



"IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND."

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WON'T SLIP A COG.

In sailing o'er the sea of life, my brother, do not think
If you should leave the Progress craft 't'd go to wreck and sink.
Don't feel that you possess the earth with all that in it lies,
And hold a chattel mortgage on the planets in the skies.
You're but a tiny single drop of water in the sea
Of all the great and active tide of live humanity.
And you should always bear in mind, though lofty be your height,
This world will never slip a cog when you drop out of sight.

Though you be rich in gold and lands, and bear an honored name,
Though as a star you glitter in the firmament of fame,
Remember that the humblest man you scornfully pass by
Will stand your equal at the bar of justice up on high.
Though you may think yourself above the honest working man,
May look on him as dross while you're a nugget in the pan.
You scarcely will be missed when from the earth you take your flight—
The world will never slip a cog when you drop out of sight.

The proudest monarch on the earth must some day take his stand
As humble as the lowest slave the breezes ever fanned.
And when by hand of God the seals of that great book are given
The man of toil may be a prince, the king shut out of heaven.
Then as you meet your fellow men don't for a moment think
That in the endless chain of life you're an essential link.
And always keep this solid truth within your memory bright:
The world will never slip a cog when you drop out of sight.

—Denver Post.



Written for The Prison Mirror.

LETTER WRITING.

It is claimed that letter-writing is on the decline; that its usefulness is fast disappearing; that the newspaper, the telegraph and the telephone have taken away its occupation. While this is true, in some respects, I claim that the fine art of letter-writing is still in the ascendant; that it is one of the grandest accomplishments any one can be blessed with. And it is an accomplishment, one that by most people must be acquired. Only to the gifted few has nature presented it.

As a historical, biographical, or descriptive agency, correspondence or the diary are superfluous and out of date. In those cases the above mentioned inventions have at least greatly impaired the usefulness of letter-writing. But, as a means of intercourse, it can never be supplanted. To the poor, home-sick wight, to the unfortunate whose days and nights are spent in solitude; to the over-worked young person who is just starting in life, to the brain weary student, there is nothing so inspiring, so restful, so delicious, as the perusal of a well-written, carefully conceived letter from a loved one or some well-wishing friend.

In a letter, the character, the peculiarities, the individualities, the very soul of the writer are laid before us. We are in touch with them. For every thought, every expression, we have an answering sentiment. It is as though we were sitting side by side engaged in pleasant conversation. No matter how trivial the expressions may seem, they disclose to our minds some of the beauties of character of the writer, some of the pleasing memories or incidents of the past. We are lost

in reverie; we are reading between the lines. How our bosoms swell! We are carried back to our mother's knee; to the side of wife or sweetheart; rolling and tumbling on the floor with our first-born astride of us pulling our hair and shouting with glee; or perhaps some sweet, sad memory steals o'er us and we stand beside the grave of some blighted hope. At any rate we are rested, revived, strengthened and made better by the perusal of the letter.

And a letter never lies—or, at least, it never deceives. Any well-cultured person can convey almost any impression in conversation, concealing their thoughts or coloring them to suit the fancy; but when these thoughts are placed upon paper they are transparent as glass.

Do not neglect your letter-writing. It is an ennobling occupation, and you may rest assured that great good will result from it.

D. W. K.

Written for The Prison Mirror.

IDEAS ON READING.

Reading constitutes our chief pleasure and perhaps it would be true to say that reading and studying the thoughts and ideas of others constitute the cardinal pleasures of all civilized people—whether they be at liberty and consequently capable of choosing between their likes and dislikes or if they be in a state of restraint like we are and have no voice in their choice except when reading is concerned.

Our mind is constantly at work and we must give it either wholesome or unwholesome working material. We know from personal experience that if we want a sound, healthy physical constitution, we must provide it with sound, healthy food. So also with our mental being; if we want that in a healthy condition, we must reject all poisonous substances and only absorb that which invigorates and strengthens.

This question has often occurred to me: Why do we let our mind dwell upon the low and morbid, or worry and fret about some imaginary thing that will land us in an abyss of melancholia and despair? Better far to link our mind with that of some great mind portrayed in a book and share his pleasures and triumphs, wander with him into some unexplored region and get an inkling of the pleasant sensations a person feels who is able to say: "I am the first living being to touch these shores." Or we may linger by him in some shaded bower and feast our mind with his bright, pleasant thoughts.

