

New Year's Hymn.

O Year that lies before us,
What shall thy record be,
As thy short months roll o'er us,

Thou bring'st new hope to cheer us,
New visions fair and bright,
Of higher aims and conquests,

So, year by year, in mercy,
To us it hath been given,
To climb from our past failures

Lord, grant us grace to serve thee
In serving each and all;
Our hearts keep warm and trustful;

In Prison and Out.

By the Author of "The Man Trip."

CHAPTER I.—TO BEG I AM ASHAMED.

THE small back room, which was the home
of a family, was not much larger than a
prison-cell, and in point of cleanliness and
light and ventilation was far inferior to it.

This small, dark, back room had been in-
tended for a kitchen. Close against the
window stood the dust-bin, into which was
emptied all the waste of the house, when it
was not cast out into the street.

Even this poor, hard-working woman, who
had been struggling for years to pay the rent
of this dark, unwholesome den as a home for
herself and her children, hardly gave a
thought to the tainted air they breathed,

Her husband had been dead for ten years,
and she had had two little children to hamper
all her efforts to lift herself and them out of
their poverty.

In the mother's mind there were still linger-
ing dim memories of a very different child-
hood, and of better times than her marriage.
Sometimes there came to her, as there comes
to all of us, sudden flashes of light out of the
misty past; and she saw again her cottage-
home down in the country, and the village
school she went to, and her first place as a
young servant in the vicarage, where the
clergyman's wife had taken care she should
keep up her acquaintance with the Collects
and the Catechism.

The poor mother was ignorant; but her
ignorance was light and knowledge compared
with that of her children. They know
nothing, and thought of nothing, beyond what
they saw and heard about them. David could
read a little, but Bess not at all. The thick
knot of streets was swarming with children;
and it was not difficult to escape the notice of
the school-inspector on his occasional visits,

For a long time neither of them knew that
she was suffering from the fatal and painful
disease of cancer, which had thrust its deep
roots into her very life. When he did know
it, David's heart burned within him to see her
standing bravely at her washing-tub, enduring
her agony as patiently as she could.

Mrs. Fell was more than satisfied. Separation
from her children would have been more
bitter than death itself; but now she would
have Bess and David with her as long as she
could keep death at bay. The four shillings
and eightpence would pay her rent, and leave
almost fourpence a day for other expenses.

"It's just as if a wolf was gnawin' me,"
she said to David one evening, when he came
in with a loaf of bread and a piece of smoked
fish from a stall in the street; "hot as ever I
see a wolf, save once when father was alive,

all let these on me now. You children take
your share first, for I've eat it all and I've
leave enough for you."

"It's all for you and Bess, mother," he
answered. "I ate my supper at the stall."
He did not say that he had made his supper
of a crust of mouldy bread he had found lying
in the street, and was still as hungry as a
growing lad generally is. Like his mother,
he was quite used to dirt; and the urgent
claims of his appetite. But he sat down at
the end of her ironing-board, and watched
her by the feeble light of the candle as she
greedily devoured the food he had brought.

"Mother," he said, "I only took fourpence
all day for running two errands, for all I've
been on the look-out sharp. Mother, I must
take to beggin'."

"I must," he went on: "there's lots o'
money to be got that way. They all says so.
I couldn't make myself look hungrier than I
am; and I'll tell the truth, as you're dyin' of
a cancer, eye! and dyin' of hunger. I know
there'd be folks as would help us. I hate the
thought of it as much as you; but it's better
me than Bess. Little Bess 'ud be frightened,"

"I never thought it 'ud come to beggin',"
said his mother in a sorrowful, lallering voice.
"Nor me," continued David; "but there's
hardly no work for such as me as don't know
nothink. I'd have chose to be a carpenter
like father; but there's no chance of that.

David felt it a bitter pass to come to. Un-
taught and ignorant as he was, he had his own
dream of ambition to be a carpenter, and earn
wages like his father. He had gone now and
then to a night-school, and learned, after a
fashion, to read and write a little; but there
was no school where a ragged boy like him
could learn any kind of handicraft by which
he could earn a livelihood.

"I'll do it," he said, after a long silence, —
"not just round here, you know, mother; but
out in the country, where folks ain't all in
such a hurry. I'll take care of the police,
and I'll be back again afore Sunday; and
you've got Bess with you, so you won't be
lonesome. If I've luck, I'll try again next
week. There's kind rich folk as 'ud do some-
think for you, if they only knew; and I'll go
and find em out. Don't you take on and fret,
mother. It ain't tervus, you know."

"I'll think about it in the night, Davy,"
she answered sadly.

