

"Am I cold? Am I a jibberin' ice-'ouse floatin' in an Arctic sea?"

The Bass was feeling in his pockets for some coppers, which were not forthcoming.

"Look here," he said suddenly, "come into the cathedral with me; it's warm in there at least."

The scarecrow came nearer and put one shaking hand on the young man's cuff.

"Sy, will the bloke tackle the ivories? Will he ply?"

"Why, yes, it's practice night; I dare say you can stay if you promise to be quiet."

"Sure, Mike; forge ahead!" and the two went on.

The cathedral was dimly lighted; the Gothic arches looked dim, and distant, and mysterious. The few lights in the chancel only served to emphasize its dimensions, and the organ was muttering out a pedal prelude that echoed somewhere in the darkness like the lost voice of the Bass.

The young man settled his charge near a register and went off with his music to join the choir.

"He is risen!"

As the soft staccato notes floated down to him, the boy clasped his blue hands and drew a long breath of mingled ecstasy and bronchitis.

"Alleluia! Alleluia!"

He stood up and, drawn by the music, slipped up the aisle, nearer and nearer the source of those exquisite sounds. The Bass turned and saw him on the chancel steps and signalled to him to go back, and he crept away into the darkness again. When the practice was over the boy had fled.

After this he always lay in wait for the Bass and accompanied him to the Cathedral, sometimes carrying his music.

"Sy, couldn't I sing with them other fellers?" he asked one night.

"I'm afraid not," said the Bass kindly.

"Couldn't the cove wot slings the stoppers make me sing?"