The Prison Mirror.

"IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND."

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For The Mirror.

THE POWER OF MERCY.

"This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."—Luke, xiii. 43.

When high upon Golgotha's cross the dying Savior hung,
And up from the jeering mob below cruel, bitter taunts were flung,
Whose love and faith triumphed o'er sin and death
And turned and prayed to the dying Christ even with his latest breath,
And to whom of all redeemed mankind the glory great was given
Of entering at his Savior's side the newly opened Heaven:
No priest or prophet was he, nor Jewish prince or chief;
But, wondrous power of mercy, an executed thief!
So yet may earth's condemned ones, through Christ's redeeming love,
Leave prisons, gibbets, here below for thrones in Heaven above,
If they but turn to God and pray for mercy as did he
To whom the Savior pardon gave that day on Calvary.

C. H. O'NEIL.

Jan. 27, 1888.

For The Mirror.

THE TWO SCHOOLS.

In Three Chapters.

CHAPTER III.

The reader of the two previous chapters has condemned or excused the young man who started in life with bright prospects, but now lies in an unmarked grave; but pray do not be too hasty to enroll yourselves upon the register of your chosen school. Let us see what course his brother has followed during these years.

We left him at home under the instruction of the good family physician, trying to gain a knowledge of one of the most honored professions. He studied hard and advanced rapidly, teaching during the winter months until he had money enough to attend a course of lectures. Near the close of his first course of lectures, as he was honestly endeavoring to devise some means for finishing his professional studies, he made the acquaintance of a young man who was sailing in a boat of like color with his own, and they began to "scheme." It would take two years to earn money enough to complete his course if he taught school, and this seemed the only honest course. His friend had been into various "schemes" and they had worked like magic. They could earn menoy enough in a few months to complete their studies and have something left with which to begin the practice of their profession. So, after much thought and careful arrangement, they decided to migrate to a distant state and gather up the surplus currency of the hardy sons of toil. For farmers were the objects of their scientific dealings. They were soon on the ground, and being bright, fine appearing and industrious, the scheme "worked like a charm." They soon had the money they started out to get, but they had a great deal more—they had a taste of dishonesty and had learned that there was other ways than honorable ones to get money. They went on until they were finally arrested and it took about all the money they had to get them out of the clutches of the law. But what was money? They could soon replace it, and they did. When the time came for them to go back to their studies they had devised another "scheme" to work in one of the large cities during the winter, and they thought they would skip one year of study.

Well, we will make the story short and say that though many times under arrest our friend has never been convicted and has devoted his life to "scheming." The last time the writer saw him he was of the opinion that "a dull, prosy life is but a shade removed from the realm of the dead." We cannot say what his future will be, but judging by the light of reason he will never be a member of an honorable profession or fill an honorable station in the world. If he does it will be after a cyclone has struck him and he wakes up to a realization of the fact that "all is vanity."

The reader is no doubt wondering where the sons of B have been and now are, and what doing. They have been within the bounds of reason and are now filling honorable stations in life. When A's sons entered the college of their final choice, B's sons were at home working on the farm. The winter following they taught school, and returned to the normal in the spring. There they remained until fall and again resorted to teaching. In the spring they entered a more advanced college, and remained two years. At this time they were given their choice, to complete their college course or enter their professions. They chose the latter—the older choosing the legal profession and the younger the medical. The former is now a member of the legislator of his native state, the latter, on account of ill health, was forced to abandon his profession and is now at home superintending the farm. Their parents are going down the decline of life peacefully, proud of their manly sons. Their neighbor A still laws and frets and fumes, and rides his hobbies, chief among which is, that educatiou was the ruin of his boys. He fails to see wherein he can be censured.

