

'Did you see Mr. Minor, Henry?' It was a faint, mournful voice which asked this question, and the speaker was a pale, sad-faced woman, whose sunken eyes and hollow cheeks at once told you she was an invalid.—The chamber where she sat was very poorly furnished, but everything was neat. A small fire was burning in the grate, and a solitary candle on the stand.

'No, mother, Mr. Minor won't be at home for a week,' answered the boy slowly, as though he disliked to communicate the news. He was a slender, delicate-looking boy, apparently in his twelfth year.

'It is my last hope,' said the mother, looking desparingly on the thin hands which lay in her lap. 'There is no way to pay the rent, and the agent said if I wasn't ready when he called to-morrow, we must go into the street. What will become of us, my poor children? I had trusted Mr. Minor's getting back, he was so kind to your father before he died; but my last hope is gone now. I could have earned the money if it hadn't been for this sickness; but to-morrow we must go into the street.' She said the words with great tears slowly chasing themselves down her pale cheeks.

'Don't cry, mother, I earned a shilling this afternoon, selling papers, and bought you and Mary each a nice orange,' interposed the boy, trying to speak in a bright, hopeful voice.

And now a small hand was thrust out for the fruit, and a small, little voice said, earnestly, 'Oh! mother, don't let us feel ill now that we have got the oranges.'

At that moment there was a loud rap at the chamber door, which started the little family, but Harry was not long in ushering into the room an old gentleman, who inquired if Mrs. Carpenter resided there.

His glance took in the room and its three occupants, and after taking the seat which Harry Carpenter brought him, he said—

'I am Squire Dunham, and I called here to say, Mrs. Carpenter, that I would not press the matter about the rent; that if you could not meet it you might stay here, and I would not trouble you.'

A flash of joy went over the three faces, but the mother broke down into a sob. 'Oh! sir, God in heaven will bless you for this!' and they were the sweetest words which Stephen Dunham had heard for many a day.

But before he could answer, his gaze was attracted to a small, wistful, upturned face in the corner, and its sweet blue eyes, and the golden gleam in its brown hair, were like that face which shone away off in the morning of his boyhood, the face of his sister Hetty!

As his gaze met the little girl's, she rose up and came toward him. 'You won't send mamma, and Harry, and me into the street, will you?' she said, in her sweet, pleasing way; 'cause we can't live there when the wind blows, and the rain comes, and the great carriages will go over us; and mamma's sick, and I am a little girl you know, and Harry isn't big enough to do anything but sell papers.'

'My child,' said Squire Dunham, 'you shall never go into the street!' and his voice was not quite steady, and there was a strange moisture about his eyes. He took the little girl on his knees, and she nestled her bright young head on his shoulder, chattering away to him, and thinking what a good, kind man, Squire Dunham was!

The laundlord remained some time with his tenants. Many kind words and promises cheered them, for that little head nestled softly against his heart, and warmed and gladdened it; and before he left Squire Dunham