

Elocution Contest Selections

THE SAILOR LAD.

OLIVE HARPER.

He was a sailor, brown and young,
Whose ship had just sailed by;
Its fair white sails were proudly swell-
ed,
Its great, dark hull was lightly held,
And, with the rippling waves did weld,
As swept its prow around a curve,
Without a single wavering swerve;
And anchored safe did lie.

For many days the good ship had
Battled with wind and main;
Storms had assailed, great winds did
blow,
Calms had entangled in their slow
And weedy currents, ice and snow
Tried to enshroud her in the bands;
Pirates attacked her in far lands;
Yet here she was again.

Her captain was a stern, good man,
Right worthy of his place;
His men were all brave, tried and true,
Who loved their ship and ocean blue,
And little else of life they knew
But that which centered round the
life
On ship, and mother, home, or wife,
Or of the little face

That watched for him while far he
sailed
Along the boundless main;
Who counted hours, and weeks, and
days,
And numbered all his little plays,
And all his small life's sunshine rays,
By "When my father's ship comes
back
There's nothing pretty I shall lack—
When he comes home again."

But now the proud ship was at home,
At liberty the men,
Who, through the heat and through
the cold,
Through dangers that were never told,
Had borne their trials, brave and bold,
And faced grim death and gaunt
despair,
And now seemed walking in the air;
"They were at home again."

And all the men who'd wives and
babes,
Hastened blithe away,
And left this young brown sailor lad,
And who no wife nor infant had,
But whose old mother, blind and sad,
Waited at home in her old chair,
Waited with many a fervent prayer,
For his return that day.

On shore he stood, so brown, so strong,
A pleasant sight was he;
No brighter eyes were ever seen,
No face of nobler, sweeter men,
No better boy was there, I ween;
No heart was truer or more grand,
In any mansion in the land,
Than this lad from the sea.

He was a boy, no more than that,
Who, wonder that he felt;
When every street and rumshop door,
And every little bedecked store,
Persuasive sighs, showed o'er and
o'er,

And begged him to go in—
To drink, and steep himself in sin!
'They were the mouths of hell.

And he was robbed: the little store
That he had slowly won,
That for his mother he had brought,
That meant so much of love and
thought,
Of comfort in her blindness sought—
All now was gone; he saw the theft.

And, like a beast of whelps bereft,
He struck! The deed was done!

Then, trembling in a vague alarm,
He looked upon his hands;
While round his feet a circling flood
Crept slowly, as he dumbly stood;
And this dark circle—it was blood!
Dark and sinister it lay,
Circling about him every way,
And forming linked bands.

The sight of that dark, awful stain,
Was worse than of the dead,
Who lay there prone, with pallid face,
And form that matched the baneful
place,
And from his breast that bubbling
race,
Of pouring blood that circled round,
And wrought new figures on the
ground,
And filled him with sore dread.

A little while he trembling stood,
As a baby tottering stands,
Bewildered by the horrid sight,
And then before him all grew night,
His gleaming knife the only light;
But when his senses came again,
And he could see a little plain,
His hands were clasped in iron
bands.

A mother, pale, and bent, and blind,
Knelt in a prison cell,
And kissed those brown and sturdy
hands,
That now were clasped in iron bands,
That tolled so brave in many lands;
That never had an action done
That was not right, except this one,
In that red gate of hell!

The poor old, shrunken, sightless eyes
Had not a tear to shed;
Dry, labored sobs shook her old frame,
And through them burned the awful
shame.

That now had fallen on her name;
Yet, in all her sorrow, none
Heard her blame that prisoned son,
Who sat with bended head.

Too well she knew the pitfalls that
The law allows to lie
Unchecked, unheeded, everywhere,
That catch unwary footsteps there,
Like some wild tiger at its lair;
That lay their tolls to trap within
The very ones least prone to sin,
And gloating, see them die.

She had no hope; red-handed he
Was taken in the act;
Tho he was drunk, that could not save,
And, tho he killed a thievish knave,
He now must fill a felon's grave;
No hope was there for this poor lad
Who, tho he sinned, was not all bad;
The law must go by fact.

'Twas done! 'twas done! that bonny
lad
Whose ship had just sailed in—
That handsome youth, his mother's
pride,
Who, for one moment self-beside,
Had sinned when drunk, had shamed
died;
While those who were the guilty
ones,
Whose hearts are laid as nether
stones,
Cried, "We have punished sin."

And now a low and unmarked grave,
Another close beside,
Shows where low lies the sailor lad,
The only one his mother had,
The boy whose heart was weak, not
bad,
Who had a dread and awful end,
With none but one poor, weak, blind
friend;
While sin still lives in pride.

L'ENVOI.

Oh! friends, maybe to-morrow you
A sailor boy may have,
Whose ship is sailing home agala,
Whose heart is beating love's refrain,
Whose young life you would spare
from pain;
Then join, with prayerful hearts and
true,
And vote our Prohibition through,
And thus your own boy save!

A SHORT STORY.

TALIEP MORGAN, SCRANTON, PA.

The Newman M. E. Church is the
largest in the city of Bloomsbarre,
having over 800 members.

The official Board is in session.
A very animated discussion is going
on over the withdrawal of twenty-
seven of the members of the church.
Dr. Williamson, the eloquent pastor,
is speaking:

"I admit that in point of numbers,
twenty-seven out of over eight hun-
dred would make but very little dif-
ference, but see who the twenty-seven
are—the very ones who carry on our
prayer-meetings and attend to the
spiritual affairs of the church. It is
true that they are not the wealthy part
of our church, but a church cannot be
run with money alone."

"Brother Williamson," spoke up the
Hon. Chas. Smith, a member of the
Legislature, "I say let them go; we will
get along much better without them.
They have grown crazy over the Pro-
hibition party, and right here in our
prayer-meeting some of them have
grown so bold as to declare that any
man who did not vote her ticket was
supporting the liquor traffic. Now, I
claim to be as good a Prohibitionist
as any man in the Prohibition party,
and indeed, a better Prohibitionist,
for the reason that I had the honor of vot-
ing for the enactment of our present
license law, which has done more for
temperance than the Prohibition party
will ever accomplish."

Then Judge Grant, one of the county
judges, spoke up:

"Gentlemen, this recent discussion
about the church being the bulwark of
the liquor traffic is nothing short of
blasphemy in calling the faithful fol-
lowers of the Lord Jesus Christ, the
upholders of the rum traffic, the
greatest curse the world has ever seen.
I agree with Brother Smith, let these
Prohibition cranks go, and our church
will then go on in peace." (Applause
from the other members of the Board.)

"Of course," said Dr. Williamson, "we
will have to give them their letters,
for we can find no fault with their
Christian character. But we have none
to take their places in the public
prayer service. This is one of the evils
of bringing politics into religion; they
won't mix. The Grand Old Republi-
can party is a good enough temperance
party for me, and while it is not up to
the standard on the temperance ques-
tion that I would like to see it, yet
I am not going to throw away my vote
on a party that hasn't a ghost of a
chance of electing its candidates."

(Applause.)

"I don't understand what these fan-
atical Prohibitionists want," said the
Hon. Mr. Smith. "Our church, as a
church, has declared that the liquor
traffic can not be legalized without
sin," and nothing stronger than that
could be uttered. The man who sells
liquor for a living is worse than a —"

Just then there was a sharp knock
at the door.
"Come in," responded the double-bass
voice of Dr. Williamson.

The door opened and the portly form