

BEHIND THE BARS.

AN INSIDE VIEW OF THE PENITENTIARY GIVEN BY A PRISONER.

The Amount of Joy or Misery a Convict May Find in His Incarceration—How Prisoners Employ Their Leisure Hours.

[Buffalo Courier Interview.]

"Life is about what one makes it, whether guarded doors and iron bars stand between him and freedom, or the whole world is his to wander in at will," said a prisoner at the Erie county penitentiary to a reporter. The speaker and his companion were standing in one of the corridors of the mail department, gazing upward at the whitewashed cells which rise tier above tier to the roof. A chorus of peculiar sounds strangely but not harmoniously blended broke upon their ears. Sighs and groans, whispered conversation, cheerful chit-chat, the subdued notes of a familiar hymn, and the air of a favorite ballad softly whispered, told of the varied moods of the occupants of the narrow apartments. The speaker was relating some of his peculiar personal experiences and striving to convey to his companion some idea of what it means to be "behind the bars."

"When a man is sent here for a long term," he continued, "the amount of enjoyment or misery he gets out of his incarceration depends entirely on himself. At first, of course, the confinement chafes him and he longs to regain his freedom, but after becoming accustomed to his new surroundings this impatience or restraint is succeeded by a sort of philosophical resignation. He has tried the strength of the bars and looked into the resolute faces of the keepers in vain for some sign of weakness, and he concludes that to escape by force of physical prowess or the bribery of the attendants is out of the question. The city papers say no more about his case; his friends, one after another, cease to call upon him, and he comes to the conclusion that he has been forgotten by the world, and nothing remains save to serve out the time of his sentence in a living tomb and strive by cheerful compliance with the prison regulations to cut short the period of penal servitude. With the short term men it is different. The expectation of an early return to their accustomed haunts keeps them from forming any settled habits or laying out any plan of procedure.

"The more intelligent long-term man is, the less he suffers. The illiterate and the dull are apt to become morose and melancholy, and spend their time in unavailing lamentations, while the educated and ambitious man feels that he has made a grave mistake in life and sets his mind at work to devise some means of regaining a portion of what he has lost. Without a purpose in life an intelligent prisoner would go crazy. A few days ago one of the prisoners brought me the model of an ingenious and complicated machine which he had invented since his incarceration, and this model is now in the hands of a patent solicitor with a fair probability of the inventor reaping a handsome reward for his industrious brain work. Another man who recently completed a five years' term here, wrote a technical work on electro-plating during the odd hours spent in his cell. Others are skillful whittlers, and fashion wonderful things with their jack-knives. One of these whittlers carved a handsome model of a lake steamer, perhaps two feet long, out of a solid block, and fitted it up with cabins, smoke-stacks, paddle-wheels, masts, and all other features and furnishings of one of the fresh-water boats. This was placed on exhibition in a downtown show window and attracted much attention. Others make a careful study of certain games, such as checkers, chess, etc., and in time develop wonderful skill. Then there is a certain class whose chief aim seems to be to gather as much money as possible, so as to go out into the world with enough to give them a business start.

"One or two have property which is managed for them by their families or agents, and these give up their thoughts to the best course to pursue in the management of their possessions. There are, perhaps, two or three who devote all their spare time to the formation of plans for escape, but these are destined to nothing save disappointment. Still, if they are not easily discouraged, even this occupation of mind is better than none at all, for it keeps them from despair and melancholia. Even prison life can not crush out individuality, and we have here inveterate punsters, good story-tellers, misanthropes, violent infidels, devout believers, skeptics, men as humble as a triathlete, and all the other types of character common to the outside world. We even have our poets.

"I believe if a long-timer has a special talent he should be given full opportunity to cultivate it. Society has no right to permanently dwarf a man's powers while he is undergoing punishment for some misdeed as a warning to others. The ends of justice are sufficiently satisfied when the intelligent man is compelled to undergo the ignominy and disgrace of a prison cell, and after incarceration the idea should be reform rather than revenge. The prisoner should be given full scope in his efforts to prepare himself for an honorable career of industry when his sentence has expired. If he is prepared to enter one of the learned professions, or excels in one of the fine arts, so much the better. Society applauds the man who rises from a bootblack to positions of wealth and honor, and there is no reason why she should turn a cold shoulder upon the reformed culprit or refuse to recognize his genius because he has slept in a prison cell.

