

# HIGHLAND PARK NEWS-LETTER

Volume 17.

HIGHLAND PARK, ILLINOIS, DECEMBER 24, 1904.

Number 4.

## "For Thine Is the Kingdom"

IN a dim vague way Tony may have known that there were other things that made up the lives of eight-year-old boys beside getting up in the dark of even the morning of the longest day in the year, putting on a few ragged clothes, eating some scraps of food and then walking through several miles of mean squalid streets to the great printing house where the papers were given out. He may have known that there were boys of eight years old who went to places called schools on week days and to places called churches on Sundays. He may have known that there were fathers who cared for their boys and mothers who cuddled them.

Perhaps he had dim visions of once having been crooned to sleep on somebody's breast.—Who can tell! But ever since Tony could toddle about under the weight of a bundle of papers he had walked the streets all day long calling out, "Here's yer morning pipers! Morning pipers! Extry," or, "Evening pipers!" And this he did for the padrone who owned him and with whom he lived.

Tony was a tiny boy even for his age, and he had a pair of big black eyes shaded by long silky lashes. He had soft lips and a smile that was as sweet as about his face. His teeth were white, strong and even and his lips were red.

The padrone's wife not only realized the beauty of the boy but instinctively felt the sweetness of his nature and so in her rude way she made life easier for him; that is, in winter she found him the warmest corner in the crowded room to huddle down and sleep in and for him she reserved the safest place on the roof on torrid summer nights. Then she saved him by a hundred womanly devices from her husband, the padrone's wrath when he came home after his day of dogging the footsteps of his little white slaves.

Strange to relate Tony's boy companions in misery felt no jealousy and aided the woman in her efforts to protect the child. This was because Tony had good will in his heart; a good will that was so much a part of his nature that he knew nothing about it, for he had no thought that his kindness or gentleness would bring him reward, mind you. Tony was not in the least what could be called a saintly child. To begin with if "Cleanliness is next to Godliness" the little lad would have had no possible chance, for he had no use, save to quench thirst, for water. Then Tony swore as freely as he talked. Indeed, most of the English words that he knew were oaths. Tony was an adept little thief, and if you had asked him what truth was he would have looked at you with his big beautiful eyes and smiled and given the quid of tobacco in his red mouth another chew. But Tony had natural virtues. He never quarreled, he was generous and

LAURA DAYTON FESSENDEN

Illustrated by Ben Cohen

always eager to be kindly and helpful to the girls and boys who were his companions in slavery. He was never weary of fetching and carrying for the padrone's wife and for all his sinning Tony had never been held by the law as a juvenile offender.

The padrone, knowing the value of Tony's pretty face, had in the beginning of the boy's newspaper selling career stationed him at the entrance of one of the railroad depots where every day hundreds and thousands of suburbanites came in and went



"Once in royal David's city"

out of the busy city. The women instinctively found it convenient to patronize this small vender of daily news, and busy men with the remembrance of their own boys and girls strong within them would toss the boy a coin "for keeps," and Tony would "blow and spit upon it for good luck" before he put the nickel or dime in some safe spot among his rags to add to the padrone's revenue at the day's close.

Next to the padrone's wife, Tony's most intimate friend was the policeman whose beat had been for years at the station crossing. He was a gray, grim, stout old fellow, who looked as if he couldn't smile,

and who could wonder when he had to shout to drivers of teams and rescue rash people from being

run down by trolley cars all day long? The policeman's name was Tom Callihan. Every morning he said to Tony, "Hello Dago!" and Tony would reply, "Hello yourself!" I doubt if for two years and more any other conversation had been exchanged between them until the day when in the midst of one of those jams and crushes that sometimes congest the heavy traffic at a railroad center there was mingled with the uproar a shrill yelp, and then emerging from the crush came Tony with a seemingly dead cur puppy in his arms. He carried it into a dark corner of the baggage room and laying it on the ground, ran and brought water which with no ungentle touch he forced into the shut mouth. Then from his ragged little sleeves he tore strips of cloth and bound up the gaping, bleeding wound in the dog's side. While he was still busy at his work Tom Callihan, who had seen the rescue, came in and stood watching. When the child had done all in his power for the poor beast and was kneeling beside the dumb creature in silent pity, the policeman spoke.

"He ain't no good, little Dago," he said gruffly, "an' you'll get licked for wastin' yer shirt on him. See if yer don't!"

Tony lifted his big black eyes to Tom Callihan's face as he replied: "I could nothing do but getta him he—he—yella so—so damn like he was little Dago lika me, so I feel, lika hella in here," and Tony laid one dirty hand upon his heart.

"Humph," said Tom Callihan. Then he took out his red bandana handkerchief and blew such a blast upon it that it sounded like a bugle horn, but he said something to the men in the baggage room that resulted in a bed being made for the little dog and in it the poor bruised creature lay for many days, sheltered, fed and caressed.

Every spare moment that Tony could find in his long, busy day he spent with Varni, for so he named his only possession, and it was not long before Varni adored the boy that had saved his life. And as soon as he grew strong enough to stand on his feet Varni began to make himself useful. He caught rats and mice in the baggage room after business hours and the rest of the time he stood close to Tony's side. The little ragged boy and the little ragged dog came to be considered by the passers-by as partners.

Among the throng that came through the great entrance door of the station one morning there was a man of the sort that Tony knew as a "swell," and he held by the hand a little girl. "Pipers," called Tony. "Morning pipers."

"Oh!" cried the little girl; "what a dear, dear