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Beautiful Thoughts. A poet prayed for a beautiful thought, which he might make the theme of a song, as sweet to the ear it caught...

CONVICT NO. 18,600.

My occupation a few years ago was that of a newspaper reporter. I worked a large part of my time in a penitentiary, where more than 1600 prisoners were confined.

One morning, on entering the penitentiary, and proceeding to the book which contained the routine items for the press, I found this slip: "No. 18,600. Edward Washburn, life prisoner, sentence commuted to twenty-eight years, six months."

Here was something to be investigated. On making inquiry I found that Edward Washburn had been received on a life sentence in 1870, and that now, after a lapse of over twenty years, the Board of Pardons—the eternal source of hope for all prisoners in that State—had acted upon his case, with the above result.

Each convict has a certain number of days deducted from every month of his term, according to the length of his sentence, if he demeans himself properly. Thus it lies in the power of a "long time" man to gain years of freedom.

The next thing to do was to see Edward Washburn himself. The sentences of a man who has been a convict for twenty years, who has been completely isolated from the outside world as if he were dead and buried, and who is then resurrected, called back to life and liberty, cannot be devoid of interest to the most indifferent.

The long years of prison life had had their effect. The prisoner was an old man, broken in body and mind, although he told me his age was 42. I explained that I had permission to talk with him, and would like to hear about his history.

"How did I feel when I heard I was pardoned? Well, it was so sudden-like I just had to sit down. I had given up all hopes of ever getting out long ago, but Mandy was true grit, she was, she never gave up."

His next words were unusual. "I don't blame nobody but myself for being here," he went on. "Who ever heard of a convict before, who attributed to himself the blame for being in the penitentiary? Most convicts are the innocent victims of villainous conspiracies. They never even dreamed of committing the crime for which they are serving sentence."

"It was all along of my bullheadedness, but I guess I'd better go back to the beginning of my story if you want to hear it all. When I was about 19 years old, Jason Scott and me took the job of clearing 80 acres of land close to where Pauldin is now. In them days the town was only a clearing with a few log shanties. Jase was a couple of years younger than me. His father an' mine had come west from Columbian county and settled in Pauldin. We was the only boys in them parts then—the only young folks exceptin' Mandy Picheer."

"We figgered on clearin' our land winters, as our fathers agreed to give us the time after corn huskin' was done, providin' we helped them good summers. Jase and me built a cabin and there we intended livin' while we was doin' our choppin' and clearin'. There was lots of snow that winter and it come early. Oh, how I hate the winter! The snow lyin' out there in the prison yard brings the hull thing back to me, and how happy Jase and me was, workin' and talkin' about what we was goin' to do. I can most see the cabin now, with the door open and the snow all around as it looked that winter mornin'."

started out, leavin' Jase to follow. I walked out a little ways and then looked around to see if Jase was comin'. He warn't, and I waited and hollered until I got all out of sorts with him. A crazy idea struck me, and I just thought I'd shoot toward the cabin for fun and mebbe that would fetch him. God knows I didn't want to do my harm. I was jus' a great big foolish boy and I got tired of waitin' and I thought I'd shoot for fun, and mebbe that would fetch him."

I looked at the man and he was no one in agony. His face was drawn, and a pallor was there which added to the prison tan and made it ghastly. His voice, puerile from the disuse of twenty years, had sunk into a hoarse whisper. He was staring at the great stone wall in front of him with dull, vacant eyes. He seemed oblivious to everything and kept repeating, "I didn't mean any harm. I only thought I'd shoot for fun, and mebbe that would fetch him."

I have looked into murderers' faces on the verge of eternity while the death warrant was being read, in order that I might tell the public next morning whether the lip quivered or the eye grew dim, but as I gazed upon this picture of weakness and misery on the wheelbarrow in front of me it made me sick. The victim of an act done in "fun"—and this was fun!

