

THE Prison Press.

VOL. 1, NO. 1.

WAUPUN, WIS. TUESDAY, JANUARY, 5, 1886.

PRICE, 5 CENTS.

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Maion, - - - - - MRS W. T. WRITING.

INTRODUCTION.

In presenting to our comrades and the great world of liberty this, our maiden issue of "The Waupun Prison Press," we do so with not a little pride, and deem it proper to make the following remarks by way of introduction.

This, we believe, is the first and only printed sheet ever owned, edited, published, and sent forth to the world, by prisoners confined within the walls of a penitentiary. The success which has attended us since our first consultation in regard to our little enterprise, has far surpassed the most lofty dreams of its founders.

In extending to us the privilege of publishing and sending forth The Prison Press, our warden has, we feel, extended toward us a most beneficial privilege, and each and every prisoner within our midst cannot exhibit too great an appreciation of this favor; we must also not forget to express our gratitude to our popular Deputy, Capt. E. D. Henry, for the many kind words of encouragement, and favors extended toward us, which tended greatly to our present success. In sending forth to the world "this humble little sheet," we most sincerely trust that it is destined to become the cornerstone of that pedestal whereon shall rest the mighty and living statue whose strong arm shall bear aloft forever the flaming torch of reason, mercy, and justice. We trust that the introduction of the printing press into the great penal institutions of this great republic will eventually solve the great problem of true prison reform; and that from the sands of "this rippling brooklet" there may be gathered many brilliant gems of truth, to forever decorate the sovereign heads of "justice" and "right." It shall be our earnest endeavor to bury melancholy, estrangement, and enmity in the vast region of the past, and in their cankered bos-

oms sow the golden seeds of hope, love, and charity.

It shall be the untiring mission of "The Prison Press" to encourage prison literary talent, and to instruct, assist, entertain and amuse all those within our midst. A portion of the net profits of our enterprise shall be devoted to the purchase of such books for the prison library as the prison chaplain may select, thus extending to all within our midst a lasting benefit. Our exchanges, such as we may select, shall be distributed among our comrades at rates within even the most limited means of all. This feature of our enterprise alone will be received with great pleasure by our comrades, especially those who have no means, or whose means are very limited, as they will in either case, have it within their power to procure the very best and latest reading matter. We feel that the great associated press of America especially of Wisconsin will not permit us to want for exchanges to fill this part of our mission.

In thus sending forth "our tiny sheet" to our mothers, sisters, homes and friends, and the great world of liberty, we present therefore a model gem of miniature literature, born and sustained under the most painful difficulties and circumstances, yet we shall use our every endeavor to maintain a credit to ourselves and an honor to our Warden.

"The Prison Press" was organized under the following management.

Geo. W. Kane, Director. Geo. L. Wooten, Editor, Charles L. Stewart, Business Manager. Stewart & Wooten Publishers.

With the above introduction we submit to our kind readers the future success of "The Prison Press."

The Warden's Good Will.

After some hesitation, consent has been given to the experiment of publishing a prison newspaper by the young men who have taken it in hand.

This will be accomplished, it is expected, without interference with the ordinary duties of those who print and publish it, and with no relaxation of the prison rules, in regard to them or other men in prison.

It will afford no license for communication between them and others, either through the paper or otherwise, nor authorize any other method of transacting their business, than at the office as has always been the custom.

No personal allusions to officers or men, gossip or rumors will be made. The Warden does not hold himself responsible for the literary quality of the paper, believing that a liberal license for a free expression of the thoughts of the writers will most conduce to an interest by the patrons of the paper, but he will observe its moral tone and propriety, and will lend his aid to its success.

Another Repair Shop Needed.

The Warden is breaking colts nowadays, the repair shops are overcrowded with work on that account.

TAKE HEED.

We inform our comrades that the system of grading for good conduct in the shops, and for tidiness and cleanliness in the cells, established by the warden, has been done for the benefit of those who desire to merit a good standing, and to have it recorded to their credit.

