THE DAY'S EARNINGS.

"*THE CROSSING-SWEEPER*" (*p.* 353).

what made his little dairymaid so dreamy and absent-minded, she was thinking all the while about Queen Mab and her little playmates. And in the summer-time and the autumn she would look for the scarlet pimpernel, and when she saw how fair it was, and how prettily it folded its blossom in the evening, she wondered whether Prince Pimpernel were fit for Fairyland yet, —it could not be long, at any rate, before his time would be come. Some people would have told her it was only a senseless weed, but Kitty would have shaken her head at that. She could show them how the pimpernel knew more than mortals—how it could tell when the shower was coming long before the first drop fell, so that the shepherd-boy knew by its folded petals that the weather would be wet, and gave it the name of "Shepherd's Weather-glass." Oh, yes; they might call it a weed if they chose, but Kitty knew that there was a living spirit in the little flower.

And once, when the captain asked her where she went to when she ran away from Mrs. Gubbins, she told him all about it—how the fairies had carried her away, and what wonderful countries she had seen.

The captain said "Fiddlesticks!"

But Kitty knew better.

THE END.

"'HOWEVER DID YOU FIND YOUR WAY HERE?'" (*p.* 352).

SOME LITTLE ONES OF THE STREET.

VI.—THE CROSSING-SWEEPER.

"NO, I ain't made as much as that, 'cos I've only been on for about an hour, but I shall make more afore I've done. People pays more for keeping their shoes from getting dirty than they will for cleanin' of 'em when they *are* dirty."

"Yes, but then I don't see as what you do helps much to keep 'em clean. 'Taint as though you took a real muddy crossin' where there wasn't no cart as came round to sweep the street. The parish is what does your work, and you only keeps a broom for a sign, and scratches the road with it when anybody's a-lookin'. However, the more mud you *don't* sweep away the more boots come to me to be cleaned, p'r'aps, so nothink's lost between us."

This was a funny conversation to overhear as one stood at the corner of a pleasant street at the Surrey side of the Thames putting down one's umbrella after a smart shower of bright spring rain. At first it might have seemed as though the two boys were working in a partnership, and that the sweeper was ready to give a sly touch with his muddy broom to the boot of anybody who did not give him a penny as they crossed the road from the corner where the omnibus set down passengers.

This would have been very dishonest—even more dishonest than sweeping a crossing that required no sweeping, as an excuse for begging for pence. I dare say young Tim Doolan doesn't think it dishonest. You can see by his face in our picture that he hasn't the look of a bad boy, but he is very ignorant, has never been taught much at the ragged school, and cannot be caught by the Board School visitors, and taken off to learn to read and write.

As to a home, poor little Tim Doolan has no home. His father disappeared from the court in Bermondsey where they used to live, years ago, his mother, who sometimes earns a shilling or two in the Borough Market, spends most of her earnings in drink, and is nearly always quarrelling with her neighbours.

How does poor Tim live then? you will ask. Suppose we let him tell his own story, as he stands here, a funny-looking figure, dressed in a suit of clothes that must a long time ago have belonged to a little man, and are still so much too large for Tim, that the trousers are tucked up almost to the patched knees, and the arms of the tattered tail coat have been cut short to allow him to get his hands outside them, and clutch the handle of the rough broom with which he "scratches the road," as his friend the shoeblack says.

"Me? Oh, I don't live nowhere partickler, excep' when mother's at home; and I haven't got nowhere else to go but Blueman's Court, by the tan-yard.

"If I was bigger, per'aps I might get a job o' work at the tan-yard. Mostly in the summer I sleeps out, becos of course I go down to the Derby downs at Epsom on the race-day, and earns good money wot with turnin' cart-wheels in the road for coppers. Look here, sir!"

(And Tim balances himself on his broom, flings his heels up in the air, and curves over sideways, coming down on his feet on the other side, and all his rags seeming as though they would fly off him.)

"That's what I does on the road leadin' to Epsom when I take my broom; but if not, why I turns cart-wheels on my hands; or else I saves up to buy a couple o' whisks, and tramps down ready to brush the dust off the gents' coats when they get there in the mornin' to see the races. I went down one year to pick up the sticks for a man as keeps a Aunt Sally an' a coker-nut shy; but I was too little, they said, becos I couldn't help cryin' a bit when the sticks caught me on the legs, as some of the fellers that shied tried to make 'em do.

"In the autumn I've been hoppin' along with mother and a lot of others—hop-pickin', you know, in the gardens right in the country; and that's prime, 'cos you get reg'lar meals, though the smell of the hops does make you so precious hungry. Other times, I sleep where I can—mostly either in the Borough Market, or else in a cart or a waggon under one of the sheds in the Borough where they put up at night, next door to one of the old yards that belongs to the inns what used to be for people to stop at. Do I get on pretty well at crossin'-sweepin'? Yes, a good deal better than anythink else that I'm let to do. The police won't let me do much, and what with the road-sweepers, and what with them that has a reg'lar crossing of their own, it ain't easy to find a place to stand at; but I've got one here where nobody interferes with me, and where it ain't often that much sweepin 's wanted; and it's mostly ladies that comes across, some of 'em going to church, or else to chapel; and they're many of 'em good for a penny, and some even gives me twopence, so as I can often make a shillin' or eighteen pence some evenin's.

