

THE STATE PENITENTIARY.

Having been urged by a number of our citizens, to write out my views on the subject of our State Prison, I have yielded to their wish, feeling, however, my incompetency to do justice to a subject of such vital interest, to at least a portion of our fellow-citizens.

I shall only allude to so much of the operation of the present system as I deem of most importance, and only in a brief way.

I have carefully examined the reports on the Penitentiary, from 1843, to the present, and I would respectfully solicit a careful examination of those reports. That for 1842 and '43, sets down the profits at \$6,996 48; but let us take a peep below the surface, and see what this is composed of, or in what it consists: First, debts due; second, finished work on hand; third, unfinished work; fourth, lumber and materials; fifth, all the tools and machinery. The question naturally comes up, how much of this is to be paid for? The second will answer.

The net gain to the State in the report for the years '45 and '46, is about \$8,000. But in what does this consist? Not, in dollars, and cents, but, like that for '43 and '44, in debts, good and bad, tools, &c. Still, no money comes into the Treasury. In '47 and '48, a net gain of \$11,847 is reported. Out of this large sum, you might reasonably calculate that something would be realized to liquidate the large yearly drains from the Treasury, for the support of the institution; but no, not a dollar finds its way there. Embraced in this, is a charge of \$15,000, for labor done by the hands employed on the Capitol; also, a charge of a steam engine, at \$3,000. Astonishing as it may appear to him who only glances these reports a superficial reading, the sum of \$25,000, is asked and granted to help this flourishing (!) institution out of debt.

Reported net gain for '50 and '51, is \$31,504, but, let this sum be all swallowed up by a charge of \$40,000, for work on the Capitol. This same sum of \$3,000 is again applied; as also, these same debts, good, bad, &c.

These reports represent the affairs of the Penitentiary, to be in a healthy and flourishing condition. "Thanks to a wise administration for it, say the taxpayers." But! let again the Treasury be depleted to the tune of \$30,000, to help this flourishing (!) concern out of debt.

We come now to the report for '52 and '53, which is the best I have seen. I do not mean to say, that any of them are unfairly made out. I think they are made out with candor and honesty, but I examine them upon their own merits. In this report we have a net gain, or profit of \$30,004 20—Surely something can be spared out of this large amount to reimburse the Treasury for the constant drain upon it from this source. It is not too sanguine, you patient tax payers, but look to the end. That same old engine set down to your account twice before, another batch of debts, due, must first be taken into the account, before the balance is struck, but without troubling ourselves to know the how or the why, it will be some comfort to know that only \$2,000 is now asked to be forked over for the benefit of the concern. Just here there appears to be a mystery. How is it that the affairs of the Penitentiary are always represented to be in a flourishing condition, and yet at every sitting of the Legislature asking for money by the thousands? The report says, "it could not be expected that the 120 hands employed in mechanical work within the walls should make enough to sustain and clothe the other 120 employed on the State Capitol." Here let me make a supposition.—A, has 240 negroes that cost him but a trifle, in his lenity of his disposition he says, to one half of his around it, into which you may enter, I will feed and clothe you comfortably, and all I ask of you is good behaviour. The other half he employs at some profitable business. At the end of a year he puts up his books, and finding himself in debt \$20,000, would he not, if a prudent man, abandon the scheme? Most assuredly. Why not the State of Tennessee do likewise?

But let us see if such would be the result of the case we have supposed. The 120 who labored of ought to make \$100 each, this makes the sum of \$12,000, a sum surely sufficient to sustain and clothe the 240. If so, better far not let the bricks raise a hammer, than to work them hard and bring the State in debt. I can't conceive the idea to persist in a system of conducting our State prison, which yearly abstracts large sums of money from the treasury, and what is a worse feature, oppresses and degrades a portion of our citizens, and a portion too having just claims to respect and sympathy, especially as the system could be so easily changed, and made to bring a revenue into the public fund, and at the same time oppress and degrade no one, to which I will advert presently. By reference to the 9th page of the last report it will be seen that an appropriation is asked to purchase ground for a grave yard, and the very best of reasons are given why it should be done. That those having the charge of the public cemeteries will not permit the dead to be buried in their precincts. Certainly no one having proper regard for deceased relatives would consent to have a convict buried by their side. Yet, by the operation of this system, the released and pardoned ones are all fostered on the mechanic, placed alive by his side, with all their views inclining to, to associate and mingle with them in business.

These outlaws are gathered from all the avocations of society, but all return to one. Has not this one a just cause of complaint? Justice says yes. But even suppose the Penitentiary did yield a revenue to the State, it is abstracting that much from the honest mechanics' families, and disabling them from affording the means of education to their children—or else compels them to remove from our city to places where this evil does not exist.

It may be justly argued that these convicts must be employed, certainly they should; but this can be done—the State Treasury be made to receive, instead of all the time paying out, and the evil we complain of be remedied.

There are persons who would fain remove the Penitentiary from the State, pay a bonus, and agree to employ the convicts so as to interfere with no mechanical trade conducted in this State, men, too, every way reasonable. In the name then of all reason should it not be done? On the score of economy, it were better to employ someone to feed and clothe the convicts, and suffer them to remain idle, than to go on under the present system.

We have seen that the mechanical district of society does not seem more than its portion to the State prison, but is compelled to receive them all into its ranks. Why not parcel them out to other divisions, on the principle of justice? Why not educate some of these convicts for the different learned professions, or for mere gentlemen. These classes send to and should be willing to receive from the institution. Why not have professors of law, medicine, and theology, salaried by the State, to teach the convicts, as well as to employ book mechanics to teach them trades? What professional man in the State but would rise up in envy to resist such a law? So should every mechanic rise up—not in arms, but with a voice loud enough to be heard by the law makers, and cry aloud, till their voices should be heard and heeded.

CANDIDATES.

We are authorized to announce L. W. FINE, as a candidate for reelection to the office of Sheriff of Davidson County, at the ensuing election.

We are authorized to announce JOHN K. ROBERTSON, as a candidate for the Sheriffship of Davidson County, at the ensuing election.

We are authorized to announce W. W. FINE, as a candidate for Sheriff of Davidson County, at the ensuing election.

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SPECIAL NOTICES.

Dyspepsia Cured by the Liver Pills.—That lingering disease, Dyspepsia, so often mistaken for Consumption, has its origin in a disordered condition of the Liver, and may, therefore, be effectually cured by the use of Dr. Williams' Liver Pills, which have become so celebrated as a remedy for this class of diseases.

Dr. Williams' Liver Pills, which have become so celebrated as a remedy for this class of diseases, are sold wholesale and retail by all the principal druggists and country merchants throughout the United States.

From Personal Relief.—I was cured of my dyspepsia by the use of Dr. Williams' Liver Pills, which have become so celebrated as a remedy for this class of diseases.

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