This system has been explained so often in the chapel that, we all who have been here two months understand it. But for all new comers among us, it may not be out of place to say that the shop-keeper is required to keep a daily record of deportment in the shop; and to grade each man according to his conduct, as nearly as his judgment decides from 1 to 10. The Warden also keeps a similar record of the condition of your cells. From the highest grade in these two respects is made the "new clothing list" for the succeeding month; which list we publish by numbers and term it the Roll Of Honor. No man can get a new suit, whose number does not appear in the list.

Roll Of Honor.

The following is a list of the numbers of those who were placed on the Clothing List for the present month, by reason of the excellence of their record for the previous month.

SHOP'S No's. 1 & 2

No's. 5. - 6. - 12. - 14. - 20. - 31. - 33. - 35. 52. - 61.

SHOP No. 3.

No's. 2. - 222. - 224. - 226. - 227. - 230. 238. - 246. - 257. - 259. - 267. - 276.

SHOP No. 4.

No's. 180. - 180. - 213. - 208. - 141. - 142. 148. - 150. - 158. - 172. - 173.

SHOP No. 5.

No's. 174. - 184. - 200.

SHOP No. 6.

No's. 386. - 400. - 401. - 413. - 416. - 427. 428.

SHOP No. 7.

No's. 437. - 442. - 451. - 462. - 427. - 484.

SHOP No. 8.

No's. 49. - 82. - 85. - 122. - 132.

SHOP No. 9.

No's. 80. - 91. - 101. - 105. - 115.

A Question Of Nationality.

What are the ingredients of our "Irish Stew?"

Economical Fuel.

During the recent cold snap the turnkey hung up some additional thermometers in the cell rooms. We noticed a marked improvement in the temperature.

The Prison Press.

Entered at the Post Office at Waupun, Wis. as second class mail matter.

NOTICE.

TO THE W. C. T. U. AND Y. M. C. A. OF WISCONSIN.

To the above societies, we desire to issue our special invitation for contributions to, THE PRISON PRESS; all articles for publication may be addressed to the editor,

GEO. L. WOOTEN,
Waupun Wis.

NOTICE

To Prison Contributors.

We invite each and every one of our comrades, to send us original contributions, which if meritorious will be published as space permits. All contributions must be sent to us officially; fully signed with the name and number of the author, (name not for publication however, but as a mark of good faith.) Write upon one side of the paper only. Contributors are specially requested to make their articles as brief as possible. No continued articles accepted. Rejected copy will not be returned. Address all contributions to "Editor PRISON PRESS."

Had it been different.

There are 450 male, and 16 female prisoners in this prison. Just think of it! If us men and boys had all been women, there would have been only sixteen of us here.

If the women had all been men there could not have been more than sixteen of them here, so there would have been only thirty-two, in all.

Fresh Air.

We notice in passing some of the cells that the ventilating hole at the back end is often filled or covered up, so that it can afford no benefit in allowing obnoxious air and foul odor to escape. Each one of us should remember that every other man in the cell room is personally interested in the ventilation of every cell. Open them up boys! if you don't want a fresh 'sniff' yourself, the rest of us do.

THIS THE ONLY PRISON NEWSPAPER.

There is published in the Elmira Reformatory N. Y. a creditable and useful weekly paper called the "Summary," which paper, we believe, is circulated gratuitously to the inmates, and is the only newspaper admitted into the institution, and is edited and published by the Superintendent and assistants of the Reformatory, and is not therefore, in any sense, a prisoners paper. "The Prison Press" is the first of its kind, and if all our sanguine hopes are not blasted, it will take the lead in merit as well as in the date of its birth.

Special, To Editors And Publishers.

We fully recognize the fact that present circumstances does not entitle "our little sheet" to that warm sympathy so universally extended by the associated press toward its younger contemporary's, but having a brief knowledge of the great-heartedness of editors and publishers generally, we feel that many will kindly respond to our call for exchanges. In making this appeal, we make no pretenses that "our little sheet" is an equal or fair exchange with even its most humble and distant 'kin' in the great world of liberty, but many who peruse its miniature columns will find therein many anecdotes, hints, original ideas, and much useful information worthy of reproduction in the columns of the loftiest journal in the land; neither do we make this appeal in behalf of "The Press" alone, but rather in behalf of our unfortunate comrades to whom the Warden will distribute gratuitously, the greater portion of our exchanges. "Who will be first to respond?"

