A SONG STORY.

Two little friendless children, tiny waifs of a great city, struggling hard to earn their daily bread.

Nelly, a timid little maiden, with slender, graceful limbs and a wealth of waving golden hair—just the kind of child a fond mother would love to have nestling at her side and clasping her dainty, childish garments. But Nellie had no mother, no home—no tender, loving hand to smooth her tangled curls. Her home was a garret in a London slum, and her mother died that years ago, when Nellie was a tiny thing of only two, and now her only friend was a ragtoll little Irish lad, who had his merry dark eyes and laughing face, that were her heart more than a year ago, when into Nellie's sad, lonely life came sunshine in the shape of a little boy, regarded the sweet faced little girl with a tender chivalry which was very quaint and winsome, and which often evoked amused comments from the passersby.

They were always together in their leisure hours. In summer time the little orphans might be seen wandering side by side in the public parks or seated quietly in some out of the way place, with their curls and the golden head nestled close together, while Nellie told wondrous stories to her young little friend of a land far, far away, childish treble, fragments of the hymns she had learned at the mission school.

Mike never tired of listening and would lay again and again for "just one more," the dark eyes growing wide and radiant as Nellie spoke of the streets of gold and of the joys which awaited the children in "the kingdom called home."

"Shure we get there, we get there, Nellie?" he questioned eagerly one day. "Do you know the way?"

Nellie shook her head a little sadly.

"We can't find out the way until we die, Mike, dear. Then an angel with a golden crown will come and take our hand and show us the way."

Mike's dusky face grew grave.

"I wish we could go, Nellie—yot and me," he whispered. "You know I sing there, Nellie, without policemen telling us to move on, couldn't you?" Then suddenly, as a new thought occurred, "Then you'll be no policemen there, Nellie, will shure?"

Another shake of the golden head.

"Oh no—not, Mike. There'll be no need of them. Everybody's good and happy up there, Oh, Mike, think of it!" clapping her thin little hands in an ecstasy of delight, "flowers all a-growin and a-blossomin; roses and lilies that never fade! Oh, doesn't it all seem too good to be true?"

Mike nodded his little colleague's shining eyes and radiant face and felt a strange shaking at his heart as he noticed how fragile the little form in his arms was and heard the short, quick cough which came from the pale lips ever and anon. Was Nellie going to die and leave him he wondered vaguely. Ah, how dreary life would be without her! A quick sob rose in his throat, and he brushed his small, rough hand across his eyes hastily.

All that night Nellie's little wan face haunted him, banishing sleep from his eyes. Long ago, as he lay upon the hard heap of straw which formed his bed, a brilliant idea entered his crafty head. Nellie must go to the sea. He had heard of wonderful cures which a change of air had wrought. There was Tim, the lame boy, at the end of the court—why, he had not been like the same child since that three weeks' visit to Margate. And old Joe, the shoemaker, was never tired of telling how the fresh, pure air had made a new man of him. Yes, Nellie must certainly go to the sea, and he, Mike, must find the money. The idea settled, he fell asleep.

Early and late the little fellow toiled, carefully husbanding every halfpenny he could save, running errands, sweeping crossings, selling papers, counting on later on much which brought an addition to his treasured hoard.

Meanwhile the bright summer days smiled into autumn, the sunshine faded, to give place to chilling winds and damp mists. All this did not tend to improve Nellie's health. A bright spot of vivid color burned on the white face, and the blue eyes shone with unnatural brilliancy.

Mike noted the change with great satisfaction.

"You're getting such a rosy face, Nelly!" he ventured shyly, "and your eyes shine like two big stars. There'll be no end of street lamps soon," he added, with true Irish gallantry.

Nellie smiled the sweet, patient smile which Mike loved so dearly. She would let him do by telling of the sleepless nights and worrying anxiety, of the cough shifly feeling at her heart and the weary aching of her wasted limbs.

With that divine unselfishness which characterizes some natures, she bewildered enough to hide from him the true state of affairs and would trip up to her lofty attic after night, to think, weak as she was, they both loved so well.

One cold winter night, when the snow was softly falling, Nellie passed into the silence with a pure white smile, Mike crept to the cold familiar corner to bear yet once again the old sweet story.

Clear and bright were Nellie's blue eyes, and softly her low voice rose and fell as she told in tender accents of the "pearl and flowers and the golden threshold where children come always to play." And sweeter than flowers and the golden threshold where children come always to play." And sweeter than flowers and the golden threshold where children come always to play." And sweeter than