

himself, and turned to look at his mother. She was still gazing before her, in that curious, absent way, as though she scarcely heard.

Then all the people stood up, and she took Jack by the hand, and hurried him out of church.

"They're all comin' out now," she said, as soon as they got outside; "we'd best get out of the way."

CHAPTER II.

"Did ye ever hear the like o' that, mother?" said Jack, when they had both slackened their pace a little. "I never known there was such a beautiful place anywheres as he talked about. Do ye know what king it is? Couldn't we go?"

"I reckon he wouldn't let us in, Jack."

"Nay, but didn't ye hear the gentleman say as he'd let in even little 'uns like me, if only they'd try and please him. Oh, mother! do 'ee let us go! May-be some one 'ud tell us where it is."

"I never heard of any king as was beautiful," she answered, thoughtfully, in that dense ignorance of the London poor scarcely to be imagined by those who have never come in contact with it. "We've got a queen, you see, and not a king, so it can't be in this land."

"But the gentleman 'ud tell us where 'twas."

"Aye, but we couldn't ask him"

"I could! Only fancy, mother! *never* hungry, *never* thirsty, *never* cold!" cried Jack, excitedly, "That's what he said, and you'd never cry no more, mother. Oh, do 'ee let us ask some one the way, and where it is. I know if we could only get a sight of the King it 'ud be all right. Don't ye mind how good the gentleman said He was, and so beautiful. Oh, mother, I *wish* we could see 'un!"

"Aye," she said, with quiet hopelessness, "that would be fine, Jack."

"Why didn't we never go to church afore?"

"I didn't know as they wouldn't turn us out if we tried."

"And you never been inside one?" continued Jack, thoughtfully.

"I was in one when I was married."

"Do ye think father knew anything about the King?"

"No, I doubt he didn't, Jack, or he wouldn't ha' died."

The tears gathered slowly in her eyes as she spoke. If it were true, if they could have only known where the good King was, He would have saved him perhaps. But she did not say anything. The poor are so used to suffering of all kinds. Suffering had made her incredulous, too, of any great good.

But to Jack it was otherwise. His mind harped constantly on one subject—if he could only see the King! Everything would be right if he could only see the beautiful King. Never hungry, never thirsty, never cold, never feeling any pain, he kept repeating over to himself, as he pattered along with his little, sore, frost-bitten feet on the icy pavement. Day after day the thought seemed to grow stronger in his mind, and often and often he talked it over with his mother. Not that she believed in the whole thing much, but it pleased the child to talk about it.

"You was servant in a jeweller's shop once, wasn't you?" he asked, one day

"Yes, afore I was married."

"Did you ever see an ammy—something?"

"Amethyst?" she said, "yes often; they're clear, shining, purple stones."

"Oh, aye!" said Jack, his eyes sparkling; "fancy a wall all trimmed wi' 'em, mother, mustn't that be fine? and the street below all gold! Why, I never had a bit of gold in my life, and the streets is all made of it, and great, big pearls for gates; and never hungry, never cold, and never have bad hands and feet any more. Oh, mother! I do wish we could find out where it is! I know the King 'ud let us in."

By Jack's wish they went many times to the dark corner in the church, but they never heard the pale, earnest preacher, or the words about the King again; and poor little Jack cried for disappointment at last. "We shall never see 'un," he said, "if there's no one to tell us the way."

(To be continued.)