For "The Prison Press."

HOW CAN WE BEST IMPROVE OUR LEISURE MOMENTS.

By J. McG.

It is a reasonable theory that all young men aspire to become respected and useful members of society; in order to do so, we must improve our present opportunities by seeking to get all the good that it is possible for us to get out of our present condition, this is not to be accomplished however, by devoting our spare moments to the reading of cheap, sensational literature.

The boy or man who confines his reading to stories of impossible robberies, man-hunting adventures, the rescue of abducted maidens, and like absurdities found in the lower grade story papers and books whose only mission is to pander to unhealthy and depraved tastes, has no time or inclination to think seriously upon life and its responsibilities. The past lives of some of us has been a sad failure, largely because we did not think of these facts, and our present experience ought to be a warning for the future; our surroundings are not as pleasant as we could wish, but we have one advantage that should not be despised, and that is the opportunity for mental improvement; many a man has risen from obscurity to eminence, who did not have half the time for study and self-culture that we now possess. By self-culture, I refer to the development and improvement of all parts of our natures, moral and physical, as well as intellectual. Self-culture cannot be secured if the mind is kept in the unnatural state of excitement which is the inevitable consequence of a continual reading of sensational literature, on the other hand good, wholesome reading nourishes the intellect, quickens thought, improves the taste and kindles the imagination to higher aims.

The first step toward self-culture is a proper course of reading, and this must be conducted intelligently. do not read too much nor too long at one time, but go about it (as you did the eating of your Christmas chicken,) slowly and carefully, that you may get the full benefit of it, when at work in your respective shops, think over what you were reading the previous evening, if it does not come to your mind readily, read it again, and again, until it becomes fixed in your memory. Do not read merely to kill time, for the injury caused by this habit can hardly be imagined.

We all desire to make friends, and it is right and proper that we should, but remember that the next best thing to a good friend, is a good book.

Just so sure as love begets love, does dwelling upon evil beget evil, thoughts engenders thoughts, good ones purify, evil ones corrupt, if your reading is good, so are your thoughts, and so it must follow, as a natural consequence, if your reading is bad, so are your thoughts.

It is the duty of everyone who enters society, to contribute to its welfare and security, which cannot be accomplished by seeking to imitate the hero of some trashy novel.

Whatever man has done, man may do, is an adage which we will do well to remember. Many a man has educated himself by studying one hour each day, and so may we if we have the will to persevere, and the energy to accomplish what we undertake.

We are not obliged to struggle alone and unaided, there are those even here, who are willing and ready to aid and assist us, and if we properly improve our time we may go forth with the satisfaction of knowing that

we have improved our time, and attained that which cannot be taken from us, and in after life we may be enabled to look back upon the past, not with pride, perhaps, but with the certainty that we are the better for our present experience.

City Advertisements.

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Prison Advertisements.

Clint O. Welch,

(Prison Barber.)

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CLINT O. WELCH

LITTLE THINGS.

—101—

A little theft, a small deceit,
Too often leads to more;
'Tis hard at first, but tempers the feet,
As through an open door.
Just as the broadest rivers run
From small and distant springs,
The greatest crimes that men have done
Have grown from little things.

A Christmas Raffle.

BY VINCENT WILLING.

Not many years ago, there was living in the little village of H—, a prosperous young man with his loving and devoted wife, two dimpled cheeked little children and his mother. George Ralston—we will call him—was the station agent and telegraph operator. When his father died, he became the owner of the old homestead, together with four thousand dollars in bank, drawing six per cent interest; his own salary of one thousand dollars per year, provides abundance for him and his family.

George Ralston's life excepting his university days, had been passed beneath the roof where he was born. Dora, his pretty little wife, had been an orphan since her sixth year, at which age she was adopted by George Ralston's parents; for her parents had been lifelong friends of the Ralston's. At the age of seventeen she became the happy wife of George Ralston, her foster brother, and playmate of childhood.

