

The Prison Mirror.

Edited and Published by the inmates of the Minnesota State Prison.

Entered at the post office at Stillwater, Minn., as second-class mail matter.

This paper will be forwarded to subscribers until ordered discontinued and all arrears are paid.

Should THE MIRROR fail to reach a subscriber each week, notice should be sent to this office and the matter will be attended to at once.

Contributions solicited from all sources. Rejected manuscript will not be returned.

THE MIRROR is issued every Thursday at the following rates:
One Year \$1.00
Six Months .50
Three Months .25
To inmates of penal institutions 50 cts. per year
Address all communications,
Editor PRISON MIRROR,
Stillwater, Minn.

THE MIRROR is a weekly paper published in the Minnesota State Prison. It was founded in 1887 by the prisoners and is edited and managed by them. Its objects are to be a home newspaper; to encourage moral and intellectual improvement among the prisoners; to acquaint the public with the true status of the prisoner; to disseminate penological information and to aid in dispelling that prejudice which has ever been the bar sinister to a fallen man's self-redemption. The paper is entirely dependent on the public for its financial support. If at any time there should accrue a surplus of funds, the money would be expended in the interests of the prison library.

NOTICE.

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THE cause of civilization is advanced by all who labor. By the scholar, taxing his health and energies working far into the night over an abstruse problem; by the "soulless corporation" connecting two continents with a cable or penetrating the primeval fastness with a railroad; by the merchant, the sailor, the planter and the laborer. All are working for themselves and for each other. No man can work only for himself. If what he accomplishes is beneficial to him, it benefits others as well as himself; if it is harmful to him, it is also harmful to others at the same time. An indissoluble, unseverable bond connects all human kind. None can stand apart and truthfully say, "this is for my benefit only," or "this hurts no one but myself." The interest of the individual is in the final analysis the interest of the race. And so also are the responsibilities of the race the responsibilities of the individual.

This great mutual interdependence of nations, this world-wide community of interest in which all men are involved is becoming more markedly apparent each day. What we call civilization is a process of development from egoism to altruism, and the world is becoming more civilized each hour. Paradoxical as it seems, the very selfishness of man is hastening the process. The other day word was sent out from Washington that Secretary Wilson was greatly concerned over the report that the foot and mouth disease has appeared among the cattle of the Argentine Republic. Fifty, yes, twenty years ago every head of cattle on the Pampas might have died and rotted without being once thought of by a United States government official. But civilization advances in geometrical progression when once it gets well started, and commerce has brought the altruistic dream of a "brotherhood of man" almost into the sphere of actualities. Today no community can live for long in isolation. To try to do so is to commit social suicide. China, bowed beneath the yoke of tyrannous custom, is making the attempt, but she will as surely be broken up and assimilated by more civilized peoples as the sun will rise tomorrow. She must co-operate with the force or be overwhelmed by it.

We are all one people—human beings. In the broad, logical sense, there are no nationalities, no competing races. Unconsciously, we depend upon each other to a degree that makes the word Independence, as applied to any of us, a jest. The Bulgarian peasant suffers from the failure of the Minnesota wheat crop; the discovery of a new mine in the Transvaal affects the inhabitants of the Northwest Territory; the bankruptcy of a Baring brings ruin to the small Australian shopkeeper; a break in the levees of Louisiana or Mississippi causes a bread riot in Manchester, and the threatened outbreak of a cattle disease on the plains of the La Plata may reduce the wages of five hundred Chicago stock yard employees who never heard of South America.

When men come to realize that the interests of each one are woven in the web and woof of the whole social fabric, thus becoming the interests of all, there will be fewer strikes, more hearty co-operation and less class and sectional strife. We are brothers, all of us, good, bad and indifferent, only we don't understand it yet.

A READER of THE MIRROR, H. G. G., 808, takes exception to what was said in these columns last week in reference to Mr. J. G. Shedd's published remarks on success. He says, in part: "Is not the

man, who from poverty and obscurity has forged ahead and won a high place for himself in the commercial world, the one best able to give advice to those who have not been successful in the great field of labor? We will accept Mr. Shedd's statement seriously—not literally—as he intended it should be accepted. I will give a brief outline of his business career, and you may judge from that whether he is or is not competent to speak on success. At the age of fifteen he entered the employ of Marshall Field and Co. as a cash boy, and was advanced from one position to another until he became the foreign buyer of silks and laces for the firm. At that time he was a young man and as he was with the firm only twenty years before he was made a partner, his work must have given satisfaction. Do you not think the experience of one who has raised himself without influence and by his own ability from a cash boy to a partner in one of the largest establishments in the world is likely to be of value to others? If his position does not spell Success with a very large capital S as plain as pen can write it, then the word is without meaning to me."

