could do was done, but his life was slowly ebbing away.

A group of newsboys stood around, some crying, others silent with awe and fear. "Its little Bob Higgins—Doll Higgins'es boy," said one of them, wiping his wet eyes on a dirty sleeve. "He has a little lame brother, as'll never live 'thout Bob."

Suddenly the blue eyes flew open, he smiled faintly as he recognized his mates, but immediately a look of agony came over his face. "Oh, boys," he sobbed, "I'm-so-sorry, tell Dicky as how I'd just sold my last, and wuz agoin' ter Miss Wes's when I-got-knocked-down. Tell him-ter-be-good-and-and-oh! take care o' him—boys—cause-he's-so-little-an'-tired-an—"