Christmas Eve is here; the snow is lying like an unsullied mantle upon the frozen ground. Church bells are pealing forth their anthems of gladness and of joy. The feeble light of the stars descending from the deep distances, breaks in ripples over the glittering snow; silver fragments of moonshine kiss the glowing cheeks of sleighing parties, while the jingling sleighbells blend in exquisite harmony with the melodious voices of carol singers.

At the Ralston cottage, little Anna and Ella together with many of their juvenile friends, had been holding high carnival, for it was a fact well known that Grandma Ralston was happiest when surrounded by rosy cheeked, and bright eyed little children full of gleeful mirth. And then too, she used to tell such wonderful stories about Santa Claus, and how he loved little children. Dora is in the parlor with the parents of the little visitors, arranging the presents upon the Christmas Tree for the morrow. By the golden hued little warbler is sleeping upon his ivory perch in his little castle of bronzed wire, suspended from the ceiling, while pussy lays stretched full length before the glowing coals.

"To make a happy fireside clime
For weans and wife
Is the true Pathos and sublime
Of human life."

But a few moments ago the last of the visitors at the Ralston cottage had bidden good night to their genial hosts. Dora has just completed little Anna's toilet for bed, and has taken little Ella in hand, while Anna trips over to Grandma for a "tiss dood ni," then another Milliputian goes through precisely the same performance, and then they are put to bed—by that loving soul, their mother—to sleep that sound refreshing sleep, known to but few except innocent little children.

Hark! footsteps are heard upon the pathway leading toward the house, and Dora thinking it must be her husband goes to the door, and opens it just in time to meet, not her husband but Mr. Hansbrough, the village marshal.

"Why!—good evening Mr. Hansbrough, I

thought it was George come home, for we have been expecting him for some time. Come in and take a chair by the fire, for you must be cold," says Dora.

"Good evening ladies, yes thank you," says Mr. Hansbrough as he accepts the proffered chair.

"Have you seen our boy, as you came this way Mr. Hansbrough?" queries Grandma Ralston.

"Well yes, I—"

"In the name of mercy Mr. Hansbrough has anything happened my husband?" eagerly exclaims Dora.

"My dear friends it is with sorrow that I am compelled to inform you of the misfortune which has befallen George Ralston but a short time since; still I do not think it will amount to much."

"Where is he?" almost shrieks Grandma Ralston.

"Yes for mercys sake, tell us where he is," echoes Dora.

"He is in the lockup," replies the marshal.

At the word lockup Dora falls fainting to the floor but her fall is broken by the strong arms of Mr. Hansbrough, who carries her to the sofa, where Grandma loosens her dress, and bathes her deathlike temples, the while imploring the marshal to tell her all about it, for she is stronger than she is (pointing to Dora) and can stand it, for she knows her boy can do no wrong.

"Well you see" says the marshal, "they had a raffle down at John Dolan's saloon this evening, and George stopped to get a glass of wine; after drinking it Mr. Dolan wanted him to take a chance in the raffle. George threw the dice and tied the highest throw, then they all had drinks, a fier the drinks they resumed the dice throwing, and pretty soon they all had drinks again, then Mr. Dolan and George had some angry words, and almost instantly George grabbed a billiard cue and struck Mr. Dolan several times with it—fractured his skull the doctor said."

"My God, my God! my son must have been insane from the effects of wine," moans Grandma Ralston.

"That is just what I think, for Mr. Dolan told me once that he always put whiskey in the wine, just to give it a body" he said.

"Oh Mr. Hansbrough what an outrage, what an outrage. Oh my darling boy," means the poor old lady.

At the trial George Ralston received a six months sentence in the state prison. The Sheriff is standing upon the depot platform with his prisoner, who is surrounded by the ones he adores, talking in the old familiar tones trying to drive away their awful grief. The locomotive bell is ringing, and the engine driver is waiting for the conductors signal to start the train. For a moment George Ralston stoops to the little upturned faces, and presses their velvet like lips to his, then he turns to his mother who presses him again and again to her bosom, whispering consoling words the while, then he folds the devoted wife in his arms, and with a humid touch in his eyes bids her have courage, and love the little ones. The train begins to move, and with one last hasty kiss George Ralston leaps aboard the moving train, followed by the sheriff. Snowflakes are silently falling upon the transfigured faces of the little family left behind like poems of regret. At the curve of the track a car window is raised, a hand thrust forth waving a handkerchief, for reply Dora holds high in her loving arms little Ella, now he is gone.