Our friend H. G. G. has misunderstood us. THE MIRROR has no inclination to scoff at any man who does things, and if it had such a desire it would curb it. Our comment last week was devoted entirely to Mr. Shedd's phraseology. His advice was probably excellent, and he unquestionably knows whereof he speaks, but the sentence quoted in THE MIRROR was indefinite, incoherent, liable to misinterpretation and of no practical value to anyone not possessing a key. It is not necessary to point out the road to success to the man that has "found his work." Every human being possesses the ability to be successful in some honest and useful line of endeavor, and not only to be successful, but to derive a keen joy from his work: the great difficulty is to find the right line before it is too late. If those who have succeeded would tell us how this is to be done, their advice would be invaluable. As it is, their experience is of great value, but it is not too much to ask them to express themselves in comprehensible terms.

LAST week we took occasion to comment on the destruction of one of the state magazines by some smart Alec in the cellhouse, and today we wish to say a few words regarding the mutilation of some bound magazines belonging to the library. We were shown one a few evenings ago that had a number of pictures torn out and was badly torn otherwise, and we were assured that somebody is making a practice of this sort of thing. It might be said that it is none of THE MIRROR's business whether the library books are misused or not, but that is open to a difference of opinion. There are only a few inmates here who so entirely lack any sense of decency as to ruin the state's books, and in protesting against such wanton destruction of property, THE MIRROR voices the sentiments of all the rest.

THE terms of the settlement of the dispute between the Great Northern and its trainmen have not been made public, but it has been admitted by both sides in the controversy that only a spirit of good-natured give and take averted the threatened strike. As it is, both parties profess satisfaction at the outcome. It is to be regretted that some other labor organizations throughout the country do not follow the example set by this trainmen's union and make an honest attempt to effect an amicable settlement of their difficulties, instead of assuming that all the right is on their side and that there is nothing to arbitrate. Never in the history of organized labor has it been so arrogant and overbearing in its demeanor and so unreasonable in its demands as within the last six months. Why? Simply because the employers have got to fulfill their contracts or lose large sums of money, and consequently can not afford a shut down at this time. In the great majority of instances where strikes have occurred lately, the disputes could have been settled by arbitration. Friends of organized labor note this display of autocracy with sincere regret. The union is strong only so long as it is supported by public opinion, and the public is getting heartily sick of holding the bag; sick of boycotts and picketing, of having to pay double prices for the necessities of life, because union men won't work themselves or allow anybody else to work. The people of Denver have formed an organization for the purpose of enforcing the fundamental principle of our government—the right to do honest work unmolested. This Citizen's Alliance, as it is called, is already 7,000 strong. It will undoubtedly be the first of a number of similar organizations throughout the country which will in time seriously curtail the sphere of union labor—and who can say the unions will not be getting just what they deserve?

FOR the information of recent arrivals, THE MIRROR wishes to state that every inmate of the prison is entitled to send out one copy of the paper to friends each week. Write the address to which you wish to send the paper on a slip, along with your own name and register number, and give it to the night guard who will see that it reaches the editor. Do not write on the margin of your copy of THE MIRROR, but try to keep it as clean as possible. After sending in an address once, don't bother any more about it unless you want it changed. It is not necessary to send in the same address each week, as books are kept in THE MIRROR office and when a name is once entered the paper is forwarded regularly until the sender is discharged or until notice to discontinue is received. All this information is contained in a standing notice on the local page, but it is disregarded each week. Pay some attention to it for awhile, just to show you're a good fellow.

ODDS AND ENDS.



...BY...
H. J. B.

Plans are now developing for a railroad to traverse the long peninsula of Lower or Baja California. There is less said, written and known of Lower California than of any other equally large territory in North or Central America, south of the Arctic regions; and yet there is nothing but a surveyors' boundary line separating Lower California from our own state of California. From our boundary line just south of San Diego, California, this isolated territory stretches southward 800 miles, with a varying width of from 50 to 125 miles. It belongs to Mexico, but is separated from Mexico proper by the Gulf of California—and to the natives it is Baja (pronounced Baaha) California, baja being the Mexican or Spanish word for lower.

