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Copy for advertisements must reach the Leader office by Saturday previous to publication in order to insure insertion in current issue.

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The Honest Opinions of a Thief

(Continued from page 8)

I was on the lookout near a bank door. The master mechanic was at work on the safe inside. A fellow raises a window on a second story above and behind me and starts shootin'. You might say that's all right. The fellow is within the law if he feels sure I'm a thief; but I say he's a coward. I wouldn't pull a trick like that on anybody, I don't care what he is. I don't want any murders in mine."

McLeod incidentally touched a few features of his personal history. His father was a Scotch sea-captain. He himself made a number of voyages as a young lad. Later he obtained papers at Brooklyn entitling him to ship as first-mate in sailing vessels. He has made voyages to many countries in remote parts of the world.

"The circus made me a crook," he said. "I had an aunt with the old Adam Forepaugh shows. I went with them for a few seasons and that's where I got my start.

"But, hell! there's nothin' in it. The thief always gets the worst of it.

"Take old Frank Dunlap. There's a man that was one of the highest class burglars the country ever produced. That fellow has pulled out upwards of \$50,000 for one job. And where is he now? Runnin' a little cigar store in one of the Chicago office buildings. Just a broken down old man—a quiet decent old fellow makin' a pretty small livin'. Not a cent left of all that big money.

"The Pinkertons got him the little cigar stand he has now. He was down in Joliet, too. They knew he was through—too old to pull off anything else. The old man didn't want to die in the pen. The Pinkertons put him there, so he asked them to help him get out and they did, and started him up in business, too.

HE WANTS TO QUIT CRIME BUT CAN'T SEE THE WAY

"I'm forty years old—I don't look it, do I?—and I'd like to cut it out and settle down now. But I dunno whether I can or not. A fellow don't get a chance after he starts in this game.

"You know how it is. Suppose I go to a man lookin' for a job. I'm a big, strong man. I want work. He says 'Where you been working?' 'Oh, I just got out of the North Dakota state penitentiary,' I tell him.

"Fat chance I've got after that. 'I'm sorry,' he says—you know you always get this 'sorry' stuff; either that or they want to know if you're 'saved'; but that don't help a man—I'm sorry, but I haven't got anything for you just now. Yes, there's a lot of sympathy for the poor ex-convict, but to hell with sympathy! Nobody wants to have him around."

The talk turned to prisons and prison reform. The visitor had gone to Bismarck to find out the state of affairs on the inside at the state penitentiary.

"Well, as far as things here goes, I got no holler to make," said McLeod. "I been in several penitentiaries and I've heard all about all of them, from the fellows that know. This old stuff of beatin' the life out of a man and hangin' him up by the thumbs don't go any more. That kind of thing din't get any where with any man, especially if he's got the guts in him.

"I've had my taste of it. I was hung up by the wrists for two days once when they were tryin' to get me to squeal in a little deal I was in—yes, it was what you'd call a prison break plot—I wasn't

one of the guys that framed it, but I was in it.

"You know, I'm a Scotchman and I've got a little of the old Scotch stubbornness in me. I was about all the time when the warden came around. He says 'Well, McLeod, have you got somethin' to tell me now?'

"'No, Warden,' I says; 'I haven't anything to tell you.'

"When a man goes through things like that it don't make him love the law any. It don't give him any new respect for society. It's the bankers and the rest of the good people that hire the cops and the wardens and build the penitentiaries. Treat a man like a dog and he's goin' to get even if he can, whether there's anything in it for him or not. Treat a man like a man and you've got a little better chance that when you turn him loose he'll have a try at goin' straight.

MEN WHO TELL TALES TO WARDEN AND OTHERS

"Of course, there's always a sneakin' lot o' hypocrites workin' for a pardon an' tryin' to work the warden and the keepers for a soft thing. You'll find that in any prison. That don't prove nothin' against the honor system.

"These are the guys that are always tellin' somethin' on somebody else so as to make themselves the warden's friends. Of course, we hate those fellows just like you'd hate that kind of an animal on the outside. Suppose you told a man that you supposed was your friend some information in confidence and then this guy blabbed it where it would do you the most harm. You'd despise the dirty, yellow cur, too.

"There are always a lot of cowardly murderers and rapists that are too good to associate with common thieves. These are the fellows that get up in religious meetings in prison and tell how good they are and how sorry they are for what they did.

"I remember one of these fellows in Joliet one time that stood up and told how he was 'saved' and then he says, 'I thank God that I never was a thief.'

"There was a bunch of good square crooks sittin' near him and they couldn't stand for that. They began to growl and mutter: 'Why, you damned murderin' rapist, you're worse than any thief that ever breathed.'

"This particular fellow happened to be assigned to work in the commissary storeroom, where I was working the next day and a couple of us heaved a pile of boxes over on him. We didn't hurt him any; we just let him know what we thought of him."

Before he got through, McLeod paid his respects to the Fargo police department. They're a lot of "Hoosier yaps," he said.

"This guy Troyer hires a lot of stools from Chicago and other cities," he said. "Then he takes credit for what they turn up. What kind of a way is that to run a police department—hirin' a lot of cheap crooks to turn up other guys they know? Say, if I couldn't run a police department better than that I'd go to sawin' wood."

McLeod didn't deny that he was incensed at the Fargo department because, as he said, "they gave him a bum rap," in this matter of the revolver he was carrying in his coat when Officer Charles Anderson picked him up in the railroad yards as he was preparing to resume his journey.

"I was just roamin'," says McLeod. "I didn't come into this Hoosier burg to pull off anything."

At the time, he said, he was on his

way westward from Chicago, where he had completed a year's parole and thereby gained his discharge from Joliet. He was enabled to make good on the parole by the kindness of a friend, the publisher of a theatrical magazine, who employed him in reviewing burlesque shows. This friend is an old circus man, a pal of his Forepaugh days.

The Fargo police took his measurements and succeeded in getting an identification from Chicago. In police and criminal parlance, they "made him." He got a year on a charge of carrying a concealed weapon where an ordinary hobo would have drawn a jail sentence and a respected citizen would have been let off with a warning or a fine.

As the visitor shook McLeod's hand in parting and expressed the hope that he would have a chance to talk to him again, the veteran of many prisons added a special word addressed to the next state administration.

"You tell them political friends of yours," he said, "that they don't want to put any warden in here that will try to bring back that old rough stuff. There'll be hell in this stir if they do."

"Stir," in crooks' language, means prison or penitentiary.

IS THE LEADER ANY GOOD

as an advertising medium? Aaker's Business College placed seven students in good positions last week and has already placed Conrad Leraas with Fargo Knitting Mills, Agnes Wood with the Co-Operators' Herald, and Luella Basset with an insurance company this week. Mention the Leader when you write for catalog so we may know if it is a good paper to advertise in. Write to A. B. C., Fargo or Grand Forks.

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