"A short-term prisoner is never in a better condition for reform than when he leaves his place; the whisky is all out of him, his person is clean, he has become in some degree habituated to daily labor, his head is clear, his digestive power good, and his mind in a measure freed from evil influences. Let him return to his former haunts and old-time associates and all will be lost. Then, if ever, society should throw about him his protecting arm and see that he is started on the right road. All this may seem rosy colored to you, but we who are inside know more of the nature of the so-called criminal class, and, while it would be idle to expect a general reform, I feel confident that a sufficient number would be saved from going back to their old ways to make the system a success.

That Early Spring Cough.

Buffalo Express. "Listen! What do you hear? A cough? What does it indicate? Perhaps a tickle in the throat, perhaps bronchitis"—thus a patent medicine advertisement. Oh, no, it indicates that the young man with the suit-goods hat and the Waterbury watch is trying to attract the attention of the young woman in the Newmarket opposite.

ARTISTIC MECHANICS.

Practical, Day-Working Toolers Who Stand High in Scientific Specialties.

[Scientific American.] A recent notice of a mechanic in Massachusetts who is an expert in that department of natural history of which the butterfly is the chief representative, suggests other and similar instances. It may be that the exactness required in mechanical work develops a taste for close study, or it may be that natural history and pure science be one pleasant toils to the monotony of mechanical work; but it is the fact that some practical, day-working mechanics stand high in some scientific specialties.

There is a machinist—a fine tool maker—who is well known, and widely known, as an amateur astronomer. He has contributed importantly to the science, and is not surpassed in nicety and precision in designing astronomical mechanism. Another is an expert steel engraver by choice and as a pastime, and yet, incredibly as it may appear, he is a smith or forger, handling steel and iron in bars and the heavy hammer of the blacksmith all at day, and doing delicate steel engraving at night or "at hours." He has nearly finished designing and engraving a series of plates representing the child's legend of the "Death of Cock Robin," the proofs of which are really fine.

One left the machine shop three years ago, and set up as an engraver on jewelry, plate, and similar articles. He is the originator of his designs, and rarely makes a second drawing. He is a wonderful producer of elegant and legible monograms. A set of six silver buttons for a vest, all uniform in general design and no two alike in particulars, is very artistic, and yet he designed and engraved the six while the customer waited—perhaps an hour. These two instances show that the bent of the authors was naturally artistic rather than mechanical.

There is a young man, 30 years old, a joiner, who is better authority on the flora of New England than some of the authors of accepted text books. The fields, pastures, woods and by-ways are his haunts when he has an hour "in the season." He is not surpassed as a herbalist, and is quoted as authority where he is known.

A surgeon was spoiled when another man, a machinist, went into the shop. He acts at call in setting bones and reducing sprains. He is so successful that he is in the confidence of the professionals, who are not ashamed to profit by his suggestions.

This mechanic, however, only carries to its ultimate a faculty and a practice that is not uncommon in the shops. It is rare, indeed, that in case of an ordinary accident in the shop there is necessity for outside aid. When the writer was a youngster, he lodged a piece of the sharp, hammer-hardened head of a cold chisel in one eye. The "shop surgeon" applied a powerful magnet without avail. Then he cut out the obtrusive particle with a keen penknife blade, making an incision just as he might in a finger. A professional surgeon who afterward examined the eye said that it was a "very creditable job."

Funeral of a Chinese Prince.

[Pail Mail Gazette.] The funeral of the Chinese Prince Lau-Fu, the cousin of the Emperor (Quang Su), has been conducted with all the pomp, and ceremonies due to the exalted station of the deceased. The procession which accompanied the remains of the prince to his last resting place was headed by thirty-six slaves, clad in garments of green cloth and bearing a huge wooden cage, representing the funeral of the soul. These were followed by 100 slaves dressed in red and carrying tablets inscribed with the titles, honors, and virtues of the dead.

Next came twenty sportsmen leading the 240 hounds once belonging to Lau-Fu, the camels, mules, horses, sedan chairs, and the private carriage, drawn by a mule, sixteen servants dressed in green silk, bore an arm-chair covered with a tiger skin, a regiment of cavalry and infantry followed, then the body servants and camels, thirty-two priests with temple music, and finally the coffin, borne by eighty servants and covered with a silk pall. The emperor was represented by six empty carriages, behind which walked the grandees. Prince Lau-Fu's arms, carriages, clothes, tents, etc., were all burned as a winding up of the festivities.