George Ralston has been in the state prison five months and fifteen days, in fifteen days more he will be a free man. During his confinement he has contracted a pulmonary complaint, and with the rigid discipline of prison life, together with a naturally delicate constitution, the disease has made rapid strides. But

this fact he carefully conceals from the loved ones at home. Let us read his latest letter to his darling wife.

State Prison July 9th, 18—

MY DEAR WIFE:—These few lines I sincerely hope will find you all well, and having a pleasant time. As for myself, my health is not very good but when I once leave the confines of these dismal walls, and am once more with those I hold most dear, I will probably regain my health in due time. My darling wife, have courage only a little while, and I fervently hope all will be well. Kiss little Anna and Ella for papa—bless their little hearts,—and do not forget to give my love to mother.

Yours devotedly,
George Ralston.

Now dear reader let us return to the home that George Ralston left, some six months ago and see how the devoted little family is getting along, for this is the morning George Ralston is expected home. Dora and Grandma Rals on have been cleaning house, and putting everything in the best possible order, for the reception of George. The carpets have been taken up and dusted; the parlor floor is covered with a nice new Brussels carpet, the one that was there being put down in the dining room. The pictures have been taken down, dusted, and rehung more tastefully, the little girls have nice new frocks, while Grandma has on her silk gown that is worn only upon sacred occasions. The woodbine and ivy cling and twine around the lattice upon the porch, while the yard is filled with blooming flowers, and in the trellises are swinging and singing the happy little birds, filling the air with perfume and melody; even old Fido the faithful dog frisks about and barks and whines as if he was conscious of his masters coming. The little girls, Anna and Ella hats in hand are chasing brilliantly colored butterflies, now they come running to the house exclaiming, "mama! mama! here comes some one."

Dora, who has been arranging a fragrant bouquet to decorate the center table in the parlor, comes running out upon the porch, as she hears the voices of the little girls, and meets them closely followed by Johnny Harris, the boy from the depot.

"Good morning Mrs. Ralston," says Johnny.

"Good morning Johnny," replies Dora.

"Here is a telegram for you Mrs. Ralston."

"Thank Heaven! it is from him," she exclaims.

"Come children let us go into the house, and let Grandma read it. Oh Johnny! here is a present for you," as she hands the boy some money.

Dora and the little ones hasten to the parlor where Grandma Ralston sits in the great easy chair. Dora hands the telegram to the old lady, who adjusts her spectacles; opens the envelope, gazes steadily for a moment upon its contents, then Dora sees her hands tremble, the telegram falls, some inaudible words escape her lips as her silvered head falls back among the cushions of the great easy chair in a swoon. Dora hastily picks up the telegram, rapidly peruses its contents, then as the last breath of Dora Ralston's life goes out, she utters one piercing shriek, "he's dead!"

Let us kind reader who probably have not met with such overwhelming misfortune read the fatal telegram.

State Prison July 24th, 18—

Mrs. George Ralston:

DEAR MADAM:—It is with sorrow that I am compelled to inform you of the sudden death of your unfortunate husband. For as late as yesterday I felt sure of prolonging his life until he could reach the devoted family that he adored. Last night about eleven o'clock while in an insane dream he thought he saw his wife, mother and children standing at the hospital door with outstretched arms, beckoning him to come. In his frenzy he sprang from the sick bed before the nurse could possibly prevent him, and while trying to get away from the nurse he brought on a fatal hemorrhage. His last word were, "forgive me Dora."

[Concluded on fourth page.]

We desire also to extend our sincere thanks, and heartfelt gratitude to the members of the M. E. Church choir for their sweet singing. Neither will we forget our chaplain and his family, for they are our friends.