

"Good woman, why do you bring all your great piles of wood up these steep, slippery stairs, to fill up your room?"

"Cot in himmel, vare vould I puts him? In te court? De peoples steal him all."

True, there was no place but in that one room to store up a supply, while the time of gleanings was good. Then it has to be carried down to the court to be split up into kindlings, and then again carried up for storage. How so many find room to live in such narrow space, if our readers would learn, let them go and make personal inquiry. They will find plenty of just such cases, with slight search.

Up, up again, one more flight of creaking stairs, without bannisters, the thin worn steps bending beneath our tread, and we are on the upper floor of this one of a hundred just alike "tenant houses." Along the dark narrow passage, opening that low door at the end, into a room under the roof, 10 by 15 feet, lighted by one dormer window, and we are in the home of Madalina, the rag-picker's daughter. Home! Can it be that holy name has been so desecrated—that this child, with sylph-like form and angel face, must call this room her home. 'Tis only for a little while. She will soon have another.

In one corner of the room stood two hand organs, such as we are daily tormented with, groaning out their horrid music under our window, while the grinder and his monkey look anxiously for falling pennies or pea-nuts. These stand a little way apart, with a couple of boards laid across the space. On these boards there had been an attempt to make a bed, of sundry old coats, a dirty blanket, and other vermin harbors.

On this bed lay the poor little sufferer. Not so very little either. In her own native Italy she had been counted almost a woman.

We have seen many, many beautiful faces, but never one like this—so angelic.

"It is a bad sign," said Tom, in answer to a remark upon the expression of her face; "it is a sign she will soon be among those she looks so much like. She never looked so before. She is a living angel now, she will soon be a real one."

"Madalina, my good child," said the Missionary, "how do you feel to-night?"

"The pain in my breast has been very bad, but it is easier now. It always goes away when you come. I am so glad you came to-night, for I want to thank you for a thousand good things you have done for me."

"Are you afraid you will not get well?"

"Oh no, I am not afraid; I know I shall not, but I am not afraid. I don't want to live, if I must live here; look around. It did not use to look as it does now to me, when I went out begging, and came home tired and cold and hungry, I could lay down with the monkeys on my mother's bag of nasty wet rags, and go to sleep directly. Now they worry me to death with their chattering. Do drive them down Tom, that is a dear good fellow."

It would evidently have been a source of great gratification to Tom, to have pitched five or six of them out of the window. But there were dark eyes scowling on him, out of a dozen sockets of men who came from the land of the stiletto, and looked now as though they could as readily use it as play the organ and lead the monkey.

We looked about and counted six men or stout boys and eight women and girls, besides several children, monkeys, tamborines and hand organs. In one corner was the rag-picker's store. This had been the bed of Madalina until this evening, she grew so much worse, that she was lifted up to the bed we have described. But here she had not escaped the torment of the monkeys. They had long been her companions and seemed determined to be so still. They were climbing up and down, or sitting chattering on her bed. Late as it was in the evening there were several fresh

arrivals of parties of musicians and rag-pickers from their distant walks. Several were at supper. A long, black table with a wooden bench on either side, was furnished with two wooden trays, which had seen long service and little soap. Into these was ladled from time to time, the savory contents of a large pot cimmering upon the stove. Each guest helped himself with fingers and spoon. Whether the stew was composed of monkey meat, or two days old veal, we cannot say. That onions formed a strong part of the ingredients, we had olfactory demonstration. Some of the party indulged in a bottle of wine, and we smelt something very much like bad rum or worse brandy, but generally speaking, this class of the city poor are not great drunkards. One end of the room was entirely occupied by a camp bed. That is, in that narrow space of ten feet, ten human beings, big and little of both sexes laid down side by side. The balance of the family lay round here and there; some on and some under the table, some on great black chests, of which each family had one, wherein they lock all their personal goods from their pilfering room mates. The stove and a few dishes finishes the catalogue of furniture. How many persons are, or can be stowed into this one room, is beyond our powers of computation.

Will some of our readers who faint at the smell of unsavory food, or who could not sleep but in fresh linen and well aired rooms, fancy what must be the feelings of poor Madalina, who had just begun to taste of the comforts of civilized life, now sick and dying in such a room, where the penny candle only served to make the thick clouds of tobacco smoke more visible and more suffocating.

One of the difficulties in all these close packed rooms is the necessity to keep the door always shut, to prevent pilfering, thus leaving the only chance for fresh air to enter, of foul air to escape, by the one small window in the roof.

Having given you a view of the room, and its inhabitants and furnishing, let us look again upon poor Madalina, as she lies panting for breath upon her hard pallet. Her face, naturally dark, has an unhealthy whiteness spread over it, and there is a small bright crimson spot upon one cheek—the other is hidden in the taper fingers of the hand upon which it rests. Such a pair of bright black eyes! Oh, how beautiful! Her way locks of jet are set off by a clean white handkerchief, just spread over the bundle of rags which forms her pillow, by one of the visitors. Now, in spite of pain, there is a smile lighting up her face, and showing such a set of teeth as a princess might covet. Whence this happy smile? Listen how cheaply it is brought upon the face of the suffering innocent. She had said, "I am so thirsty, and nothing to drink but nasty warm tea." Directly Tom was missing. Now he was back again, and there he stood with a nice white pitcher in one hand, full of ice water, and a glass tumbler in the other. Now he pours it full of sparkling nectar—now he drops upon one knee and carries it to those parched lips. Is it any wonder that that simple minded, good hearted boy, should look up to us as we stood looking over the kneeling Missionary, and say, "Don't she look like an angel, Sir?"

It was an angelic smile. It was a sight worth days and nights of earnest seeking, and yet, Oh, how cheaply purchased. Only one glass of cold water.

Would that we had some Raphealic power to transfer the picture of that scene to this page, for you to look upon as well as read of, for a sight of that face with its surroundings, would do you good. It would make you yearn after the blessed opportunity of holding the cup of cold water to other fevered lips, lighting up other angelic, happy, thankful smiles.

Vainly we pleaded with the mother of Madalina to carry her to a comfortable room—to our house—to any house—to the hospital—to get her a physician—a nurse—some one, at least, to give her a drink of cold water through the next