

SUITABLE FOR RECITATION.

We give two companion poems on similar topics, one by an American, the sweet-voiced Alice Carey, the other by a distinguished English writer, Sidney Dobell. The second poem strikes us as of peculiar pathos. It has not the happy ending of the first one. The inability of the poor mother, wrapped up in the fate of her son, to conceive it possible that he could perish is, we think, very touching:

Elihu.

"O sailor, tell me, tell me true,
Is my little lad—my Elihu—
A-sailing in your ship?"
The sailor's eyes were dimmed with dew.
"Your little lad? your Elihu?"
He said with trembling lip;
"What little lad—what ship?"

What little lad?—as if there could be
Another such a one as he!
"What little lad, do you say?"
"Why, Elihu, that took to the sea
The moment I put him off my knee.
It was just the other day
The *Gray Swan* sailed away."

The other day? The sailor's eyes
Stood wide open with surprise.
"The other day?—the *Swan*?"
His heart began in his throat to rise.
"Ay, ay, sir; here in the cupboard lies
The jacket he had on."
"And so your lad is gone!"

"Gone with the *Swan*. And did she stand
With her anchor clutching hold of the sand,
For a month, and never stir?"
"Why, to be sure! I've seen from the land,
Like a lover kissing his lady's hand,
The wild sea kissing her—
A sight to remember, sir."

"But, my good mother, do you know,
All this was twenty years ago?"
I stood on the *Gray Swan's* deck,
And to that lad I saw you throw—
Taking it off, as it might be so—
The kerchief from your neck;
Ay, and he'll bring it back.

"And did the little lawless lad,
That has made you sick and made you sad,
Sail with the *Gray Swan's* crew?"
"Lawless! the man is going mad;
The best boy mother ever had;
Be sure, he sailed with the crew—
What would you have him do?"

"And he has never written line,
Nor sent you word nor made you sign,
To say he was alive?"
"Hold—if 'twas wrong, the wrong is mine;
Besides, he may be in the brine;
And could he write from the grave?
Tut, man! what would you have?"

"Gone twenty years! a long, long cruise;
'Twas wicked thus your love to abuse;
But if the lad still lives,
And come back home, think you, you can
Forgive him?" "Miserable man!
Your mad as the sea; you rave—
What have I to forgive?"

The sailor twitched his shirt so blue,
And from within his bosom drew
The kerchief. She was wild:
"My God!—my Father!—is it true?
My little lad—my Elihu?
And is it?—is it?—is it you?
My blessed boy—my child—
My dead—my living child!"

My Boy.

"Ho, sailor from the sea,
How's my boy?"
"What's your boy's name, good wife,
And on what ship sailed he?"
"My boy John,
He that went to sea.
Sure, his ship was the *Jolly Briton*."
"Speak low, good woman; speak low."
"And why should I speak low?
If I were loud,
As I am proud,
I'd cry him o'er the town."
"The good ship went down."
"What care I for that?
I'll be bound
Her owners can afford her.
How's my boy?"
"The good ship went down,
And every man aboard her."
"What's that to me,
I'm not their mother;
My boy's my boy to me.
How's my boy?"

In Prison and Out.

By the Author of "The Man Trap."

CHAPTER V.—LESSONS IN PRISON.

It was quite dark at night when the prison van containing David and other convicted offenders reached the jail to which they were committed. As yet he was still feeling bewildered and confused; and the sound of heavy doors clanging after him as he passed through them, and the long, narrow passages along which he was led, only served to heighten his perplexity. He had hardly ever been within walls except those of the poor house which had been his home as long as he could remember, and the prison appeared immeasurably large as he dragged his weary footsteps along the stone flagging of the corridors. The spotless cleanliness of both floor and walls seemed also to remove him altogether out of the world with which he was acquainted. The dirt and squalour of the old jails would have been more home-like to him.

By the time his hair had been cropped close to his head, and the prison-garb put upon him in the place of his own familiar clothes, stained and tattered with long wear of them, he began to doubt his own identity. Was he really David Fell? Could he be the boy who had hitherto led the freest life possible, roaming about the busy streets, with no person to forbid or to question him? David Fell could not be he who was now locked up quite alone in a little cell, dimly lighted by a gas-jet, which itself was locked up in a cage lest he should touch it. Not a sound came to his ears, let him listen as sharply as he could. Where was the old roll and roar of the streets, and the cries of children, and the shrill voices of women, and the din and tumult, and stir and life, to which he was accustomed? No dream as dreadful as this silence and solitude had ever visited him.