The Southern Pacific railroad company is preparing to extend a long arm from the American border through the whole length of this narrow peninsula. There is now not a mile of railroad in that state or territory, whichever it may be—a territory stretching through eleven degrees of latitude to the tropic of Cancer. Its climatic conditions are good and it contains great mineral wealth, with agricultural possibilities that modern enterprise will prove to be worth developing. It requires a considerable amount of financial courage, however, to construct a railroad through the entire length of this narrow peninsula, with ocean competition on both sides and with other roads within reach, across the Gulf of California.

But railroad companies nowadays know with some degree of certainty what is in sight before undertaking the construction of roads and they seldom fail to get what they go after. Who would have thought until very recently that there was wealth enough in Alaska to warrant the expenditure of millions in constructing a railroad in that far northern country? But today it has not only one, but two or three roads under construction, one of which is now doing a good freight and passenger business over the few miles in operation, and a company has recently been organized in British Columbia to construct another road from some point in that territory to the Klondike. The country through which this road will run contains not only great mineral districts, but large wheat land areas. It costs more to build and operate a railroad in that far northwest than in this part of the country and therefore the revenues will necessarily have to be correspondingly large to warrant their construction.

The prison grounds at Charlestown, Massachusetts, must be larger than our Stillwater enclosure, for according to the *Mentor* published by the inmates of that institution, they have a game of baseball once a week.

After four years of successful operation, free employing agencies in Chicago have been closed. Some four years ago the state of Illinois passed a law authorizing these agencies, a number of which were established in Chicago and maintained by the state, but now the law has been declared unconstitutional. Trades unionism at the outset looked with disfavor on these bureaus, declaring that they would tend to cheapen the price of labor, as they made no distinction between union and non-union men; and it secured the insertion in the bill of a clause prohibiting state employing agencies from furnishing workmen to employers

during strikes or lockouts. The supreme court now declares that this clause is unreasonable and invalid, and therefore the entire law has been nullified. These bureaus have furnished employment, without charge for their services, to many thousands of persons and have proved of much benefit to men seeking work, to employers and to the general public. Their discontinuance will add to the profits of the ordinary employment agencies, but it will increase the number of the unemployed in Chicago. Organized labor may now be made to realize that it could well have tolerated the help to the weaker brethren which this public agency was unselfishly rendering.

A New York divine asks the following question: When is a pie like society? and answers it by saying, "when the upper crust is soaked in champagne, the middle in cocktails and the bottom soggy with beer."

The "rough house" in that Joliet church recently is another reminder that all is not gold that glitters, that all the "goody-goodies" are not goody good. According to press dispatches several hundred men and women and practically all the congregation except the priest, engaged in a free-for-all fight, in the midst of services, using fists, pieces of furniture, etc., and all without any provocation. But most people would naturally think the provocation must be very great that would cause any person to fight in such a place and on such an occasion, whether that person be good, bad, indifferent, a saloonkeeper, detective or in prison.

When Captain Cook first visited Tahiti the natives were using nails of wood, bone, shell and stone. When they saw the iron nails which the captain had they fancied them to be shoots of some very hard wood, and, desirous of securing such a valuable commodity, they planted them in their gardens.

Writers say many things on paper and at long range that they would not say to your face.

The Odds and Ends man is not a spring chicken, his experience as a writer dates back but two years when he began writing for THE MIRROR, this work having been done on Sundays: and, by the way, these columns are now just one year old. But my heart goes out in sympathy for the editors of the large papers and magazines that have circulations of hundreds of thousands of copies, for on these editors, their ideas, their judgment, their editorials, rest very largely if not wholly, the responsibility for the success or failure of their publications. Hence, they must feel called upon to exert every effort, strain every nerve to its highest tension in their endeavors to think out such thoughts and write along such lines and in such ways as will please the greatest number of readers. Magazines that are filled with cheap fiction at ten cents a car load, like the *Argosy* and many others, don't count; but solid, heavy publications, like *Collier's*, *Harper's*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Saturday Evening Post*, etc., etc., where hundreds of thousands of dollars in advertising is involved, the responsibilities resting on the editors, in their own direct line of work must be very great, to say nothing of the work in connection with the contributors, etc.