The man presently came to himself and went on: "As I shot, Jase came into the door, and when the smoke cleared away, I saw him lyin' just outside in the snow, face downward. I member pickin' him up and carryin' him inside, and then startin' out to Pauldin for help. After that I don't remember nothin' until I found I was lyin' on the ground and a crowd of men standin' round me. I heard one of 'em say: 'He must have tripped up on that grapevine and hit his head on the root of the tree. It 'pears as if Washburn and Scott must have had a racket—over that girl most likely—and Washburn killed Scott.' I found out afterward that a huntin' party had stopped at the cabin and found Jase lyin' on the floor dead, with my bullet through his heart. They looked for me and finally saw my tracks in the snow and followed them. They found me a couple of miles away in the woods, lyin' at the foot of a tree where I fell."

"Some believed my story and some didn't. Them as didn't believe it said 'wasn't likely if what I said was true that I would n't tried to run away. All I know is I wanted to set out for Pauldin, but it 'pears as if I'd gone wrong some way."

"The Judge, as he said, wanted to 'low me a fightin' chance and give me the privilege of enterin' a plea of manslaughter. I said it was all along of my bullheadedness that I am here now, and so it was. My lawyer wanted me to plead guilty of the charge the Judge offered me. I asked him what it meant. He said it meant that I killed Jase in a racket, and then give me a long lingo about malice aforethought, or something like that, but I didn't understand it. I only knew they wanted me to say I murdered Jase in a racket. I warn't goin' to say I done a thing when I didn't. I flared up and wouldn't listen to nobody."

"I couldn't see things right. Well, the trial didn't take long. Everything went crossways for me. I told my story and pleaded guilty to nothin' except that I didn't mean anything. I just shot to scare him. I didn't care much what they done with me for that. The other side showed how Jase had been found dead in the cabin, how I was found lyin' in the snow miles from Pauldin, as if I hadn't been going for help. Then they got witnesses who swore as how Jase and me were jealous bout Mandy, how I'd asked her to go to a gathering with me, and she'd gone with Jase."

"It warn't so, I knowed it, but it wouldn't do no good for me to say it warn't. Mandy and me understood one another, though there warn't much betwix us then. I s'pose she might have told me what she knowed about it on the stand, but I wasn't goin' to have her mixed up in the thing. I loved they couldn't convict me because what I said was true."

"The jury fetched in a verdict of murder in the second degree, and accordin' to law that meant for life. They carried Mandy out of the court room. Seems as though she thought it was her fault some way or 'nother. Mandy's been tryin' to get me out ever since. She said if it hadn't been for her they couldn't 'a' shown no motive and couldn't 'a' sent me for life. I don't see what good that 'a' done when they was all a'pin me."

been talkin' with Washburn, have you?" said he. "Well, Mandy is his girl. They say she has been coming down here from Pauldin once every year with petitions and signatures to place before the Board of Pardons. Yesterday Washburn's sentence was commuted, which, by the way, you will find by looking on the press-book. A picture of a faded little woman who had asked me the year before in the capitol if I would please tell her what time the Parlon Board met, rose in my mind. I said to myself, "That was Mandy."

As a rule the world does not throw open its arms to released convicts. It sees that all the windows in the home are well secured at night, and that all the doors have extra fastenings on the day the papers announce a new list of releases. The people have not time to go down to the prison and watch the men pass out through the big gate. They pay a small sum each year to have that office performed by big burly policemen. The policemen accompany the convicts down to the union depot and see them off on their trains. It would be such a pity to have them go alone."

The morning of the day Washburn went out there was only one other present besides the policeman and reporters. It was the worn little woman who had asked me a year ago in the capitol if I would please tell her what time the Parlon Board met.—[Kate Field's Washington.]

Amusements and Manners in China. The hard-working inhabitants of the Celestial Empire, as the Chinese please to name their immense territory, are not unlike other nations in their love of amusements.

The Full-moon Festival makes every city in China bright and joyous. The moon-cakes are for sale everywhere;numerable lamps shine from streets and gardens and rivers; singing girls go about the streets, and story tellers gather crowds around them to listen to their interesting tales of dead emperors and heroes; Punch and Judy meet you at every street corner, and acrobats and gymnasts perform to admiring beholders.

