

Rose O'Connor might have been called a transparent child. Her skin was very fair, and the blue veins showed plainly at her temples. One could almost see through her small hands, which, although disfigured by a wart or two, were painfully white. Her little face was pinched, and her forehead habitually contracted by a frown of anxiety. When amused or interested she lost her almost fretful expression, and her face became very sweet and gentle. Large blue eyes, and abundant light-colored hair, which hung down in a long plait over her white pinafore, redeemed her from being, at ordinary times, a very ugly little girl. It was the opinion of most of the young ladies in the glove department at Lacy's that the child was good-natured, but stupid; and Nellie was the only one that looked on her with special favor.

Rose tried to raise the bread to her lips, and then a strange dizziness overcame her; she clutched at Nellie Mulligan's chair and fell back on the floor, a stertorous sound coming from her lips. Nellie turned suddenly, and was frightened by the sight of her drawn and pallid face. The girls heard the noise and gathered around her at once, while Nellie ran to the next room for water.

"It's my opinion that she's been sipping out of the beccans," cried one of those delicate creatures, who found tea not sufficiently sustaining.

"You're real mean!" exclaimed Nellie Mulligan, entering with a glass of water, and parting the group. "You're real mean, Eliza Brown! I'm ashamed of you! The poor child sees enough drunkenness at home without wanting to make a drunkard of herself. She never touched your beer! How could you say such thing!"

"If you please, Miss Mulligan, I made no allusion to drunkenness. A lady may take glass of beer in the middle of the day without being a drunkard, I guess," retorted Eliza Brown, an elderly person, with a "bang" entirely over her forehead, and many wrinkles expressive of habitual ill-humor. "But I do say that a cash-girl will take a sip of beer whenever she gets a chance."

"Well, I say that Rose wouldn't,—I am quite sure of that," replied Nellie Mulligan, bathing the little girl's face, while Eliza Brown chafed her hands.

"She needn't be so snappish if she expects to borrow my satin shoes," murmured Eliza Brown.

Nellie heard the whisper, and turned very graciously to Miss Brown.

"I never said you had a bad heart, Lize; but I know this little girl; and there isn't a better, purer, sweeter, nicer little thing in the world! And I'll say this: if the poor child has fainted, it's because she hasn't had anything to eat to-day."

"You ought to have remembered that before you sent her running about so much," replied Eliza, who was usually in fear of the belle of the glove department, but who had at present a sword of Damocles—in the shape of the indispensable white satin shoes—to hold over that young person's head.

The girls, of all sizes and complexions, who were spending their luncheon time in this room provided by Lacy & Brothers for the purpose, gathered around the central group, exclaiming over the sadness of the little girl's lot; and if she were well enough she could have revelled in pie, doughnuts, and chocolate *relais*—these terrible objects being the chief articles of consumption at Lacy's in the middle of the day.

Rose revived and opened her eyes; then she looked bewildered, and gave a little sob. Half a dozen kind hands made a couch of shawls for her; and there she lay, very white and quiet, the centre of all interest. For a moment Nellie Mulligan did not think of the Lady Rosebuds or the splendors of the coming night. Eliza Brown, who had known what it was to be hungry, got a cup of warm milk, and, kneeling beside Rose, administered it gently, grumbling all the time.

Rose looked wistfully at the little heap of pastry by her side.

"Oh, do eat something!" Nellie implored, bending over her.

"I can't, Miss Mulligan," Rose answered; "but," she added, after a little pause, "will you let me take some of these home when I go?"

"Why, certainly," said Eliza Brown, with great heartiness, "You can take them all; I'll wrap them up for you. And you shall lie quietly here until it's time to go home. I'll see

the floor-walker about it, and if he dares to contradict *me*!" Then Eliza turned her head away and wiped her eyes, still holding Rose's little thin hand in one of hers. "And people thinking of white satin shoes when there's so much destitution in the world!"

Nellie caught her glare, but prudently refrained from answering. Rose whispered something to Eliza, and the latter went to the little girl's tattered coat, which was conspicuous among those that hung on the nails for its shabbiness, and took a rosary from the pocket. Rose held it in her hand for a moment, and then fell back luxuriously on the pile of shawls.

The sight of the rosary excited no surprise in the room; for Eliza Brown had a way of saying her "penance" publicly,—sometimes because she "felt like it," and other times because she wanted to "aggravate" the Protestants.

When the little sick girl had been made comfortable, conversation and lunch went on as before.

"Oh, you were telling us abt the concert, Nellie!" somebody said. And Nellie resumed her narrative.

"It was a free show, of course, and Jim and I just went for fun. It was the queerest thing! We never laughed so much in our lives. There was a chorus from some German opera, and then one of the Galligan girls came out and thumped the piano for about half an hour. There didn't seem to be much tune to the thing, and everybody was tired of it. Then an awful guy of a woman came out in a sagegreen dress, all up and down straight, and she sang some slow thing. By this time most of the people around us were getting tired. Some of the Eye-talians at the end of the hall seemed to like it; but we chatted among ourselves, and Jim dropped a handful of peanuts into Clara Schwartz's gentleman friend's pocket. We laughed and laughed. And when another guy came out to sing a German song that was down on the programme, you couldn't hear anything. 'You ain't up in society ways, Jim,' says I. 'I ain't no Ward McAllister,' says Jim; 'but I'm going to lead the grand march at the Lady Rosebuds, all the same.' And we laughed and laughed, because you know I'm going to lead the march with Miley's Galligan."

"I'd stick to Jim," Eliza Brown said. "Miley's no good."

"And then," Nellie went on, "Mr. Bastien came out and made a speech, and said we ought to cultivate the acrostic sense, or something; that the music we had just heard was almost the music of the spears; and that, even if we didn't like it or understand it, we should come to the realization of higher ideals by pretending to like it. He wore a claw-hammer coat and a white tie, and he looked swell; but we just laughed and laughed. Then there was an intermission, and we all went to the bar and had the most delicious coffee and chocolate and cakes. I tell you we enjoyed that part of the concert. After which the Galligan girl—one of Miley's sisters—came out again. She was dressed awfully plain; in black silk, with a few red roses. I told Jim that I hoped Miley could afford to put more style on his wife than that, and Jim just giggled! Well, Miss Galligan began a slow thing called a mummot. We couldn't stand it, and Jim called out, 'Give us "Whist the Bogie Man!"' She looked frightened, and half rose from the piano; then she seemed to understand, and she changed the slow music into 'Listen to the Mocking-Bird!' It was elegant. You'd have thought there were birds in the piano.

And the way she crossed her hands over each other was wonderful. Everybody stamped and howled, and made her come out again; so she played the 'Lullaby' in *Ermine*, and then gave us a rattling march, ending in 'The Last Rose of Summer.' You could just hear it dying away. Everybody clapped and stamped. It was just too sweet for anything. After that she came out twice again and played pieces everybody knew. The other singers and players were too tiresome for anything. They're going to have more concerts; but if they're not better than the last, here will be nobody there but the Eye-talians, who can stand anything they don't have to pay for—dear me! there's the floor walker, girls! It is time I stopped chattering."

(To be continued.)

There is a fortune for the genius who can get Joseph Cook to talk a lecture into a phonograph, set the machine up in public places, and fix it so that it will stop for a few minutes, when anybody drops a nickel in the slot—if it can be fixed that way.—*Boston Pilot*.