

A FREE SEAT.

He was old and poor, and a stranger
In the great metropolis ;
And as he bent his feeble steps
To a stately edifice,
Outside he enquires, "What Church is this?"
"Church of Christ," he heard them say,
"Ah ! just the place I'm looking for ;
I trust He is here to-day."

He passed through the spacious columned door,
And up the carpeted aisle,
And, as he passed, on many a face
He saw surprise and smile.
From pew to pew, up one side aisle,
Then across the broad front space,
From pew to pew down the other side,
He walked with the same slow pace.

Not a friendly voice had bid him sit
To listen to Gospel truth :
Not a sign of respect had been paid
To the aged one by youth.
No door was opened by generous hand
(The pews were paid for—rented) ;
And though a stranger, old and poor,
Not a heart to him relented.

As he paused outside a moment to think,
Then again passed into the street,
Up to his shoulder he lifted a stone
That lay in the dust at his feet,
And bore it up the broad grand aisle
In front of the ranks and pews ;
Choosing a place to see and to hear,
He made it a seat for his use.

Calmly sitting upon the huge stone,
Folding his hands on his knees,
Quietly reviewing the worshippers,
A great confusion he sees.
Many a cheek is crimsoned with shame,
Some whisper together low,
And wish they had been more courteous
To the poor man they did not know.

As if by magic some fifty doors
Open instantaneously,
And as many seats and books and hands
Were proffered hastily.
Changing his stone for a cushioned seat,
And wiping a tear away,
He thinks it was a mistake, after all,
And that Christ came late that day.