But the grand festival held on the fifth day of the fifth moon—the Dragon Boat Festival—is the great gala day of China, for the reason that the dragon is pre-eminently the Chinese symbol. It is embodied in everything which belongs to the nation. Its literature, its art, its classics, painting and porcelain are full of it, and architecture presents it everywhere. They have volumes full of stories relating to this wonderful creature. It is the imperial emblem of China, so that the Emperor's person is always spoken of as the "Dragon's person"; his throne is the "Dragon's seat"; his bed is the "Dragon's bed"; his countenance, the "Dragon's face"; his eyes, the "Dragon's eye"; and when he is dead they say he has ascended upon the Dragon to be agonized on high, and even his tomb is called the "Dragon's tomb." We need not be surprised when we see this Dragon in every size and position upon the beautiful pottery and expensive porcelain and various tableware or in painted ornaments which come from Canton.—[Harper's Young People.]

A Willy Answer. Those whose misison in life it is to entertain the public are always pestered by friends and acquaintances for free seats at their entertainments. There probably never was a singer or an actor or a pianist who was not bored nearly to death by these people many of whom had not the slightest claim to ask the courtesy they demanded.

A pianist who was pre-eminently successful in his day, and that day was not so far back either, was Rubinstein, who travelled nearly the whole world over, delighting people with his genius. He, like all others, was very much annoyed by requests for complimentary tickets, but most of the time he maintained his composure even though justly irritated. It is told of him that just before one of his recitals in London he was accosted by an old lady in the entrance hall, and thus addressed:

"Oh, Mr. Rubinstein, I am so glad to see you! I have tried in vain to purchase a ticket. Have you a seat you could let me have?" "Madam," said the great pianist, "there is but one seat at my disposal, and that you are welcome to, if you think fit to take it."

"Oh, yes; and a thousand thanks! Where is it?" was the excited reply. "At the piano," smilingly replied Rubinstein.—[Harper's Young People.]

CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

"I THANK YOU!" Three little words, nine letters wide, And yet how much these words betide! How much of thought or tenderness This short, "I thank you," may express!

When spoken with a proud disdain, 'Twill chill the heart like frost on rain; Or, when indifference marks its tone, 'Twill love's sweet impulse into stone. Be not afraid, my little one, As time goes on beneath the sun, While marching in life's motley ranks, For all your blessings to "give thanks."

First, thank your God for life so fair, For tender mercies great and rare, For health and strength, for home and friends, And loving care, that never ceases. Then thank the ones, whose eyes they try, That do a kindness unto thee; 'Twill cost you little, pain you less, This sweet "I thank you," to express. —New York Ledger

AN IMPERIOUS PRINCE. A funny story is told about the little Crown Prince of Germany, who is only thirteen years old. One day, when at play with his brother in the royal nursery, a terrible crash roused the Emperor, who was busy in his study. As the Emperor is very fond of managing his household himself, he hurried to play with his brother in the nursery, a terrible crash roused the Emperor, who was busy in his study.

"Very good, I believe in discipline," said the Emperor, "and I think I had better show you who is Emperor in this establishment." "My brother and I had a little difficulty and I was obliged to show him who is Crown Prince in this establishment."

The giraffe is one of the queerest animals in the world, and is found only in South Africa. It is from thirteen to eighteen feet high, and it has such a long neck that it can reach up and eat the leaves right off the trees. It is very dainty while feeding, and eats the leaves one by one, instead of cramming its mouth full, like other animals, and even some children, which looks so greedy. On its head are two projections that look like horns, but they are not, they are only thickenings of the bones of the skull, covered with skin, and have a little tuft of black hair on the end of each.

At first sight the long neck of a giraffe seems much longer than the hind legs, but this is because the shoulder blades are so long, for the legs are all the same length. The eyes are so large that the giraffe can see on every side without turning its head. When the giraffe is fighting it kicks with its hind legs, and with such violence that it has been known to keep a lion at bay. Its skin is an inch and a half thick. It rarely cuts off the ground, as its neck is too long to reach easily.