For a long while he could not go to sleep, though his previous night in the police station had been one of wakefulness. His hammock was comfortable, more comfortable than any bed he had ever slept on, and his prison-rug was warm; but the very comfort and warmth brought his mother to his mind,—his mother and little Bess. What were they doing now? Were they shivering on their hard mattress, under their threadbare counterpane, which was all that was left them to keep out the night's chill? Perhaps they were looking out for him. What day was it? Was it not Saturday to-day? And he had promised to be home on Saturday!

Oh, how different it would all have been if he had only escaped being caught! He would have been at home by this time; and they could have had a bit of fire in the grate, and something to make a feast of as they sat round it, whilst he told the story of his wanderings, and tried to describe all the rich, good folks who had been kind to him. Or if the magistrate had taken away all the money, and let him go home on his promise never to go begging again, even that would have been nothing to this trouble. He fancied he could see his mother's face, pale yet smiling, as she listened to his danger, and his escape from it; and Bess, sitting on the floor, with shining eyes and clasped hands, hearkening eagerly to every word. Why had they sent him to jail? At last he sobbed himself to sleep; but all through the night might be heard, if there was any ear to hear, the heavy, deep-drawn sob of the boy's overwhelmed heart.

He was awakened early in the morning, and briefly told what he must do before quitting his cell. Then he ate his breakfast alone in the dreary solitude of the prison-walls, and the food almost choked him. It seemed to the boy, used to the wild, utter freedom of the streets, as if his very limbs were fettered, and that he could not move either hand or foot freely. His body did not seem to belong to himself any longer. He was neither hungry nor cold, as he might have been at home; but his head ached, and his heart was sore with thoughts of his mother. He was unutterably sick and sad. Cold and hunger were almost like familiar friends to him; but he did not know this faintness and heaviness, this numbness which kept him chained to the prison-seat, and made it appear an impossibility that a day or two ago he was rambling about as long as he pleased, and where he pleased, in the wide, free world, outside the prison walls. Were there any boys like him still running and leaping and shouting out yonder in the autumn sunshine?

It was Sunday morning, and he was left longer than usual to himself. He was taken to the chapel, and sat in his place during the reading of the prayers and the sermon which followed; but not a word penetrated to his bewildered brain. It was much the same on the week-day when he went to school. He knew a little both of reading and writing;

but he could not control his attention to make use of what he knew. He said the alphabet stupidly, and wrote his first copy of straight lines badly. He could not bring himself to think of these things. His mind was wandering sadly round the central thought that he was in jail, and what would become of his mother and little Bess without him.

David was naturally a bright boy, active in mind and body; but he was crushed by the sudden and extreme penalty that had befallen him. He had all along known that the police were "down" upon begging; but it had not entered his mind that he could ever actually get into jail except for thieving. Among the street lads of his acquaintance many a one had been in for some short term for picking pockets or stealing from the street-stalls; but few of these had ever been sentenced to three months' imprisonment. And he had always kept his hands from picking and stealing,—the only item of his duty to man which his mother had impressed upon him. He would not have begged if he could have worked; but no man of the hundreds of thousands about him had offered him work, or seen that he was taught to work. Yet here he was for three months in jail, a lad who had never known any will to guide him but his own untrained and vagrant nature, and his mother's kindly and weak indulgence.

The first glimmer of hope came to him when he was set to learn shoemaking. This was a trade by which he could earn a living,—not the trade he would have chosen (his ambition was to be a carpenter like his unknown father), but still honest, real work. He received his first lesson in a handicraft with ardour, and sat with an old boot on his knee, picking it to pieces with unvarying industry. If he could only learn as much as to mend his mother's shoes before his term was out! The tears started to his dull, bloodshot eyes, and his lips quivered at the thought of it. He would do his best at any rate to learn this lesson.

The jail was a large one, and the number of prisoners great. David had been asked if he was a Protestant or a Roman Catholic,—a question he did not understand, and could not answer. He was classed with the Protestants, and put under the care of the jail-chaplain, who saw him among the other prisoners, and taught him his duty towards God in a class, but who could not find time to give him any individual attention. The chaplain told him, among the rest, that he had broken the laws of his country and of God, and that his punishment was the just reward of his sin. David's ideas of right and wrong were exceedingly limited, and his conscience very unformed; but he could not believe he had done wrong, and he did not. His mother was starving, and he had begged for help. If the laws of his country and of God forbade him to do this, they were in the wrong.

He could not have put his thoughts into words, but they were none the less in his heart,—dim, bewildering, and oppressive; and he pondered over them night and day. Very few persons spoke to him, and he was never ready to speak in reply. Those who taught him thought him a blockhead, or fancied that he was at least shamming incapacity and vacancy of mind. As a matter of fact his mind was always absent, except at his cobbling lesson; for he was incessantly brooding over the recollection of his free life, and of the poor, desolate home he had been so suddenly torn from.

