

THE POET OF THE PRISON.

THE prison world appears to have its 'Occasional Poets,' even as it can boast specimens of every other class of civilized and savage men. The other day I came across a sample of their work, for the publication of which an ex M.P., who at an earlier period in his career had occupied a cell at Dartmoor, is responsible. Turning over the leaves of a prison library book he had found the following couplet scrawled on a blank page:—

'Good-bye, Lucy, dear,
I'm parted from you for seven long years.—ALFRED JONES.'

This was simple, if touching, and the sad farewell to Miss Lucy would have been lost to the world had not the volume fallen into the hands of another poet whose soul was imbued with cynicism rather than sentiment. This is his reflection on Mr Jones's verse:—

'If Lucy dear is like most gals,
She'll give few sighs or moans,
But soon will find among your pals
Another Alfred Jones.'

This specimen of prison poetry gave me a thirst for more, so I hunted up my friend the Major, and inquired whether he had ever had in his care such a contributor to the gaiety of gangs as Mr Alfred Jones or his critic. I doubted not that he would go one better; nor was I disappointed.

'Ebenezer Carey was one of them,' said the ex gaoler; 'he had come to grief as a village schoolmaster, and had taken to vagrancy as a profession, for offences connected with which he was frequently sent to my prison. On one occasion he left his slate covered with verses. The idea seems to have been suggested by some hymn, though you could hardly call it a parody. I wish I could remember the whole of this lament for lament it was, caused by the snares and pitfalls set by ungrateful society to catch the erring "moocher." It began in this way:—

'The night is very gloomy,
The time is waxing late,
And yet, by all that's evil,
The slop is at the gate;
The slop who comes with moocher,
The slop who comes with scamp;
The slop who comes with glorious capture
Two half-starved, hungry tramps.'

Then came a melancholy apostrophe to the prison itself:—

'Oh, home for careless cadger,
Disguised and forlorn,
Where they shall dwell in sadness
Until the fourteenth morn—'

and so on. And with a rebellious wind up, showing that if his incarceration had been punitive it had not been deterrent:—

'I know not, oh! I know not,
When I may next be there;
And to tell no lies about it,
I'm d—d sure I don't care!'

'That was the last I saw of Carey in prison, but I found out, quite by accident, that my poetical prisoner did on occasion try to earn a few shillings. I was in a country town about fifty miles from home, and had occasion to go to a certain watchmaker's shop. On the counter I noticed a little heap of leaflets, and, taking one up, I found that there was printed on it a panegyric in verse on the proprietor of the establishment and his workmanship. Something like this:—

'Hark! the long-hair'd poets sing,
Time is over on the wing;
Little moments how they fly,
Golden winged fitting by.'

'After more in the same strain, the "long-hair'd poet" got to business:—

'If you wish your erring watch
Cleaned with science and despatch,
Trust to one who knows his look—
You will not have far too look.'

'Then came some fulsome praise of the worthy tradesman behind the counter, and some local allusions; the ode, consisting of about fifty lines, ending:—

'And you'll certainly agree
That his time-piece surgery
Well deserves his high renown
As the foremost in the town!'

'"Are you a poet?" I inquired, as I put the paper down.

'"No, sir," said the watchmaker, "that was brought to me by a very disreputable tramp, who said that he had written it, and offered to sell it to me. He bothered me so much that at last I paid him for it."

'"What was the man like?"
'And then Carey was described to me, my informant adding that he had since heard that he was a notorious scamp, and well known to the police.

'In the out life world the sensual spirit of the poet is often broken by the sneers and jibes of his critics; so, in prison, if an inmate is caught endeavoring to immortalise his sentiments on his cell wall or his dinner tin—indeed, anywhere at all—the detecting warder acts the part of publisher, and the governor, in the rôle of critic, puts on the extinguisher. Such an effort, for instance, as—

'My name is Billy,
I don't like skilly!'

will probably lead to its author being deprived even of that article of diet.'

THE WELLINGTON REPRESENTATIVE FOOTBALL TEAM OF 1894.

ON the first page of this issue we reproduce the admirable photo taken by Mr Edwards, of Auckland, of the Wellington Football Representatives.

The recent tour was a most successful one, and with the exception of Taranaki, Wellington can probably send forth the best team in New Zealand. The matches played in tour were as follows: Poverty Bay-Wellington won by 19-6; Thames-Wellington won 5-3; Auckland-Wellington won 13 to nil; Taranaki lost by 6 to nil.

A word or two concerning individual members of the team will perhaps be of interest:

Mr S. H. DAVIDSON (11st), full-back, is one of the few really capable and reliable full-backs in the colony. A splendid kick with either foot, and a deadly collar. He is certainly an extremely hard man to beat in his own department of the game. His coolness and reliability make him a man of quite exceptional value in any team.

W. ROBERTS (11st), right wing three-quarter, is one of the finest all-round footballers in the colony. Kicks magnificently with either foot, and takes cleanly and surely.

