

if by accident, making handy use of their elbows and fists, while avoiding pretended tumbings upon us; and this became so threatening that the collector's stick was called into effective use. Then some rotten garbage fell softly upon us; and this was followed by a well-directed discharge of cinders and ashes. Coals could not be spared, or our situation would have proven exceedingly restive.

Then the women of the court began edging up to us with crooned commiserations for our prisoners. They landed their integrity; deplored their misfortunes; and decried the sad spectacle of such fine folk being "worried for a beggarly bit of rent." Mr. Evans remaining unmoved, they suddenly became hysterical with abuse; shrieking unprintable maledictions and anathemas until, in a frenzy of sorrowful indignity, they bared their scraggy breasts and besought us to strike them down, as they were sure we were brutes enough to do; supplementing this by entreating us to murder their "hissant hoffsprings afore their heyes," the said skinny mites of misery being held out to us for that beneficent operation.

The imperturbable Mr. Evans, in an "aside" to quiet my own rising trepidation, whispered, "the cows 'as no 'arm in 'em;" and quietly taking a metal whistle from his waistcoat pocket gave it a significant movement to his lips, following this with the soothing remark: "Ladies, Hi 'ates to summon the pollis!" whereupon every one of the mob scampered away to her respective habitation. Final negotiations in this cesspool of filth and degradation resulted in serving two notices to quit, a week's full payment for one tenant, solemn promises and tears from others, and a sixpence ha'penny from a blind female beggar who swore, to strengthen her excuses, that she had lost her dog, the latter making a farewell vicious assault upon Mr. Evans' heels in proof of her misfortune and probity.

It was now nearly noon and we were gradually reaching the more open districts, though it seemed characteristic of all tenements entered that the same huddling and crowding of humans, the same want and squalor, the same filth and ignorance, the same sudden indifference to the least of life's decencies and the same universal addiction to the curse of drink existed as are true in the worst sections of Cheapside, Shore-ditch, Whitechapel and the Minories. Attempts at decoration and cleanliness, where in exceptional cases cheap prints adorned the walls and the tiny living rooms were fairly habitable from even occasional application of soap and water, though the meanest necessities of life were wanting, were rare; because frowned down by the vicious majority who seem merely to live to drink and drink to live. We found one place that had been completely wrecked because the offending family had dared put a bit of cheap muslin over the window. "This a settin' theersel's hup o'er their neighbors 'ad to be mad" a hexample on!" The daily tragedies of lives with better aspirations, yet forced by want to this inconceivable deadening and hopeless association, was a thousand times revealed to me this day.

In one adobe where we called for rent four naked children lay huddled in a corner of the bare room under a handful of rags, because the last clothing

from their bodies had been pawned for drink. The father came home often enough and remained long enough to beat the mother and snatch some utensil, scrap of clothing or bit of furniture and run away with it for drink. "Wat's a body to do with such houtlaws?" groaned the collector. "This place 'asut paid the missuses a penny'orth's rent in a twelvemonth!" At a rag fair near I got for less than a shilling, garments enough to cover their nakedness; for another shilling, left them more food than they had devoured in a fortnight; and on lines of friendship compelled Mr. Evans then and there, while denominating me various species of "hasses," to receipt a month's advance rent for the filthy coop, against that much chance for a family's life in the world's metropolis. As the mother came running home from cleaning foul cast off boots in a near mouldy booth, she shrieked over her good fortune as though the coffers of the bank of England had been poured in her lap; and the neighborhood was set awirl by the mite of charity as though a fire or a murder was in progress.

