

rear car. Through that little hole we slipped, and lives and property were saved.

"Now, that brakeman was only a common railroader, yet he saw that situation at a glance. There wasn't time to run his whole train off the crossing, nor even half of it—barely time to pull one car-length by prompt, quick work. He kept his wits about him as, I venture to say, not one in a thousand would have done, and saved my reputation, if not my life. He is now a division superintendent on one of the best roads in this country; and may good luck go with him!"

The Old Church Bell.

BORN of the metal and the fire,
They bore me from my raging sire,
And made me of the city's choir
Which sings in free air only;
And here since then I've patient hung,
Silent, untouched; but, being swung,
Giving my voice with iron tongue—
Alone, but never lonely.

The hermit of the belfry here,
Called in the upper atmosphere,
I speak in accents stern and clear
To all the listening people;
With none my speech to check or mar,
Sending my utterance near and far,
With sonorous clang and sudden jar,
I shake the slender steeple.

I ring the chimes for the bridal day;
I toll when the dead are borne away;
I clang when the red flames rise and play
On crackling roof and rafter;
I tell the hours for the steady clock;
I call to prayers the pastor's flock,
And back and forth in my work I rock,
And sink to silence after.

Here by myself in the belfry high,
Peeping through bars at earth and sky,
And mocking the breezes sweeping by,
And back their kisses flinging,
I chime for smiles, I toll for tears,
I herald news and hopes and fears,
As I have done for many years,
And never tire of ringing.

From place of vantage, looking down
On yellow lights and shadows brown
Which glint and tint the busy town
With hues that gleam and quiver,
I see within the streets below
The human currents crosswise flow,
Eddying, surging to and fro,
An ever-living river.

Or day or night they meet my gaze
The sloping roofs, the crowded ways,
The meshes of a dreary maze
Where men are ever wending;
One day a rest for them may see—
One day in seven; but for me,
No time from call of duty free,
My toll is never-ending.

I chime for birth or bridal chain;
I toll when souls have burst their chain;
I clang when fire its ruddy rain
From clouds of smoke is flinging;
I chime for smiles; I toll for tears;
I herald news and hopes and fears;
And so shall do for many years,
And never tire of ringing.

—Exchange.

Ned Wright; or, The Thief Turned Preacher.

BY JAMES COOKE SEYMOUR.

ONE morning, a few years ago, the Master-at-arms in one of Her Majesty's ships of war, looking down the ship's hatchway, beckoned the stoker up the ladder and whispered to him:

"Don't be alarmed, old chap; I'm very sorry, but I must tell you the worst of it. They are making arrangements for you to be flaked (flogged) this morning."

The stoker, at first, treated the information cavalierly; but on observing the pitiful looks with which some of the sailors regarded him, and catching sight of the grating at the main rigging, and then of the cat-o'-nine-tails, with its baize-covered handle, his cour-

age began to fail. For the rest, the stoker tells his own story.

"One of the marines drow near me, and whispering in my ear, said:

"Here's a lead button, old fellow; keep this between your teeth whilst being flogged, and it will save you from biting your tongue!"

"Ere I had got the button fairly in my mouth a shrill whistle echoed fore and aft the ship, followed by a loud shout from the boatswain's mate:

"Hands, all hands, to witness punishment."

"The momentary bustle brought about by this sound, soon gave me to understand that I was on board a man-o'-war. The 'blue-jackets' were galloping up the stairs, the marines were rattling their fire-arms, and everybody going towards the quarter-deck. This took all the bravery out of me; yet I waited in silence, striving to muster up courage to play the man, when presently two marines with fixed bayonets marched me on to the quarter-deck. Here I found all the officers in full dress uniform, and the blue-jackets arranged in rear of the marines. I had scarcely taken my position against the mainmast, when the Commander proceeded to read the Articles of War, after which, speaking to me, he said:

"Strip, sir."

"Having previously been told what to do by the ship's corporal, I proceeded to tie the lanyard of my knife round my waist, and pulling off both my Guernsey and flannel shirt, I stood bare-backed, ready for the dreadful work. My hands having been stretched out, and tied up to the grating, and my ankles fastened together, the boatswain's mate took the cat-o'-nine-tails, and having tucked up his sleeves, stood near to me awaiting his orders. For upwards of a minute there was dead silence. Then the Commander called out in a loud voice:

"Boatswain's mate, do your duty."

"Instantly the cat-o'-nine tails was raised in the air, and, like boiling lead, fell upon my back."

The ignominious sufferer on this occasion was Ned Wright. Ned had but lately joined the vessel, and on his first evening on shore at Spithead he had gone on a drunken spree with but little money, but obtained more by selling his good clothes for old ones. He stayed away three days without leave, and returned to the ship, his linen in ribbons, his blue canvas trousers with one leg off at the knee and the other torn half way up the calf, and minus shoes, stockings, hat, and comforter. An imprisonment in irons for three days having had no effect in improving his reckless behaviour, he was flogged. But even this fearful punishment had but small effect in curing his incorrigible waywardness.

Ned Wright was a character of no common wickedness. From a boy, he had associated with the worst companions, and had been ever foremost in all manner of evil. While still a mere child, his propensity to steal showed itself in his helping to rob the till of a small shop in London. Ned crept in on his hands and knees, stole the money, and spent it with the other boy-thieves, in baked potatoes, fried fish, and stewed eels.