The most peculiar thing about the giraffe is its tongue, which is so flexible that it can be contracted so that its tip can enter an ordinary quill. The movements of the giraffe are very peculiar, the limbs of each side appearing to act together. It is very swift, and can out-run a horse, and over broken ground and rocks will leap like a frog. The giraffes that are born and bred in this country grow very tame in the zoological gardens, and will follow visitors around. They eat hay, carrots and onions. When cut grass is given to them they eat off the upper parts and leave the stems, just as we eat asparagus. —[New Orleans Picayune.]

His Carriage Driven by Naptha. C. L. Simonds of Lynn has made a steam carriage for his own use that will make ten miles an hour. The carriage weighs only 400 pounds, and can carry two persons at a time. It has the appearance of an ordinary carriage in front, except there are no provisions made for a horse. The wheels are of cycle make and four in number. The hind wheels are 43 inches and the front wheels are 36 inches, with rubber tires. The boiler and engine are just in the rear of the seat, and give the carriage the appearance of a fire engine. The steam generated in what is called a pop-corn boiler, which weighs 100 pounds. The steam is made from naphtha fumes from three jets. The naphtha is kept in a cylinder, enough to last for seven hours, and there is a water tank that will hold ten gallons. The steering part consists of a crank wheel on the footboard, so that the engine can steer and attend to the engine at the same time.—[Springfield (Mass.) Republican.]

GOLD AND SILVER.

How the Output of the Two Metals Compares.

Interesting Facts and Figures by the Treasury Department.

According to a table prepared by Mr. Edward O. Leach, late director of the United States Mint, America produces a very large proportion of the silver of the world. The silver production in 1892 was according to his figures \$196,595,184; of this amount America produced \$160,000,000, or five-sixths of the entire silver production of the world. Of this \$160,000,000, produced in 1892, \$75,000,000 was the product of the United States; \$59,000,000 from the mines of Mexico; \$15,000,000 from the mines of Bolivia; \$3,000,000 from Peru; \$1,000,000 from Chili and \$2,000,000 from the Central American States. Of the \$36,000,000 worth of silver produced by other parts of the world, one-half comes from Austria, one-fourth from Germany, and the remainder from France, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, Spain, and small amounts from other European countries, while Japan produces about \$2,000,000. Thus the United States is not only the greatest silver producing country of the world, but actually produced about two-fifths of the entire output of the world, and nearly one-half of that produced in America.

In this connection some figures obtained from the Treasury Department on the production of gold will also be interesting. The gold production of the world in 1892 is set down at \$139,516,027. Of this the United States produced \$34,431,577; Australia produced \$39,870,800; Russia, \$23,546,200; Africa, \$22,069,578; British India, \$3,057,900; Colombia, South America, \$3,475,000; Venezuela about two millions, and other South American countries small amounts ranging from \$750,000 to \$1,500,000.

While the United States is today producing as much silver as gold, her productions of silver in the past one hundred years have only been about one-half as much as her productions of gold. The silver productions of the United States from 1792 to 1892 were \$1,146,899,000 and the gold productions during the same period were \$1,907,881,703. Add to this the gold production of the present year and you get in round figures \$2,000,000,000 of gold which has been taken out of the mines of the United States.

California still remains our chief gold producing State. We hear of the gold mines in Colorado, Montana, Nevada and Idaho, but none of them are up to the side of the old mines of California. Of the \$34,431,577 of gold produced in the United States last year the mines of California supplied \$12,571,300; those of Colorado \$5,539,924; South Dakota, \$3,942,496; Montana, \$2,906,022; Idaho, \$1,721,304; Nevada, \$1,571,500; Oregon, \$1,491,781; Arizona, \$1,177,577; Alaska, \$1,571,300; New Mexico, \$999,176; Utah, \$899,175 and Washington, \$733,553.

The southeastern States still produce small quantities of gold. North Carolina turned out last year 278,560 worth of gold from her mines; South Carolina, \$123,305; Georgia, \$94,734; Virginia, \$4970, and Alabama, \$2393. These southeastern States also produced some silver. The mines of Georgia last year turned out \$95,251 worth of silver; North Carolina, \$90,196; South Carolina, \$123,822, and other States in that section small sums.