The painful, wakeful hours of the night,
the poor mother thought of her boy tramping
the roads in his ragged clothing and with his
almost bare feet, and stopping the passers by
to ask for alms. It had been the aim of her
long, laborious life to save herself and her
children from beggary. Oh, if this cruel
malady had only spared her another two or
three years, until David had been more of a
man, and Bess a grown-up girl! She could
have laid down to die tranquilly then, though
now she had a terrible dread of dying. But,
as far as she could see, there was nothing
else to be done than to let David try his luck.

"You may go," she said in the morn-
ing, after they had eaten together the few
months her little store had lasted; "and get
the night before; and get the night before;
Don't you never do nothink save beg. That's
had enough; but remember, both of yer, what I
always said, 'Keep thy hands from pickin' and
stealin'.' Them's good words to go by. And,
Davy, come back as soon as you can; for I'll
be hungrier for a sight of you than I ate for
victuals. Always be a good boy, and quick and
true, as your mother's folk is; and I'll be
thankin' with hunger, and if they answer
'No,' or shake their heads, turn away at
once and try some body else. Don't stop folks
as are in a hurry. Kiss me afore you go,
Davy."

It seemed a solemn thing to do. He felt
half-choked and could not speak a word as he
bent down to kiss her tenderly. He put his
arm around his sister's neck, and kissed her

too, and then, catching up his three shill-
ing cap, he went to the door trying to whistle a
cheerful tune. He paused in the doorway,
and looked back on them.

"Good-bye, mother," he cried; "don't
you fret after me."

(To be continued.)

GEMS.

WHILE the use of tobacco—a virulent
poison—at first produces the usual effect of
all similar poisons, disgust, nausea, deathly
sickness, and using the powers of nature in
opposition to it, it is a matter of surprise, a
humiliating fact, indicative of the depravity
of our nature, that the young will persist
in intense suffering that they may so re-
verse nature as to compel it to tolerate
such an abominable poison weed. It is as
unnatural as it would be for the lamb to eat
poison, the lion to eat grass, snow to fall in
mid-summer, or water to run uphill. One
of the most alarming features of the fact
that it naturally leads to the use of intoxi-
cants, the two vices being twin brothers.

I would prefer that my son should be
safely locked up in prison, adopting a sim-
ple diet, forming correct habits and labour-
ing for the good of the state and the well-
fare of society, disconnected with all crime,
than to have him lounging around the
liquor and gambling saloons and places
where the "vile weed" is sold, for, to the
extent he should patronize them, his course
will lead to corruption, immorality and
ruin, encouraging the worst vices of our
fallen human nature.

In the boy who despises education, Sab-
bath schools and religious meetings, spend-
ing his Sabbaths in roaming in the forests
and fields, robbing bird's nests, killing the
young and all within his reach, visiting
fruit trees and gardens for pillage, I think
I see the germ of the future man—or
substitute—drunken, profligate, indolent,
useless to the world and a disgrace to
humanity, destined to spend the last of life
in prison, or expiate his crimes on the
gallows.

If vain young ladies would preserve the
natural clearness and beauty of their com-
plexion, let them beware of drinking much
tea, particularly when strong, since its
nature is to darken and injure the colour
of the skin. Tea contains tannin, highly
astringent, very nearly resembling the pro-
perties of the bark used by the tanner, by
which he gives solidity and dark colour to
leather. If a lady uses much of this, par-
ticularly if strong, with luxurious foods,
saturated with grease and the spices, she
need not be surprised if her skin becomes
dark and dingy, her face pimply, with
abundant blackheads, the pimples be-
coming a constant source of annoyance
and chagrin.

THE SUPREME CURSE.

THE saloon is the supreme curse of the
nineteenth century, because its influence
extends in an direct, and what we
call it is felt, human misery, degradation and
moral profligacy. It is the worst of all
our great evils, and where every tentacle
crushes to death. It produces poverty,
degrades manhood, it makes a possible
murderer of every nation, it fills the
streets with want and wretchedness, it
crowds to overflowing our jails, and is a
leading factor in populating insane asy-
lums, almshouses, and pauper's beds. It
becomes the monster, it often becomes the
monster. But what is the worst of it?
It is crowding and what makes it
worse the national crime of the age, its
effect upon the youth. The youth more
innocent suffer than guilty. The wife, the
prattling children, and the unborn child,
each bear the mark of its curse. This is
the phase of the problem which makes its
solution a crime of measureless propor-
tions.

The supremacy of the saloon affords a
most impressive illustration of the power
of the whole nation becoming morally
unethical, and its people constantly before
its view, and when it is so widely used
to quell all opposition which would deal it
mortal blows. Avenge.