

sands had lived and moved and passed away forever. We did not linger long to view the premises; for, whatever either of us thought or felt, we wasted no words on our impression, but pushed our way up the broad staircase and entered the desolate halls, which echoed and re-echoed long, and it did seem to me, mournfully to our tread. From chamber to chamber we passed on, first through one extended wing of the building, and then through the other, with what might truly be called 'idlo curiosity.' Then from attic to cellar we wandered, until we knew every room, and every cell in the vast building. It was indeed a lonely place. Standing separate as it did, the avenue of entrance reaching west and remote from any dwellings, it seemed to me, as if we were almost the last of our race; as if some terrible pestilence had swept away the busy millions, and that we alone were left.

After due examination, we chose a comfortable room in the centre or main building, which had been appropriated for the use of the Keeper and his family, and taking the floor for our bed, and our hands for our pillows, we laid ourselves down to sleep away the afternoon. It was nearly sundown when we aroused ourselves. The trees threw into our room a deep shadow, and made it look almost like night. I felt a fear creeping over me, and thought that I would rather be in the woods and risk the storms, than sleep in so desolate a place. The strange vision of my mother, also occurred to my mind, and I looked timidly around, almost expecting to see her pale, sad face, turned upon me. We descended from our room and made out way quickly towards the city, my father eager to quench his burning thirst, and I to get some food, for I felt very hungry. At the corner of Howard and Franklin streets we parted—he to lounge in a certain grog-shop, while I endeavored to raise a little change. It was late, and I was exceedingly put to it for some successful experiment. At length a happy thought struck me, and I went into a drug-store in Market street, and called for six cents worth of the cream of tartar. It was soon weighed out and handed to me. Just at that moment a person came in, and soon after two or three more. The young man in the store was of course soon busily engaged in serving them. I stood still at the counter, with my little package in my hand, waiting with seeming great patience. After all were gone, I still remained, standing there, and at last the clerk asked me if I wanted any thing else.

"No, sir," said I, "I am only waiting for my change."

"Your change, oh! what did you give me?"

"A half dollar, sir."

He looked at me for some moments, and then said,

"Are you right sure?"

"Oh yes, sir," said I with all apparent ingenuousness.

"I gave you a half dollar just as that girl came in for the castor oil and you put it in the drawer, and forgot to give me the change."

"Well, I am sure I did forget all about it," said he, as he gave me forty-four cents change.

I walked quietly out of the shop, but as soon as I was round the corner I threw the cream of tartar into the gutter, and ran off as fast as I could to join my father.

He was delighted with the large supply I had raised, and when I informed him of the trick to which I had resorted, he patted me on the head, and said I was a sad dog—and then laid himself back to enjoy a hearty laugh at the joke.

"Money is too scarce now, Charley," said he, "to afford to buy any thing to eat with it. You can easily get enough cold victuals. So do you go out and get something for us to eat, and we will go home and take our supper in our new lodgings. We will take a bottle of gin along and some beer, and fare sumptuously."

"But what shall we do for a light, father?" said I.

"Sure enough, that is a question."

"Suppose we buy a candle—we can get one for two cents."

"But we must have a candle every night, and candles will cost two cents a piece. That will never do. And we will have to get matches. Besides, I don't believe the Trustees would allow a candle to be taken into the building. Any how, there is no great use for a candle. We know the way in well enough. We never had a candle in the woods, and now because we have got better lodging we are not content without additional luxuries. It would be a useless expense, Charley, and we will not incur it."

Much against my will, I had to consent to this mode of reasoning. It was not long before I filled my handkerchief with bread and meat, at the kitchens of sundry benevolent individuals, and called for my father, who was already much intoxicated. After pulling him by the arm and coaxing him a good deal I got him under way, and towards ten o'clock we turned into Madison from Howard street. Here commenced the lonely part of our journey. The huge pile of buildings into which we were to creep like thieves, arose gloomily on the right, and looked the very picture of desolation. My father was too much in liquor to be a sensible companion, and I, boy as I was, had to meet the imagined horrors of such a lonely, deserted place, almost companionless. Slowly we wound round the enclosure, until we gained the north-west front of the building, and then kept on up the broad avenue, until we were once more beneath the trees that threw a shadow dark as midnight upon the porch and entrance of the house. As the gate swung to behind us, with a loud noise and the jingling of a chain that was attached, a wild, unearthly scream, which seemed to come from a window over our heads, thrilled upon my ears. I almost sunk to the earth.

"What is that, father?" said I, in a hoarse, tremulous whisper.

But he was too far gone with the liquor he had taken to notice it as any thing unusual. I stood still, and so did he, for his motions were governed by my own. I knew not what to do or what to think. The wild, awful scream was still ringing in my ears, and the strange sight I had seen but the night before, was still before me in imagination. After a few minutes of indecision, I pulled my father towards the steps that lead into the building, which were indistinctly visible in the darkness. As he attempted to set his foot upon the first of these, he stumbled and fell upon them with a loud noise. Instantly that piercing scream was repeated, then there was a rustling among the branches of the trees over our heads, and a large, dark-looking bird, swept away with a slight noise as its wings beat the still air.

I recovered my senses in a moment, greatly relieved, though I trembled violently from head to foot. I knew that I had been frightened by a "screech owl." I now endeavored to get my father on his feet, and after some difficulty, we were safely lodged in our own room. We were at home. One long draught at the bottle sufficed him, and he laid himself down, and was soon snoring loudly. For my own part, I had little appetite for the bread and meat I had brought with me, and following my father's example, I took a long draught, and laid myself down upon our hard bed. Happily for me, I was soon sound asleep, and did not wake until the sun was shining in at the window.

The burning thirst of my father was quenched at the pump in the yard, and he then took a dram from the liquor in our bottle. We now made a breakfast from the cold meat and bread which I had begged the night before, and after sitting about until towards nine o'clock, went into town to act over, with various modifications, the scenes of many previous days. Thus we passed our time, for some months.

I was often greatly frightened in the old Poor House, by strange noises and stranger fancies, but never more so than on one dark night when, failing to find my father in any direction, I bent my steps for home (!) a little after ten o'clock, supposing that he had gone out there. Every step which I