

"I don't know; I never been in a church to service, as I can remember."

"Let's go," suggested Jack, numb, but enterprising.

"Bless you, they wouldn't let the likes of us in; why, it's for rich folks."

At this moment they passed by the door of a large, lighted church. Some one later than the rest was just going in; as she pushed the swinging-door softly open, the light and warmth streamed out into the porch, and beyond, on to the pavement.

"Let's go in," urged Jack again, under his breath, pulling at his mother's gown; "you see it ain't too late, and it's bitter cold out here."

"It is bitter cold!" she echoed; and more from apathy and misery than from any desire to see what was inside, she followed the boy up the steps.

He was going to push the door open, but she stopped him.

"Look here," she said, "we can go round this side way; it ain't so light, and no one'll see us if we sit right behind."

So they made their way noiselessly along a little passage which opened on the aisle at the back of the church. Next the wall was a seat running all the way along, and on this they both sat down, no one noticing them, except a little girl, who stared very hard at Jack, who was rather an apparition, with his uncombed hair, and ragged trowsers, and bare feet.

They were in a little dark corner, behind a pillar, but they could see almost the whole of the church; and it was "so warm and comfortable" near the hot-water pipes, that Jack's heart glowed within him.

"Ain't this first-rate?" he whispered.

But his mother didn't hear. She was gazing dreamily before her, apparently recollecting something. All the rest of the congregation were kneeling, but these two never noticed it. Only when they all rose from their knees, his mother said to Jack, "I guess we ought to have knelt down like other folks."

"Never mind!" said Jack, with superficial philosophy, "nobody seed us, so it don't matter."

The first notes of the organ pealed out, and

rang up among the arches. Jack sat entranced. He had never heard anything like that before in his life. When his mother stood up with the rest of the congregation, he stood up too, but he did not know what he was doing.

The boys' clear voices rose fresh and ringing, and all the congregation took up the strain. Jack and his mother had no hymn book, but that was just as well, as they could neither of them read.

Jack listened eagerly for the words, to hear what it was they were all singing about. At first he couldn't make out; then all the people round began to sing, he caught some of the words. It was something about somebody—

"Walking sadly life's hard way,
Homeless, weary, sighing, weeping,
Over sin and Satan's sway."

He didn't know anything about the last, but "homeless," "weary," "walking sadly," why, that was just like him and his mother! Who could it be? Listening intently, in eager wonderment, he heard almost all the rest, with the exception of a few words, but it was all such jumble about a glorious king and a very poor man, that he couldn't understand it; yet the beauty and pathos of it touched him almost more than he knew.

Then all the congregation knelt down again, and Jack knelt down too, this time, the stone feeling very cold through the hole in the knee of his trowsers.

When he got up again he saw a man standing up in a place raised above the heads of the congregation.

"What's yon he's stood up in?" he inquired.

"Hush," his mother answered; "it's a pulpit. You listen; he's going to talk."

He did "talk" too. He was a young man, not more than five-and-thirty, with a pale, pure face, and eyes that had a wonderful fire and earnestness in them.

The ladies leaned back while he spoke, as if they liked it indeed, but were quite accustomed to it. To Jack, on the contrary, it was like a dream. The light and the warmth, and the beautiful dresses, and the rich, ringing, searching voice of the preacher thrilling through the building.

(Continued in our next number.)