The Mad Found Him.

[Chicago Herald.] A pretty young mamma, with a little girl by her side nearly as pretty as herself, was being entertained by a male stranger, who had struck up an acquaintance through the usual and always convenient mediumship of the little girl. The stranger did all the talking. He was one of these men who think they know every thing, but only rarely get a good chance to tell it. The lady answered only in monosyllables. The little girl listened patiently and demurely for a time, and then began to fidget around in her seat. Finally, as the stranger stopped for breath, she said:

Depopulation of France.

[Boston Transcript.] The depopulation of France has been receiving much attention from the Paris savants. M. Luder proposes that the government take legal steps to facilitate marriages, to search out the sterility of infants, to accord prizes or immunity from taxation to parents having more than two children, to guarantee secrecy to any mother who may wish to leave her child at a founding hospital, and to extend the protection of the state to all children "morally abandoned." Since the year 1800 the French birth rate has fallen from 32.9 to 25.5 per 1,000 inhabitants.

The "Sorrowful Tree."

[Chicago Herald.] Near Bombay, on the island of Goa, there is a singular vegetable termed the "sorrowful tree," because it only flourishes in the night. At sunset no flowers are to be seen, and yet an hour after it is full of them. They yield a sweet smell, but the sun no sooner begins to shine upon them than some of them fall off, and thus it continues flowering in the night during the whole year.

Vaccination in Prussia.

[Chicago Herald.] Vaccination is carried out so strictly in the Prussian army that not a soldier has died of small-pox since 1875. If the same system could be applied to the whole population of Europe it is believed that the disease would disappear in five years.

Mark Twain's Success.

[London Letter.] Mark Twain is said to have cleared \$35,000 from his reading tour this season. This is doubtless the largest sum ever realized by an author, from readings of his own writings, since Dickens made his famous American tour.

Patents in Mexico.

[London Letter.] Patents in Mexico cost from \$10 to \$300, according to the ideas of the office there as to the importance of the invention covered. The usual rate is \$25.

MANUAL OF ARMS.

[Army and Navy Journal.] "Present arms!" There they are Both stretched out to me— Strong and steady, smooth and white, Fair as arms can be.

"Ground arm!" On the floor, Picking up his toys, Breaking all within his reach, Busiest of boys.

"Right wheel!" Off his cart; "Left wheel!" too, is gone: Horsey's head is broken off, Horsey's tail is torn.

"Quick step!" "Forward march!" Crying, too, he comes: Had a battle with the cat— "Cratched off bofe my fums!"

"Shoulder arms!" here at last, Round my neck they close, Per little soldier by Off to quarters goes.

The Zebra.

[Minnesota Tribune.] The zebra is a striped animal of the order of Pachydermata. It is gregarious and is usually formed of sand and water barrels. Its chief habitat is central Asia, but it also frequents the neighborhood of Tannu, where Englishmen get inside it for the purpose of being killed by Araba. It has been supposed that the wooden horse of Troy was a zebra. In the desert where grass is scarce it will eat solders—Graham fed ones preferred. One of the zebras most famous in history was that manufactured by P. T. Barnum. He made it out of a broncho with a paintbrush and two pots of black and yellow paint. One day one of the water barrels burst and washed the paint off. He explained it by saying that the animal had zebra spots and meningitis. A small zebra is called a zerebellum.

Zebras are rather difficult animals to handle. The best way to treat one is to establish it. That done you can retreat in good order toward Haheben (or Tammanib if Osman will let you) and, after exercising a strict censorship over the press correspondents, send home dispatches saying that you have killed 1,000 rebels and would like to be appointed to a position in Missouri. Should this be refused, you can open a real estate office in a small frontier town, hire a man to find gold in the neighborhood, and then open a saloon, with a faro layout in the back premises, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith. That done you can wait till a vigilance committee is formed and then go back to the land of white men and endow a home for orphans.

Shaving and Boot Blacking.

[New York Graphic.] The luxury of an American shave is a thing that Englishmen hear a good deal about and which they are generally anxious to experience when they arrive on our shores. After having tried it they say the luxury is a delusion and a snare. Every Englishman shaves himself and that is why traveling Americans look in vain for an artistic capillary abridger in London. The American asserts that nowhere but in his native land are true artists with the razor to be found.