There are many differences of opinion about what kind of reading is the best or of the greatest value, but each one of us must choose for himself. We may take for example a quantity of candy; each individual piece is composed of sugar, but they are flavored with different ingredients to suit different palates and so it is with books. We may read a book that is considered unwholesome and still get a great amount of benefit from it, because jewels are generally found in the mire and there is no law that says we should take the mire along with the jewels, any more than there is a law that says our stomach should force every particle of food we eat, into the blood no matter whether it be life giving or life-destroying.

Many persons read books simply to convince themselves that their thoughts and ideas are correct; and whenever they find a book that does not correspond with their ideas they pronounce it no good. Others read books for the general thoughts they contain and take them up and engraft them, so to speak, into their own thoughts where they may grow, and, if the soil be deep and fertile enough they may in the future loom up and bring forth beautiful and luscious fruit.

F. J.

Written for The Prison Mirror.

"DOES CRIME PAY?"

Every now and then we run across the above gnarled, twisted, moss-covered interrogation voiced by Adam beyond the gates of Eden and reechoed by every successive generation since the creation. Like Banquo's ghost, it will not down. No sooner has it been exorcised by the church, seemingly, than its appearance is noted in the legal domain. Ejected from this field by an army of phantoms, it proceeds to haunt the journalistic field. "Ad otium cum dignitate," or more correctly, perhaps, it takes up its temporary abode in the extremely confined limits of an editorial cranium, the outward appearance of which would suggest "dignified leisure" at death as well as dinner.

But even ghosts require a measure of space to turn in, and some time for repose. The journalistic cranium admits of neither, for the incessant rattle and noise of machinery therein, disturbed the restful quietude that the shade of this most expansive question requires for profound rumination. This field, then, is forsaken by it and among the musty, dusty tomes of science and philosophy it finds a home after its own heart (for ghosts have them,) and there it plays at hide and seek with the chance visitor, who, from time to time, disturbs its pleasures by trying to build a seine around its playground, like a picket fence about an empty sepulchre. So far this may be considered characteristic of its umbra life. But, we see there is another phase of this umbra life, from the Styx. It has an intermural existence.

Some day a philosophical disciple of Cacus temporarily in the custody of the "Blind Goddess" resting under the watchful eye of "Father Chronus," will resurrect this, Oh! so tired spectre, and, with all the wisdom of a Seneca, united to the spirited invectiveness of a Cicero in an arraignment of a Cataline; all the eloquence of a Demosthenes launching his Alexandrian Phillipic on "The Crown," will hurl forth the momentous question: "Does Crime Pay," at an audience who, did conditions permit, would gladly rise as one man and perform the "last sad rites" on both shade and materializer in the hope that such an act of undoubted courtesy would be duly appreciated by all mankind. The question is asked, too, with all due seriousness, in spite of the fact that the most ancient inscription now extant bears the heading, "Does Crime Pay" and was found amid the ruins of an A 1st grade, kindergarten school on the border of Babylon. Its appearance in "THE PRISON MIRROR" is due I opine to the psychological law having as its basis a cycle of about nine years in length, or to be exact, the period is nine years, three months, and five days, as stated by Buddha in his "Theosophical Book of Cycles." The annular periods are septenary or about 7½ weeks between their visible periods; can be seen by the naked eye, or with the aid of an electric light. On close inspection of the shade as it there appears we may readily perceive that 'twas a novice who withdrew the shroud from the grinning, polished skeleton; one who most sincerely believes that it does not "pay"—when caught.

But when the oft evoked umbra adorns the head of a leading article we wonder, (judging by ourselves, of course) whether there is not a more than usually alluring prospect in view. Those seeking a solution of this question ere entering into crime as a profession may procure some 100,000 testimonials, from graduates, within the limits of the U. S. and these may be supplemented by 500,000 more from

the mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, wives, children and sweethearts, beside a million or so relatives and friends, all of whom directly or indirectly, are competent, from bitter experiences of manifold nature to answer this question. And so well known is this fact, that the persons who question the commercial value of crime are set down, by the general public, and criminals as well, as being seriously afflicted with the disease known as "Non compos mentis."

We earnestly recommend that some one of that class propound the query: Does it become necessary to eat when one gets hungry? Or, if daylight never came would it still be dark? Or, is a person dead when buried? or any question of a similar intricate nature, that will require more concentrated energy to be applied ere a solution can be effected.

LEONARD.

A CALIFORNIA EX-CONVICT WANTS TO DIE IN PRISON.

District Attorney Snook is in receipt of a rather remarkable letter from a man confined in the Alameda County Jail accused of a felony. The letter is an appeal from the prisoner, admitting his guilt, and asking that the authorities proceed with all possible haste with his case, and that he be sent back to the prison where he has already served one term. The man's name is Charles E. Jackson, and he is charged with having forged a check on the First National Bank of San Jose, by which he secured \$50 from Frank Grassi, a Livermore hotelkeeper. The letter, which is as follows, has aroused much interest among the officials of Alameda county:

OAKLAND, CAL., Nov. 1897.