"Do I turn cart-wheels on my crossin'? No, I should think not. The way is when you see somebody comin' to begin sweeping like mad, right and left, so as you get to the curbstone, while yer making of a bow with your hand, just as the party coming along is goin' to step into the road. If they don't give yer nothing, you keeps on in front of 'em with yer hand to yer forrud, and a'most trippin' of 'em up with yer broom. If they orders you off, you lean down on yer broom like I'm doing now, and makes a low bow and grins if it's a gentleman, when he's pretty sure to laugh and fling you a copper; and if it's a lady, you looks serious, as though you wouldn't ha' thought she could ha' been so hard with you. Here comes a lady, sir—I'll show you."

A pleasant-looking lady is approaching, and about to cross the street, and almost before I can look round, Tim Doolan is in the middle of the roadway flourishing his broom with such vigour, that we would think he had been sent by the parish on purpose to clear a path for her. The lady hasn't a penny ready, and I fancy Tim will fail this time; but he contrives to keep just in front and a little on one side, but without touching her dress.

As he trots along he crouches before her in such a way, that his face seems to look up at her from under the hand which he keeps to his forehead; and it is such a nice appealing face—for Tim is a pretty boy—that the lady can't help looking at it, though it is a rather dirty one; and presently she says, "What a tiresome boy you are!" and stops and opens a little bag which she carries, and finds a penny. But Tim Doolan knows his business. He doesn't rush forward and make a snatch at the penny. He doesn't even hold out his hand; but he steps back, and stands waiting quite patiently with a comical look of persuasion on his face. The lady holds out a penny, and Tim comes forward quite slowly and holds out his hand, making a bow that brings his head almost down to the patch on his knee. Then the lady asks him some question, and he replies with

a smile. They have quite a conversation together; and by the time Tim comes back to the corner he is twopence richer, for another penny has been found for him.

"What did she say to you?" asks Dick, the shoeblack.

"Oh, asked me if I went to school, which I said I did when I could—an' that's true; but not to the Board School. The Board School ain't for them like me. It's too respectable, and it don't purwide no brekfus' nor yet dinner, an' I've got to find wittles and lodgin' for myself, so I don't belong nowhere partickler; and the Board beadle he don't get hold o' me, nor yet plenty more, I can tell you."

It isn't pleasant to hear Tim Doolan talk like this. He is one of the boys who live anyhow and anywhere—the Children of the Streets—who have no home worth calling a home; who are untaught, unclothed, often unfed, and almost uncared for. It makes me afraid, to hear Tim talk in this sharp manner. I fear that his cunning will lead him into mischief: for there are people in the neighbourhood where he is supposed to live who will be quite ready to teach him, if they can persuade him to live with them. They will teach him to lie and swear and steal, and some morning he may be taken before a magistrate, who will send him to school—to a prison school or an industrial school—where he will be among other boys who have been taught to lie and swear and steal, and have lived in the streets, and slept in waggons, and on the stone seats upon the bridges, and under railway-arches.

"Well, Tim, but wouldn't you like to go to school and to learn something better than pretending to sweep crossings?"

"I should rather think I should, sir, 'specially if I could get a v'yge to sea. You see, sir, they won't keep me at the workus 'cos they know mother, and she won't go in, or else I'd 'a' been on board the *Go-liar* (he meant *Goliath*) ship, where they takes the parish boys. I know one of 'em. He went to the workus when his father was chucked out of a upper floor warehouse in Tooley Street, and broke his neck; and now he's aboard the *Go-liar*, and right down the river, and soon he expects to go a reg'lar voy'ge to somewheres."

"Tim, would you go to school and stay there long enough to be sent on board another ship like the *Goliath*, along with about sixty other boys, and be taught a trade as well as to be a sailor?"

"Only you just try me; but you're not likely to give me a chance."

"Yes, Tim, if you'll meet me to-morrow at the place that I will write on this card, I think I can promise you something shall be done, and we may make you a tailor as well as a sailor, and perhaps a sail-maker, too."

It doesn't take long to explain to Tim where the place is at which I promise to meet him on the following day, and bidding the boys good-bye, I go on my way.

At twelve o'clock next day I see Tim without his broom, and with his face and hands as clean as a washing in one of the fountains in Trafalgar Square, and drying them on his cap, can make them, waiting for me in Queen Street, near Holborn. There is a home there: a Home for the Children of the Street—a home for destitute and homeless boys—where, so long as they have money to keep poor children, and to teach them, the managers do not turn away any who are friendless and lost.

They did not turn away Tim Doolan. A month afterwards I saw him in a comfortable jacket and trousers and stout shoes, helping to cook the beef and potatoes and pudding, for a dinner at which the boys and girls from other homes were to be present.

The last time I saw him he was standing in the shrouds of a great ship moored in the river at Greenhithe. He was bigger, stronger, stouter, and dressed in blue trousers aud serge shirt. The name of the ship was the *Arethusa*, and Tim was one of the dozen boys who had won prizes at the ship school.

But our little friend had done more than that. He had become an expert swimmer, and had jumped overboard after one of his shipmates who fell out of a boat. Tim dived after him, and brought him up from under the boat, and then swam with him till he could get hold of a rope that was thrown to them.

For this act of courage Tim has a silver medal, which he wears outside his blue shirt.

There he is—his eyes twinkling with fun and good humour—as he and his companions, sixty of them together, see our steamer coming—and all sing together—

"Hearts of oak are our ships,
Hearts of oak are our men!
Ready, ay, ready!
Steady, boys, steady!
We'll fight and we'll conquer again and again."

I hope none of them will have to fight, except against idleness and falsehood, and cowardice, and meanness. For those are the enemies who are always so ready to injure and destroy, not only the Little Ones of the Street, but every child and man and woman who is not ready to take a true brave part in the world. THOMAS ARCHER.