W. T. WYNYARD (11st 10lb), centre three quarter, captain of the team, and one of the best players in the colony. Is a very fast runner, good kick and most unselfish, besides being tricky. He visited the Mother Country and Australia with the New Zealand Native team in 1888, and last year was one of the New Zealand team which visited New South Wales and Queensland.

A. DUNCAN (12st) can be placed either centre three-quarter or five eighths and is equally good in either position, being an adept at every department of the game. He has medium pace and great heart. He is an old Wanganui College boy, and this is his first year as a 'rep' man.

C. HALES, emergency, three-quarter only. Played once against the Thames. He is a good man, fast, and kicks well; an old Auckland. This is Hales' first season as a Wellington rep.

J. BENNETT (11st 9lb), five-eighth. It was also this gentleman's first year as a rep of Wellington. A fast man, and a constant scorer. Bennett 'came off' in nearly every match during the season.

D. R. GAGE is too well-known to need any description. Probably the trickiest player in the colony. Has played some wonderful games and is the hero of many victories.

J. PUDNEY (10st 12lb), extra half. A good player, passes and tackles well, and is fairly fast.

G. MABER, (11st 12lb), forward, is lightest forward in the team, but very fast, follows up grandly, and works hard from start to finish. Played in the last New Zealand team.

J. POLAND (13st 12lb), centre forward, plays a hard determined game, one of the heavy brigade. A well known Auckland player for many years.

A. CAMPBELL (12st 10lb), a real good man on the line out, and follows up well. The place kick of the team.

F. BISHOP (14st), forward, is the heaviest man in the team—'fourteen stone of beef and bone.' As might be imagined he is a grand man in the scrum.

W. MCKENZIE (13st 7lb), wing forward, is commonly nick-named 'off side McKenzie' from his scrum tactics. He is the tallest man in the team, 6 feet 2 inches in his socks, very fast and a good dribbler. McKenzie is a man who invariably gives trouble to his opponents.

F. YOUNG (13st 10lb), forward, a front man in the scrum, and good at securing the ball. Grafts from start to finish, good on the line out, follows up well.

J. SWINDLEY (12st 7lb), forward, front man with Young in the scrum, a demon to work. His first year as a rep, an old Auckland boy. He played with New Zealand team this year.

J. KELLY (11st 12lb), wing forward, an old Auckland, very fast, consistent scorer, always follows up smartly, and is a great man in the passing game.

W. PRINGLE (12st 6lb), very fast, good in open, and backs up well.

A. JACK (12st 13lb), forward; first year as Wellington rep. An old Otago High-school boy. Not very fast, but always there when wanted.

Mr GRANT, manager for the team, is treasurer of the Wellington Rugby Union.

Mr E. DAVY acted as umpire during the tour, and is Chairman of the committee.

A FINE ART PUBLICATION.

BY far the best fine art publication we have seen offered to the public at anything approaching a reasonable price, in the views and pictures of the principal cities of the world. Issued in sixteen portfolios of sixteen magnificent views each, the series comprises views of the most beautiful places in the world. The pictures are the perfection of the now favourite 'half tone' work, and cannot be too highly praised. Messrs Gordon and Gotech, the Australian publishers for the American firm who issue the work, have a splendid thing for their patrons in this portfolio. The photos from which the pictures are taken are costly, yet the numbers are but a shilling each, or the whole series for sixteen shillings. Mr Spreckley, of Auckland, is the agent. His advertisement is on our cover.

WANGANUI TOURIST TRAFFIC.

FACILITIES for tourists and others desirous of acquainting themselves with the beauties of the New Zealand Rhine are growing apace, as may be seen by the accompanying illustration which we reproduce from a photo taken by Mr W. H. T. Partington, photographer, of Wanganui, on the occasion of the launching of the Manuawai, Mr A. Hatrick's new river steamer, which is expected to be fitted up in good time for the opening of the tourist season. The launch was witnessed by a large number of spectators, who were unanimously of opinion that a prettier or more successful one has seldom been seen, spite of the fact that the vessel had to take the water broadside on. The Manuawai is a very pretty example of *fin de siècle* energy and go-aheadism. The order for her construction only went to the builders—Messrs Yarrow and Co., Poplar, London—in January last; she was put together, taken to pieces, packed and landed in Wellington by the close of July; from thence removed to Wanganui, where the work of putting her together again was begun during the first week in August, and on the sixteenth of September she was successfully floated, and ready for the erection of the deck cabins and other finishing touches. The Manuawai measures 121 feet, with a beam of 18 feet, an estimate draught of 12 inches, and a guaranteed speed of 11 1/2 miles per hour. She is built throughout of Siemens steel, with seven watertight compartments (each compartment having its own ejection pump); her high pressure engines are really splendid, and her whole construction has been carried out on the most modern approved principles. Her fittings will be first-class, and her passenger accommodation will leave nothing to be desired. We congratulate Mr Hatrick on her highly satisfactory launching, and hope his enterprise will receive its due reward. Certainly he is leaving no stone unturned in his endeavour to open to the world the beauties of the Wanganui river.



Partington photo, Wanganui.

WANGANUI TOURIST TRAFFIC—LAUNCHING THE MANUAWAI.