District Attorney Snook—Dear Sir: I was brought here from Livermore yesterday on the charge of forgery, having waived preliminary examination. I am an utterly discouraged man. Something like eight years ago I finished a five years' sentence for the commission of the same crime in Folsom prison. I wish to plead guilty to the present charge. Will you kindly hasten the proceedings of the court in my case, so that I may be speedily sentenced and sent to Folsom. During the past eight years I have been again and again thrown down by friends who turned against me when hearing that I was an ex-convict. Fellow ex-convicts have repeatedly blackmailed and pointed me out to my acquaintances. I have been time and time again on the verge of committing suicide. Homeless, friendless, disheartened, I am prepared to receive as long a sentence as the Judge chooses to give me, and only hope that my life may end ere my time is out. Again I most respectfully request you to hasten the proceedings in my case. Very respectfully,

CHARLES E. JACKSON.

"Fifteen years ago I had a good position in Denver," said Jackson, in telling the story of his life. "I was a heavy drinker, and at last my accounts were short. I was not guilty of the theft, but they sent me to the penitentiary from which I was pardoned in a few months. My wife died and I came to California. The fact of my imprisonment followed me. Work was not plentiful, and at last in utter desperation, I forged a \$500 check, got the money, and then faced the music. I went to Folsom penitentiary, where I served a five years' sentence."

"When I was released I felt like a new man. I believed I had reformed. Returning to Sacramento, to where I had committed the crime, I made myself known to the Rev. J. H. Ryder, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, to whom I told my story. For three years I lived an upright Christian life. I was honest, but in spite of all this, I was hounded and persecuted by men who should have given me a helping hand. The man who suffered by my crime never forgave me. Once when I was about to be given a position that would have enabled me to pay him back again, I was exposed and forced to

leave. Times without number the words, 'He's an ex-convict,' were thrown at me. Soon I was an outcast and down I went. I left Sacramento, and tried to live decently, working hard for my living. Ex-convicts would find me out and often to hush them I would part with my hard earnings. I was driven out of society, out of decent surroundings, and now, when the stress of misfortune has completely overcome me, I have committed crime again.

"Yes, I knew what I was doing. I made not the slightest effort to escape. I am a wretched, miserable, disgusted man, ready now to go back to the prison and end my life there. God help the ex-convict, there is no hope for him."—San Francisco Examiner.

CHARITY.

"Charity should always begin at home" is a true, but sad to say, a seldom followed admonition. Churches and religious sects are always preaching about their foreign missions and the poor suffering heathen (?) in other lands. They send money, clothing and tracts to China, the wilds of India, Africa and South America and allow people to starve to death at their doors. It is true that there are the Home Missions as well as the Foreign ones but why not dispense entirely with all work abroad until there are no more poor in this land. "Charity begins at home," do not lose sight of that fact, or just make a beginning of a charity here and waste all the main efforts abroad. If a clergyman told the members of his congregation to learn to be Christians by converting someone else, people would laugh at him, yet his church sends money abroad when it is needed here. In what light do you suppose a foreigner that you have been spending money on to convert views your actions when he reads in the American newspapers of the crime, destitution and want right at your doors? Does he respect you for trying to help him out of a bog when you are in so deep yourself as to be almost beyond help?

Begin and finish your charity at home; every effort is needed in this land, at your very doors, and it is entirely unnecessary to go abroad to find some one to help. But right in this country you can find some one to whom you can give a lift and who will appreciate it the more because it comes from a neighbor and a countryman.—Elmira Summery.

A PREMATURE PROPOSAL.

Widowers, as well as widows, are the targets of many jokes. Here is a story they tell of a farmer in a certain county not 50 miles away from St. Louis.

His wife had been in poor health for some time, and one day he was called in from his work because she was so much worse. The neighbor women told him to hurry to town for the doctor. He rushed out to the stable, saddled a horse and galloped toward the village, a few miles distant.

As he rode he met an interesting widow. She was interesting because she had been a widow but six months, and the departed one had left a good farm to her. Of course, she wondered why neighbor Jones was hurrying so. She called to him to know what was the matter. He pulled up his horse, turned toward her and said:

"My wife is very sick. They don't think she will live, and I am on my way for the doctor." He paused, and seemed about to ride on, but a thought struck him. He leaned over toward the widow and asked anxiously:

"If she does die, will you have me?"—St. Louis Republic.

The utility of life is not in its extent; it is in the employment of it.—Montaigne.