We have told the story of these two families, because they represent two great principles in life. We could have made the contrast more striking had we not been dealing with characters, all but one of whom are living, but we trust we have been successful in our object in detailing facts which embody principles effecting every thinking human being. True, all are not given the advantages of education, nor are all reared on farms, but the principles of government and training, as well as the natural tendencies of such training on the youthful mind and the final effect upon the moulding of character, is the same the world over. And not only are these principles applicable to the youthful mind but in the busy world. Every one belongs to one of these great classes. One is selfish, the other unselfish; one is unbalanced, the other balanced; one uses force, the other persuasion; one is impatient, the other patient; one abuses power, the other regards it as a great trust and responsibility; one would grind all who do not think with them under the heel of oppression, the other would reconcile, compromise, live at peace with the world; one can see no reason for the mistakes of others, the other has charity for all. To sum all in two words; one is UNREASONABLE, the other REASONABLE.

One word in regard to the much-abused term "education." There is but one true purpose in education, and that is the bettering of one's condition, education for a purpose and to a definite object. Better educate the boy to swing an ax, or the girl to know the mysteries of the washtub, than give them a knowledge of books and place them above the level of honest labor, yet not educated for any definite purpose –to know how to do any particular thing that will afford them more than a mere existence. The country is full of educated vagabonds, who, thrown upon their own resources, are as helpless as infants so far as making a living is concerned.

O. C.

Eternity is crying out to you louder and louder as you near its brink. Rise, be going! Count your resources; learn what you are not fit for, and give up wishing for it; learn what you can do, and do it with the energy of a man.—F. W. Robertson.

It don't vas der feller mit a big head, dot vas oxtreemly shmard. Heads mit goot shuffin in 'em, und a heart dot hafe a mortgage on dot brain, vas der shtatesman.—Carl Pretzel.

The best people are not those who say the most or speak the best, but they who say the best and do as they say.—Ex.

What utter disregard must a man have for himself who is the father of a dude.

For The Mirror.

Early Strugglee.

We were both the sons of poor but honest parents, who, as luck generally runs, were blessed (?) with a superfluity of children. The other fellow was a little dog, or rather, a little pup, and of his parents or pedigree I know nothing, but I think none the less of him on that account. His name has escaped my memory, but that is of little moment, for as the poet says, "A dog by any other name would smell as sweet," so we will call him Tray, as I believe it is considered a very respectable name among dogs, though I must admit that he proved unworthy of it in his latter days.

Of my own parents I will say but little. They were of the poor, common every-day sort of people and had to work very hard in order to supply their numerous offspring with the bare necessaries of life.

I was about twelve years old at the time this story begins and the other fellow was at about the same stage of life as myself. I know nothing of any previous arrangement having been made, but I suppose there had been, for one day a healthy looking man came to our house and I was called in and presented to him, with my thumb in my mouth. He looked me over, about as a farmer does a calf that he contemplates buying, and then remarked that he thought I would do. He then asked me how I would like to be a farmer, and in answer I supposed I changed thumbs. I was then informed by my parents that the gentleman had no little boys of his own and was going to take me home with him to raise. I had never seen a farm, but had heard that the apples and watermelons and lots of other good things all came from there, and that farmers always had plenty to eat. So I was not at all grieved at the idea of leavidg home; in fact, I believe I showed open delight by removing my thumb from my mouth.

After good-byes all around I started with the farmer to my new home. On the way to the wagon we called at a house where he had previously been and bargained for a pup on the same terms that he had secured me. There and then I met, for the first time, the pup mentioned above and named Tray. I little dreamed then how woven together our fortunes were to be for a time, nor how much alike our journey through life would prove to be. After getting Tray we went to the wagon, and while the farmer was hitching up Tray and I improved the time in getting better acquainted. He was dressed much better than me, but he did not assume any superior airs on that account. He indicated his desire to be sociable, and we soon became fast friends.