A few gypsy families were encountered. Every one paid promptly. Groups of costers, huddled in genial communistic fashion, invariably badgered Mr. Evans with promises of jolly beatings, but finally paid, leaving him for the time scathless and whole. At various places the badinage was fearful: and at no place did we fail to receive sarcastic inquiries as to whether we were "howdashus" enough to regard them as "dooks," "ludmayors" and the like, coupled with still wittier requests for the loan of anything from a "thrip'enny bit" to a "bod" or a "quid." In one house we encountered a child actually dying in its bed from consumption. Its mother, who sold vegetables, had placed an unfilled prescription from the parish doctor in its listless hand, as excuse against the collector's call. I left something else there, but the child was too far gone to even smile its thanks. And so, on and on through a day's, to me a year's, indescribable of life hopelessness and despair, until the very last place on the collector's day's list was reached.

"No trouble 'ere!" said Mr. Evans gaily, as a skinny hand reached through the broken pane of a basement window with the amount due and was withdrawn the instant the receipt was placed within it. I thought differently, descended the stairs and pushed into the foul basement room.

"Don't, don't sir!" a voice pitifully pleaded. "They re not always that way, sir!"

The whole story, such a one as the master, Dickens, was wont to so thrillingly tell, was instantly revealed. There on the dank concrete floor lay two hideous objects, father and mother, swollen almost purple, and insensible, from drink. The speaker was a dwarf girl with hump back and huge head; skinny, white, horrible. She kept this homeless home together by working day and night at chopping up old barrels and boxes for "kindlers," getting beatings instead of food; even keeping the beasts of parents in drink; and with such bravery, sacrifice, patience and terror, as we of better fortune can never know, living the hell-life dauntless and true. Bruises and lashings showed on her head, neck and arms as she

looked up scared and pleading. I was two half crowns worse, or better, off for this pitiful sight. She clutched them tigerishly in her hands; then cuddled them against her breast as a mother might a new-found child that had been lost; then she fell upon her hatchet and kindlers in a strange looking heap; and, as I rejoined Mr. Evans—who was still varying his species of objurgational "hasses," in view of my "soft" conduct—and we turned towards the awakening city lights. I heard this brave little dwarf setting forth upon a, to her, before unknown journey within the human region of grateful sobs and tears.

EDGAR L. WAKEMAN.

OUR STOCKHOLM LETTER.

STOCKHOLM, June 16.—[Special].—When you, my readers, are looking through this letter, Dr. Nansen will probably be on his way to the North pole.

A prominent journalist, who interviewed him the other day at his home in Lysaker, near Christiania, writes about his visit as follows:

Dr. Nansen met me at the depot. He told me that he had given up smoking and drinking entirely, in order to train himself for the impending hardship. Nansen's wife is a petite, lively woman of dark complexion, who loves sport no less than her husband.

"His study is furnished with rare old furniture. On a large antique table a type-writing machine and bundles of papers and manuscript were to be found. There were also letters from all parts of the world, from people who wanted to participate in his expedition. There was a letter written by a French lady, who was tired of life and intended to enter a convent, but believed it would be better and more prudent to 'strike out' for the North pole.

"The bread which will be the principal nourishments of Nansen and his people during the expedition is a kind of biscuits, large and round, white and very compact. The ration of each man is to consist of four biscuits a day. Silk will be used as the most suitable material for tents, as it shuts out the cold better than anything else.

"The cabin of 'Frem' (Forward) is heated by means of an English petroleum stove, which consumes three liters of petroleum a day. As the explorer has taken along with him a sufficient supply of this fuel to last him eight or nine years, there will be no lack of heating material.

The library of the expedition consists of 1000 books, half of which are scientific works and the other half novels, poetry, etc. The crew of the ship numbers twelve men, who together will occupy the cabin, which measures only thirteen feet square. Here they are going to dwell, eat and work. Nansen intends to take his type-writing machine along, as he believes that his eyes will be strained less if he omits using a pen during the long and dark days.

Each one of the crew, as well as the explorer himself, will wear a certain kind of suit which cannot be penetrated by water.

A NEW JENNY LIND IN PARIS.

Siri Lind is the nom d'artiste under which a young Swedish songstress has made her successful debut in Paris. Her real name is Gertrude Sparman, and