

stitutes were provided for the simplest words. If one happened to skip a verse, or stumble at a word, half-a-dozen would hasten to his rescue with a noisy alacrity that savored more of an appetite for fun than for accuracy. Barring these little diversions, however, the reading passed off fairly well, and after another hymn I spoke to them briefly and simply upon the subject I had chosen. A more attentive audience no speaker need have wished; and this, too, despite the fact that the large majority were adherents of the Catholic Church. One countenance especially attracted me. It belonged to a broad-shouldered, well-built young fellow, whose sturdy frame betokened great capability for hard work, while the face, blanched by confinement in unsunned corridors, expressed both intelligence and determination. His crime had been the possession of stolen goods under circumstances which precluded his innocence, and his sentence was but half expired. All through the service he had behaved the best, and now his fine brown eyes were fixed steadfastly upon me, and no whispering or nudging from his neighbours availed to distract his attention. He was a great help, not only because his marked interest encouraged me, but because the example of his good behaviour was not without effect upon his companions. Still more hopeful did I feel of the service being to some purpose when, at its close, my model hearer approached me in a bashful way with a question trembling upon his lips. Ah! me—that question quickly dispelled all hopes of accomplished good, for it was nothing less than that I might give him a bit of tobacco, as he had not had a chew for many months. Had no higher motive than the chance of tempting me into the unwary violation of a rule under which I would henceforth have been excluded from the jail, been the inspiration of this exemplary behaviour? It is hard to say.

The men having shuffled reluctantly to their own quarters, I climbed another grated staircase to the women's ward, where, they told me, several unfortunates were eagerly awaiting a visit. Received by a stalwart, stern-visaged matron, I was ushered into a corridor precisely the same as the one just left, only perhaps a little sunnier. Six women, all of middle age, sat upon a long bench placed against the wall. On attempting to open a conversation with the one nearest me I met with a reception that was decidedly disconcerting, for by way of answer to my question she burst out into violent laughter, swaying to and fro upon the