Everything being ready the farmer lifted me into the wagon, where there was plenty of hay, then with a "cluck, cluck," and a slap of the lines we were off for our new home. Night soon shut out the strange scenes along the country road, and we sank to sleep. When we awoke we found ourselves being lifted out of the wagon at the door of a little cabin in the woods. It was very dark, and the light shining out through the little vine-clad window and door, dimly revealing the strange surroundings to my sleep-bewildered mind caused me to think I was dreaming. But I began to realize the situation when I heard a voice saying, "Ah, ye have come, have ye? Phwat in the divil has been kapin' yees till this toim o' the noight? O'il bet 'tis drunk ye are, ye baste! Phwat is it ye have there? Oh! me loif if ye haven't them both! Oh, the darlints! Me darlints!" Here I felt myself being lifted into the air and smothered with caresses. "Oh, Hannah, Hannah! come here and see phwat yer darlin' father has brought home with him." Hannah came, she saw and conquered—the pup— and we made a triumphal entry into the house.

Hannah was their only child and was about fourteen years of age. She lavished the greater portion of her attentions upon Tray, but I suppose that was on account of his being more elegantly dressed than I was.

Supper was waiting and when the good farmer came in we sat down to a good substantial meal, and I assure you that modesty did not prevent me from smoothing out the wrinkles of my little bread basket. Hannah did not forget Tray.

Supper over, we soon retired for the night, I in a bed of feathers two feet deep, and Tray was given the liberty of the house, which liberty he used in such a manner as to incur the lasting displeasure of the good wife and debar himself from ever enjoying the like privilege again.

Poor Tray, he was only a little, inexperienced pup, and I cannot blame him, but I verily believe that his imprudent conduct brought upon me, as well as himself, the disfavor of the good wife. (Good wife by courtesy only.)

Before we begin with our farming experience which will be brief, I will give you a short description of the family. The head of the family was the most even-tempered, kind-hearted man I ever knew, and I don't think I ever heard him say an unkind word to man or beast. His wife, well, she was his direct opposite, except at rare intervals, when she was the most affectionate person I ever saw. The daughter was a great pet but resembled the mother most.

When I awoke the next morning there was every indication of a storm, and by the time I got dressed it broke forth with great fury. Although it was only a domestic storm, yet it was terrible. The frantic cries of poor Tray could be distinctly heard above the peels of Irish thunder. There was lightning—the good farmer lit out for the barn and I lit after him. He looked very grave but said nothing. By the time we got through feeding the stock the storm had ceased and we returned to the house. On the way I saw poor Tray sitting behind the smoke-house rubbing his ear with his paw and moaning pitifully. That morning was the beginning of the end. Such scenes were almost of daily occurrence during the few weeks we remained there. First Tray would be the victim, then me; and then the good farmer. I and Tray had our faults but I could see none in the farmer.

One morning the good wife came out of the door with a pan of old biscuits, and calling Tray she pitched him one which he caught on the fly, but not closing on it quick enough it passed down without chewing. Several more met with the same fate—she hesitated—he wagged his tail and nodded his head—she gave it a slow, meaning toss—he took it in—fatal error. Then with a terrible curse she hurled pan and all at his defenceless head. She turned and went quietly into the house, but I felt that something was going to happen, and it did. That same day I heard her informing the good farmer that boy and pup must both go, and we did the next day. I believe the good farmer pitied us both and thought it his duty to return us to our homes. So he put us into the wagon again and we bid farewell to farm life. I remember that I was not at all sorry to leave the place, but the farmer had been very kind to me and I had formed a great friendship for him and was a little grieved at the idea of having to part from him.

When we arrived in town we did not wait to be taken home, but I jumped out and Tray followed and we went for our different homes as fast as our legs could carry us. I must conclude so I will sketch the remainder as briefly as possible. The farmer's wife made life such a burden to him that he took to drink, and I saw him many and many a time lying in the gutter or under his wagon, dead drunk.

Tray became a town loafer, got into bad company, lost his good name, and when dog days came he fell into the hands of the dog-catcher, and having lost all his friends but me, and as I was without money or influence to get him out of the pound he was executed.

My own life so far has been similar to that of poor Tray. I am in the pound, but not executed as yet.

Now, dear reader, don't say that the simile should have been carried out to the bitter end.

L. P.