In silver production Colorado leads the way, the production of her silver mines last year having been \$37,017,999. Montana comes next with productions of \$25,410,127; California, \$13,025,529; Utah, \$10,686,225; Idaho, \$5,812,549; Nevada, \$4,122,700; South Dakota, \$1,011,262; Arizona, \$2,550,955; New Mexico, \$2,350,332; Oregon, \$1,555,861; Alaska, \$1,090,476.

Our gold productions in this country began in 1849, and the silver productions 20 years earlier. The total gold production prior to 1849 did not aggregate more than about \$25,000,000, and the silver productions did not reach even a million dollars in any one year prior to 1861, and it was not until 1871 that they reached as high as twenty millions a year. Since that date they have gradually increased, reaching \$37,000,000 in 1874; \$45,000,000 in 1878; \$51,000,000 in 1885; \$75,000,000 in 1891, and \$74,000,000 in 1892. The largest silver production in any one year in the history of the country was in 1891, which was \$75,417,000. The largest gold productions were in the ten years from 1830 to 1860, at which time they reached from fifty to sixty-five millions per annum, the highest being \$65,000,000 in 1853. During the past decade

the average gold production of the gold mines of the country has been about thirty-three millions per annum.

Pearls. Very few people are aware that the pearl-oyster is not in any way like the oyster which we eat. It is of an entirely different species, and, as a matter of fact, the shells of the so-called pearl-oyster are of far more value to those engaged in "pearl fishing" than the pearls. There are extensive pearl fisheries in the Gulf of California, and some of the finest pearls have been taken from these waters. In 1881 one pearl a black one, was sold for \$10,000, and every year since that time many pearls have been taken from the beds in the Californian Gulf valued at over \$7500 each. But such "finds" are very rare, and, as a rule, the pearls which are brought up are of very little value. The shells, however, are very valuable; most of them are shipped to Europe, where they are manufactured into ornaments, buttons, and the hundred of other articles for which "mother-of-pearl" is used.

Another fact concerning the pearl-oyster and the pearl itself is very little understood. I have seen in books of instruction both in this country and in England the statement that "the formation of the pearl in the oyster-shell is caused by a disease of the oyster"; and this statement is not more generally believed, as it is also erroneous inferences. It is shown from it, that the oyster referred to is the edible oyster. The mother-of-pearl is nothing more than a series of layers of calcareous matter deposited by the oyster upon the interior of the shell, and the pearl itself is a perfectly accidental formation. It is caused by a similar deposit of matter around some foreign object. This foreign substance may be a grain of sand, a parasite, or some similar object, but most authorities agree that it is more usually an undeveloped egg of the oyster around which this natural deposit is thrown.

The large pearls ever found measure two inches long, and weigh three ounces. Those of Eastern origin. The largest found in the Gulf of California did not exceed an inch and a quarter in length, and was somewhat larger than the eye of a bluebird. Most of the Californian pearls are black and speckled. These are considered more valuable than the white.

The White Elephant. In former days the ceremonies attending the capture of a white elephant were very impressive. The discoverer, who is the luckiest man in the kingdom, was immediately made a mandarin; he was exempted from taxation for the remainder of his life, and presented with large sums of money. The king himself visited him \$1,000. As soon as the capture was made, a special courier was dispatched to the king, and a posse of nobles with gifts and robes started immediately for the scene of action. The robes which the captors used in binding the royal victim were replaced by robes of scarlet silk. Mandarins attended to the slightest wants of the animal. Rich feather fans with gilt handles were used to keep the dust from it during the day, while a silk embroidered mosquito net was provided at night. To remove it to the capital a boat was built expressly for the purpose, and a magnificent canopy erected over it, ornamented and bedecked as were the king's palaces. Silk draperies, heavy with silver and gold, enclosed the royal prisoner; and in this state he floated down the river, receiving the acclamations of the people. When near the city the animal was landed, the king and his court going out to meet him and escort him to the city, where a place had been built for him within the royal palace grounds. A large tract of land was set apart for his country place, chosen from the best the kingdom afforded. A cabinet of ministers and a large retinue of nobles were appointed to attend to his wants.—[California.]

