

it, or fire the whole outfit; there's plenty of kids."

"But you see, brother," our dear old "Boss" replied "They're all just boys"—and for him that covered a multitude of sins—"It'd kill Dingus' mother for him to lose his place, and Mike's mother, too, may be; I'll talk to them, though."

It was a week before he found time to talk with them, and then—Well the next day "the little mother of Dingus" as "the scribbler" named her at first sight; came to the store. It was the first time she had been there and I'm afraid we all stared. She slipped quietly in and asked at the door for Willie Marks.

It was then that we saw Dingus smile—a smile that made his ugly old face look like a child's, till we thought him almost beautiful. He took her in—it was against the rules, but no one thought of that—and gave her his stool, while he stood by her with his arms about her neck and sometimes brushed her hair softly. We wondered as we looked if this were our wild Dingus.

Bye and bye he brought her to the office to see Mr. Stoker. The look in her large child-like eyes went straight to our hearts. "The scribbler" jumped down off his stool and offered her a chair as if she were a princess. The office somehow grew so quiet while she sat there waiting, that we were half glad when Mr. Stoker came to take her into his private office. We could hear part of what he said, but not one throb of her low, soft voice reached us, and we heard it only when she said to Dingus as she put her hand on his shoulder "Come, my boy." She gave us a timid half smile out of tear blinded eyes as she passed us and went on down the stairs with Dingus. After that we said "the little mother of Dingus" often and "the scribbler" made no comment.

We wondered the next morning when Dingus was not there, and finally asked Mr. Stoker, though "the scribbler" said "women were such curious creatures," but Mr. Stoker did not hear.

It was Uncle Bob that told me when he came in to empty the waste basket that evening.

"Willie Marks is sick, Miss, been sick a long time. Them fellers kicked him down one night and he's been lame ever since, you see. And his mother told me yisterday that he can't work no more and the doctor says he can't cure him ever. It's that Miss, that"—And he picked up the basket and went down the stairs shaking his head.

A few days later a new young man stood behind Dingus' counters and smirked at the pretty girls. We did not know his name, so we waited for "the scribbler" to get him classified. We missed Dingus, missed his quickness and agility and missed him anyway we found, because we had all come to like him so, as Uncle Bob had done first of all. Every once in a while he told us of Dingus.

"He's been down abed now, Miss, and his little hands are soft as a baby's.

"His mother is like an angel, and when she sings soft to him, he lies so still.

"He wants ter see you, Miss, won't you let me show you the way tonight?"

And so I went to see Dingus, and after that often. Sometimes Uncle Bob went along, sometimes Mr. Stoker, but once the "scribbler" offered his services—"A beastly region of the town, you know."

But Dingus' home was clean, if it was up five flights of dark stairs, and the sun-light lingered all day by the window where he sat sometimes. He could not frisk about now, only his thin white hands kept moving all the time, till "the scribbler" just for luck, he said, bought some wonderful colored building blocks, which could make a "hundred mansions of palatial dimensions." With these Dingus played and with the paper work the girls at the ribbon counter sent him. But he liked best to whittle with the wonderful knife Mike and the other boys bought one day, and brought to him in a body.

Always the little mother of Dingus was there, pale, with often now, that tear blind-