

UNDER A COLONNADE.

It was a day early in March. The dull gray sky and bitter east wind gave no taste of spring. Here in London, round every corner swept the pitiless icy blast. Beggars and crossing-sweepers gathered their rags more closely about them, while rich men, clad in heavy overcoats, cursed the climate and sought shelter in the well-warmed rooms of their clubs. Only those constrained by duty or poverty were abroad in the streets on such a day as this. Among this number were the sandwich-men, who paraded the streets with their customary slow and spiritless demeanor, with hang-dog looks and shuffling feet. One after the other the procession of these silent, depressed figures passed up or down the busiest thoroughfares. So many hours to keep going, and many weary steps to pace for the meager pay of eighteen pence a day. Day after day to carry about the tale of other people's pleasures, with their own woe and degradation eating like iron into their souls.

and graceful, and had a quick, light step. She came along the pavement straight towards the sandwich-men, smiling all the time. She was neatly though poorly dressed. The old soldier, hearing a foot step, stretched his head to look around the protection of his pillar. He rose to his feet as quickly as he could on recognizing the lady.

Kelly fell back quickly. "A sandwich! Sure such a dirty blackguard was never Captain Dasherborough—the loafe of the regiment—a real piece of good for nothing. The man gave back a mocking echo. "Yes—come to this." "A filthy sandwich crawling the streets like a tortoise for nine bob a week! There is likeness. Ye lie!"

There was a deadly emphasis of certainty in his words. But there was the neck belonging to the cook who would— "For God's sake, do not teach anyone to find me. I am lost, lost." "Yet the young man persevered. "I leave England next week as surgeon to a colonial hospital. I shall have no further chance of doing you a good turn." The man in rags answered vehemently: "No need to look for me if you ever come back. I shall soon go under—under. A few steps more, a stumble again, and then the great darkness—death. Hurrah for death! for he's a jolly good fellow."

There are sometimes strange meetings in the hospitals. "Oh! said the girl, with tears springing to her eyes, your heart is better than mine. I have always been afraid—yes, afraid—my father should some day appear and stretch out a hand—a convict's hand, remember—and drag me down to misery and degradation." "My poor, friendless Kate!" said the young man, tenderly, "there is no fear of that now; no one can claim you when you are my wife—Kate Dasherborough."

At the utterance of this name a ghastly pale spread over the face of the listening sandwich-man. He gasped for breath as if choking, and leaned against the pillar for support. "Yes, I shall soon be Kate Kelly no more!" she murmured, with a happy smile. "That reminds me," said the lover, "that I have lost my pocket-book. I had intended to buy you a wedding gift with part of its contents." The girl released her hand from his arm quickly. "Where did you lose it? You said you passed this way before. Let us look about. There is little traffic round this corner. She gazed under the colonnade round the pillar, and came face to face with a man crouched low. "Why, here is a sandwich-man, fallen asleep!" The crouching creature lifted his head and stared at her in a wild way.

"You are Kate Kelly," he muttered. "Oh, I'm wide awake, young lady." Kate drew a little back. The man alarmed her. "But how pale you look! You must be ill. Have you fallen down? See, Cecil, how the poor man's hand trembles." The trembling hand brought forth the lost pocket-book and handed it to the owner. "Is this yours?" Cecil took it slowly, and his eye searched the man's face. "You picked it up."

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