David had no idea of writing to his mother, or hearing from her. No such thing as a letter reaching them, or being written in their home, had ever occurred within his memory. The policeman was a much more frequent visitor than the postman in their street. Yet he longed for her to know where he was. Day after day he wondered what had happened to her and Bess, and knew they were wandering and fretting about him. The only comfort he had—the only miserable spark of hope—was in thinking he should know how to mend their shoes when he went home.

It was therefore with a sudden burst as of sunshine that he learned one day that prisoners might write to their friends once in three months. The schoolmaster gave him the writing materials, and he took unwearied pains over a letter to his mother. The sheet of note-paper contained the address of the jail, and under it David wrote, in his crooked, ill-formed characters, as follows:

"DEAR MOTHER,—I was took up for beging, and cent to jal, and I'm lerrin' to mend shoes. Don't yu fret about me. I luv yu and Bess. They'll let me out in 3 months, and I'll mend yure shoes. I've kep my hands from pickin' and steelin' as muther ses. God bless yu. From david fell yure luvin' son."

He slept that night more soundly than he had ever done before within the prison-walls, and dreamed pleasant dreams of working for his mother, and buying her and little Bess all they needed with the money he had earned.

(To be continued.)

JUNIOR LEAGUE.

DEPARTMENT OF LITERARY WORK—HEAD.

"Feed my lambs."—*Jesus*.

If but one meeting of the League can be held each week it is best to combine the work of this department with that of the devotional hour. But where time and workers can be found this department will yield a large increase, second only in importance to purely spiritual work.

The Bible is, above all, the book to be studied here. First, drill the children in the number and names of the books of the Bible. If this were taught to the children of the Church to-day, in a few years hence we should not see the slow and imperfect work in "finding the place," when the pastor announces the psalm to be read responsively or the lesson from the New Testament.

It is also recommended to take up some systematic study of the Bible. Courses of study have been provided for by Dr. Hurlbut, on the successful completion of which certificates are given, to which seals may be added.

The Bible in the League will lay the principles of religious and civil liberty deep in the hearts of the children; so deep that no icy hand of unbelief nor intrigue of the Romish Church can destroy them.

"Holy Bible, book divine,
Precious treasure! thou art mine;
Mine to teach me when I rove,
Mine to tell a Saviour's love."

Next to the Bible we should take up the history and doctrines of our own Church. No branch of the evangelical Church has a more romantic and remarkable history than the Methodist Church.

It is in the Junior Epworth League that the Church Catechism may be most effectively taught. In the great majority of our Sunday-schools the Catechism, if taught at all, is done to disadvantage and very imperfectly.

The Catechism should be thoroughly memorized by the children before they are allowed to take up the higher studies.

How many good people there are who sniff at the Catechism as though it were obsolete! The good effects of its teachings are undervalued. Scotland and Wales have the fewest infidels, and infidel writings in their language are almost unknown—a living testimony to catechetical instruction.

In many instances it has been found advisable to conduct this department for nine months of the year only. A vacation from June to September will give the boys a rest and afford the leader an opportunity to work up new methods and plans of work.

Another advantage to be gained by the existence of the Junior Epworth League is, that whenever the children are wanted for a rehearsal, as at Christmas, Easter, or Children's Day, the department of instruction will always find them on hand, and of the most reliable kind.

The use of the blackboard will call forth great interest in this department. Always have it on duty. A few simple remarks will reach the heart through the eye when words fail through the ear. Put down the number of the hymns to be sung at the beginning of the meeting, or as they are announced. Print the number present. If greater, make a point in a few words about attendance. Any scrap of present interest when placed upon the board will hold attention and fix an idea.

Children love to sing. People like to hear them sing. Encourage every voice. The leader of the League must sow great tact right here. Sing often rather than too much of any one hymn. Practise antiphonal singing, the most ancient and most effective form of church music, one that should not be laid aside. The only difficulty likely to occur is the want of an efficient leader; but poor and few indeed are the churches that cannot with a little effort find a competent musician for this important branch of church work.

SOME FAMOUS MEN.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS was the son of a weaver, and also a weaver himself. Claude Lorraine was bred a pastry cook. Cervantes was a common soldier. Homer was the son of a farmer. Demosthenes was the son of a cutler. Oliver Cromwell was the son of a brewer. Howard was an apprentice to a grocer. Franklin was a journeyman printer and son of a tallow chandler and soap boiler. Daniel Defoe was a hosier and son of a butcher. Cardinal Wolsey was the son of a butcher. Lucian was the son of a maker of statuary. Virgil was the son of a porter. Horace was the son of a shopkeeper. Shakespeare was the son of a wool stapler. Milton was the son of a money scrivener. Pope was the son of a merchant. Robert Burns was the son of a ploughman in Ayrshire.