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here, old before its time. That girl—she climbs five flights of stairs twice a day—will climb no more stairs for herself or another by the time the clover-leaves are green. "The best thing about one's grave is that it will be level," she was heard once to say. Somebody muses a little here—she is to be married this winter. There is a face just behind her whose fixed eyes repel and attract you; there may be more love than guilt in them, more despair than either.

Had you stood in some unobserved corner of Essex Street, at four o'clock one Saturday afternoon towards the last of November, 1859, watching the impatient stream pour out of the Pemberton Mill, eager with a saddening eagerness for its few holiday hours, you would have observed one girl who did not bound.

She was slightly built and undersized; her neck and shoulders were closely muffled, though the day was mild; she wore a faded scarlet hood which heightened the pallor of what must at best have been a pallid face. It was a sickly face, shaded off with purple shadows, but with a certain wiry nervous strength about the muscles of the mouth and chin; it would have been a womanly, pleasant mouth, had it not been crossed by a

white scar, which attracted more of one's attention than either the womanliness or pleasantness. Her eyes had light long lashes, and shone through them steadily.

You would have noticed as well, had you been used to analyzing crowds, another face—the two were side by side—dimpled with pink and white flushes, and framed with bright black hair. One would laugh at this girl and love her, scold her and pity her, caress her and pray for her—then forget her perhaps.

The girls from behind called after her: "Del! Del Ivory! look over there!"

Pretty Del turned her head. She had just flung a smile at a young clerk who was petting his moustache in a shop window, and the smile lingered.

One of the factory boys was walking alone across the Common in his factory clothes.

"Why there's Dick! Sene, do you see?"

Sene's scarred mouth moved slightly, but she made no reply. She had seen him five minutes ago.

One never knows exactly whether to laugh or cry over them, catching their chatter as they file past the

shop-windows of the long, showy street.

"Look a' that pink silk with the figures on it!"

"I've seen them as is better nor that in the ould counthree. Patsy Malorn, let alon' hangin' onto the shawl of me!"

"That's Mary Foster getting out of that carriage with the two white horses—she that lives in the brown house with the cupilo."

"Look at her dress trailin' after her. I'd like my dresses trailin' after me."

"Well may they be good—these rich folks!"

"That's so. I'd be good if I was rich; wouldn't you, Moll?"

"You'd keep growing wilder than ever, Meg Match; yes you would, because my teacher said so."

"So, then, he wouldn't marry her after all; and she—"

"Going to the circus to-night, Bess?"

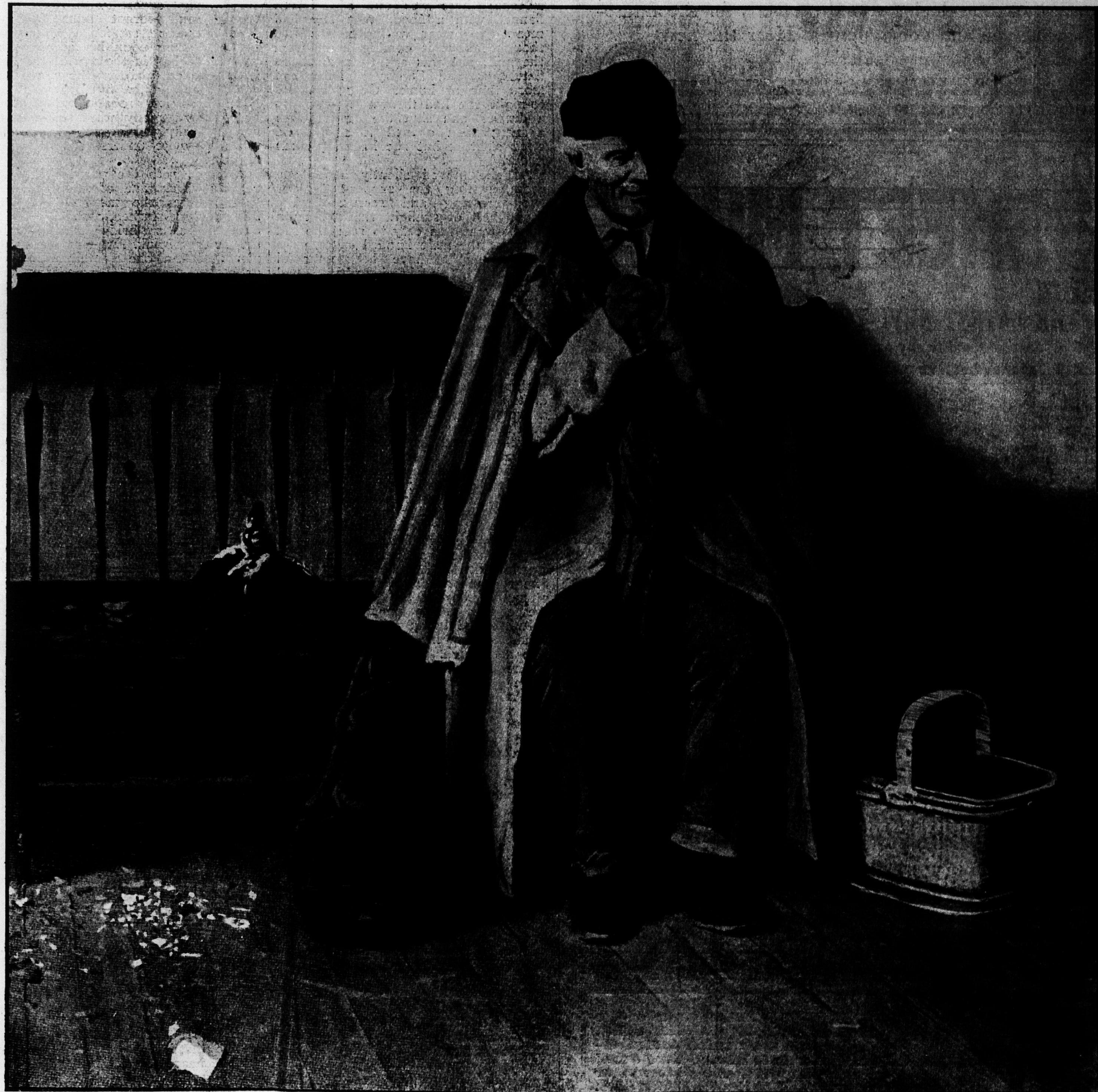
"I can't help crying, Jenny. You don't know how my head aches! It aches, and it aches, and it seems as if it would never stop aching. I wish—I was dead, Jenny!"

They separated at last, going each her own way—pretty Del Ivory to her boarding-place by the canal, her companion walking home alone.

This girl, Asenath Martyn, when left to herself, fell into a contented dream not common to girls who have reached her age—especially girls who have seen the phases of life which she had seen. Yet few of the faces in the streets that led her home were more gravely lined. She puzzled one at the first glance, and at the second. An artist, meeting her musing on a canal-bridge one day, went home and painted a Mayflower budding in November.

It was a damp, unwholesome place, the street in which she lived, cut short by a broken fence, a sudden steep and the water: filled with children—they ran from the gutters after her, as she passed—and filled to the brim; it tipped now and then, like an over-full soup-plate, and spilled out two or three, through the break in the fence.

Down in the corner, sharp upon the water, the east winds broke about a little yellow house, where no children played; an old man's face watched at a window, and a nasturtium-vine crawled in the garden. The broken panes of glass about the place were well mended, and a clever little gate, extemporized from a wild grape-vine, swung at the entrance. It was not an old man's work.



Going Home to see the Old Folks.