An Accommodating Waiter. A man driving a spirited horse stopped at a downtown restaurant for his dinner. The waiter who attended him stood in the door admiring the horse. "Bring him a lump of sugar," said the horse's owner, dropping a fee into the waiter's palm. The man went inside, but soon returned with a bowl of lump sugar and the accompanying tongs. As the horse opened his mouth for the treat the waiter seized a lump in the tongs, and with his customary snavity asked hurriedly: "How many lumps, sah?" Then hearing the laugh at his expense, he hurriedly returned to the restaurant.—[Detroit Free Press.]

Daybreak Song.

Fall sweet is the night beset-haired, moon-kist; The moonlight, strong creature and splendid, But down has a loveliness beaded. Of health and keeness and a pleasant delight In living, that smooths the languor of night Or stress of the noon with its ardor and might. And so, when I rise, Shaking slumber and sleep from mine eyes, Soft smiles come swimming, I long to be under the skies, I long to be up and away, I long to be out with the day At light's first dawning, When the winds are all white And the mists of mist Over the slims of the morning! —[Dixons Francis in the Independent.]

HUMOROUS.

It won't be long until the coal-feeder's victims had him lying in weight for them once more.

Harmony is all right in its place, but the barber and his razor should never undertake to pull together.

Fig— "You evidently think I am a fool." Fig— "I am grateful to find that what I think is evident even to you."

"Mr. Editor, I am told you called me a swindler in a recent issue of your paper." "No, sir, we only print the very latest news."

Willis: "He never fails to give me a sign to smoke when I call on him." Wallace: "He must be afraid you will smoke one of your own."

I do not weep, because, forsooth, Whatever may befall, As long as I have eyes, they'll see, They do not weep at all.

"Do you look to the future with courage?" he asked the maiden. "Yes," she replied. "To say nerve is everything in the wheat business."

Sarcasitic Citizen: "Traveling on the recommendation of your physician, I suppose," Hungry Huggins: "Naw, on the recommendation of me lawyer."

"I'll give that address don't pay. The surest way for a person to get ahead is to keep moving." "Guess you're right. That's the way four or five fellows got ahead of me last week."

"Don't you know, Mily, that it is very rude to turn around to look at a gentleman?" "Mother, I only turned to see if he turned round to see if I looked at him." "Well, if that's all, that's all right."

The Sermon That Was Not Preached.

The Rev. William Dayton Roberts, pastor of the Temple Presbyterian church, devoted several of his earlier years to newspaper work as a reporter on a morning paper in this city. He tells of the following incident: "It was announced that on a certain Sunday evening a prominent clergyman would deliver a sermon on a religiously scientific subject that being much discussed. I was sent on Sunday afternoon to get an advance copy of the sermon. The clergyman had had the foresight to have two copies made, as he supposed it would be wanted for publication, and gave me, as he supposed, the duplicate copy. I had six, and other assignments to cover, and did not return to the office until late in the evening, when, to my surprise, I discovered that I had two copies of the sermon. It was then too late to return the original manuscript for use, and I learned the next day that the clergyman, when he found his sermon was gone, had to preach on another subject and announced from the pulpit that a reporter had taken his manuscript and he must there, take another text. My paper next morning printed three columns of the sermon that should have been preached."—[Philadelphia Press.]

The Form of Birds' Eggs.

A study of the form of birds' eggs has been recently made by Doctor Newboly, of St. Petersburg. He attributes their form to gravity. He thinks that every egg not yet coated with a solid shell departs from the spherical form and elongates, simply because of pressure on it by the walls of the ovary. In birds which keep a vertical position when at rest (such as the falcon and owl), the soft egg becomes short through the bird's weight acting against the ovarian pressure. In birds which, like the grebe, are nearly always swimming, the egg lengthens, because the weight of the body acts in the same direction as the ovarian compression. The point-shaped eggs of birds like the guillemot is due to their often changing their position, sometimes swimming and diving, sometimes perching on the rocks, etc. An examination of all the eggs in the museum of the St. Petersburg University fully bore out these views.—[New York Independent.]