His father succeeded in getting him into the Blue School, in Southwark; but before he had been there long enough to entitle him to the quaint costume of the school, he decamped,

stealing several of the bright badges the boys then wore upon the breasts of their coats, and selling them for old brass.

As he grew up, his employments were various, but in each he displayed the same vicious disposition, and ever going on from bad to worse. As a waterman on the Thames he would act in concert with the heartless "crimps," who decoy the poor sailors on landing, and plunder them of all they have. On one occasion, he fleeced six poor fellows in that way.

Being concerned in a silk robbery, he enlisted in the army under an assumed name. He soon became the source of great trouble to the drill-sergeant, an impatient Irishman. "Sure you're one of the Queen's bad bargains," he said, bidding him join the "awkward squad."

He soon ran away from the army, and next turned up as a prize-fighter. In one encounter with a professional pugilist, he fought for over two hours and a quarter, and came off with the victory, a broken nose, and a battered head swollen like a pumpkin.

Some time after the terrible scene on the man-o'-war, he got his discharge from the navy, and got married. But his treatment of his wife was of a piece with the rest of his conduct. He was an habitual drunkard, and his ill-gotten gains, the proceeds of robberies and gambling, as well as what he earned honestly, nearly all went to satiate his thirst for drink, and indeed that same love of drink had been the principal incitement to all the thefts of which he was guilty. Indeed so brutal was his conduct toward his wife, that at one time she had to fly from him to save her life, at another to procure legal protection for herself and her children. Once he had to appear in Court for striking his mother on the head and nearly killing her. But Ned was familiar with Courts. He had often been in prison. He knew well the prison discipline of Wandsworth Gaol, Old Brixton, Maidstone, and Newgate. An old gaol schoolmaster accosted him once as he was being committed to the New Model Prison at Wandsworth.

"Hallo, Wright, what, come home again! How long for, pray, this time?"

Yet were there brighter and better days in store for Ned. Strange as it may seem, he was the son of pious parents, whose hearts were wrung with unutterable grief at his wild and desperate wickedness. They never ceased to follow him with prayers, such as only broken, bleeding hearts can utter. Nor did they pray in vain.

Ned had been unsuccessful in four different attempts at robbery, and was in extreme want of funds. He had received a challenge to fight a prominent champion of the ring, and now fixed his hopes of success on the issue of this encounter. While training for this combat he had to keep sober, and to keep out of the way of his evil companions. He and his wife strolled out one evening towards Pimlico. A boy on the way offered Ned a handbill, announcing that a workman would that evening speak on the subject of religion in Astley's Theatre. Curiosity and "free seats and no collection" induced Ned to go. He and his wife slipped in behind a pillar to watch what was going on. The earnest words of the workman-preacher took hold of Ned, particularly as he dropped on

his knees and implored God's mercy on all "runaway children" and young men whose wickedness was bringing down their aged parents' gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

"Young man, where will you spend eternity!" cried the speaker again and again, laying solemn emphasis on the last word.

Ned trembled as his whole past life came up vividly before him. He remembered, with terror, what the preacher had said: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God." He became so overpowered with the sense of his wickedness and the nearness of his doom that he swooned away. While in this state, Ned had a kind of vision which he has himself described.

"I felt carried away," he says, "and found myself arraigned before the most awful tribunal I ever witnessed. There sat the Judge of high heaven, upon His throne of glory, surrounded by angels and archangels, and the ransomed saints. The brightness of these beings dazzled my eyes, and made me feel as if I would give ten thousand worlds to crumble into dust. Sins that had been committed and forgotten seemed to appear before my eyes, caused me to hang down my head with shame, and in my heart to exclaim, 'Oh, that I had never been born!' Then a voice echoed through the vaults of heaven, saying:

"Prisoner at the bar, you are charged with an enormous number of great offences, do you plead guilty?"

"Shivering like an aspen leaf, not daring to raise my head, I felt this to be ten thousand times worse than being tried at the Old Bailey. There was no deceiving the Judge of all the earth, no bringing false witnesses to swear one clear. His eyes were as flames of fire, searching me through. Oh, what a dreadful feeling was that! I knew I was guilty; I felt condemned; and I stood a wretched sinner before the Judge. Then, too, in all that vast assembly, there was no voice raised in my favour. My case was hopeless. I stood in breathless suspense awaiting my sentence; and while trembling and quaking with fear, the scalding tears running down my cheeks, and my heart bursting within me, I heard a voice softly and gently whispering in my ear:

"Look to Jesus; there is pardon and life through looking to Jesus."

"Then I cried in agony of soul, 'Where, oh where is Jesus?'"

Then came a sight of Christ crucified. He looked and believed. Then he seemed to see the Judge arise and pronounce his acquittal.

"Prisoner, you have incurred the extreme penalty of the law, which you have so repeatedly broken; you are absolutely without excuse; but this is now the award of love—solely because of the merits of My dear Son, to whom you have looked; I ordain that you be taken from the kingdom of Satan, and be translated into the kingdom of My Son, and that you be made an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ Jesus."

All this seemed to be the work of a few minutes. When he came back to consciousness, sweating at every pore, and the tears streaming down his face, he was so full of amazement that he did not know what to do. Several times he started to leave the place, but so strong a hold had the wonderful scene he had just beheld upon his mind, that he could not get away.