A shave every morning is as much a part of the average Englishman's toilet as a bath, or, as he calls it, a "bawth." An American shirks from shaving himself, and somehow considers it a thing beneath his dignity, when he can hire a man to do it. He performs a far more arduous labor, however, when he blacks his own boots. To an Englishman nothing is more insulting than a suggestion that he blacks his boots. A man may be a blackguard, a drunkard, may not say his debts, may live by his wits or the wits of some other man's wits, and according to the English notion may yet be a "gentleman," but let it once be known that he blacks his own boots and he is expelled from a decent society.

Origin of "Old Hickory."

[Boston Budget.] Gen. Jackson was known among the soldiers who had served under him as "Old Hickory," a sobriquet given him during the Creek war. His brigade was making a forced march without baggage or tents, to surprise the Indians in one of their villages, and were for several days and nights exposed to the peltings of a March storm, the rain freezing as it fell. Gen. Jackson got a severe cold, but did not complain. As he tried to sleep in a muddy bottom among his half-frozen soldiers, Capt. Allen and his brother John cut down a stout hickory tree, peeled off the bark and made a covering for the general, who was with difficulty persuaded to crawl into it.

Vanderbilt Brothers' "Comet."

[Chicago Tribune.] Two of William H. Vanderbilt's grandsons, William H. and Cornelius Jr., have a taste for publishing, and print a monthly journal called the Comet, which they print under the firm name of Vanderbilt Brothers, editors and proprietors, 1 West Fifty-seventh street, the residence of their father, Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt. They write their own matter, set it up type, and print it from a press they brought home with them a short time ago from Europe. They are proud of their production, which is really a handsome specimen of typography. It is not large, but it is neat in design as well as execution. No. 1 contains an offer of "a handsome penknife for the best original story in two chapters, not exceeding 250 words in a chapter."

Pay of the British Soldier.

[London Letter.] A private in an English infantry regiment receives 24 cents a day; a lance corporal, 31 cents; corporal, 41 cents; lance-sergeant, 59 cents; sergeant, 58 cents; color sergeant, 75 cents; and quartermaster-sergeant, 91 cents. These rates are subject to the following deductions, viz.: One cent a day for washing, and 6 cents a day for groceries and vegetables. These consist of tea, coffee, sugar, potatoes, and green vegetables. After these deductions, then, the pay of a linesman is 17 cents a day, but as he has to provide his own underclothing, further deduction of 2 cents daily is made, thus reducing his actual pay to 15 cents.

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COMPARATIVE WORTH OF BAKING POWDERS.

1859--1885

Table with columns for brand names and their corresponding values for comparative worth of baking powders.

REPORTS OF GOVERNMENT CHEMISTS As to Purity and Wholesomeness of the Royal Baking Powder.

"I have tested a package of Royal Baking Powder, which I purchased in the open market, and find it composed of pure and wholesome ingredients. It is a cream of tartar powder of a high degree of merit, and does not contain either alum or phosphates, or other injurious substances."

"It is a scientific fact that the Royal Baking Powder is absolutely pure."

"I have examined a package of Royal Baking Powder, purchased by myself in the market. I find it entirely free from alum, terra alba, or any other injurious substance."

"I have analyzed a package of Royal Baking Powder. The materials of which it is composed are pure and wholesome."

The Royal Baking Powder received the highest award over all competitors at the Vienna World's Exposition, 1873; at the Centennial, Philadelphia, 1876; at the American Institute, New York, and at State Fairs throughout the country.

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NOTE.—The above DIAGRAM illustrates the comparative worth of various Baking Powders, as shown by Chemical Analysis and experiments made by Prof. Schoderl, A pound can of each powder was taken, the total leavening power or volume in each can calculated, the result being as indicated. This practical test for worth by Prof. Schoderl only proves what every observant consumer of the Royal Baking Powder knows by practical experience, that, while it costs a few cents per pound more than ordinary kinds, it is far more economical, and, besides, affords the advantage of better work. A single trial of the Royal Baking Powder will convince any fair minded person of these facts.

While the diagram shows some of the alum powders to be of a higher degree of strength than other powders ranked below them, it is not to be taken as indicating that they have any value. All alum powders, no matter how high their strength, are to be avoided as dangerous.

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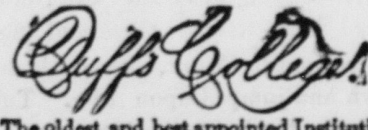
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