

BITS OF LIFE'S MOSAIC.

Written for THE COURIER.

SOUTH of Lincoln is reared a strong, white castle. It rests upon the dun colored prairies, that looks as dreary as a scene in Dante's Hell. It is a pretty building, built strong and well and it looks more substantial than most of the buildings in Lincoln. It looks more like it had been built to stay. As you enter the door, you meet a young man who asks if you would like to go through the building. If you so wish, you are ushered into a long hall and are soon before a grated door. The lock grates most harshly as the turnkey unlocks the door and it shuts to with a clang as you proceed across the inner room.

You now see about you pale-faced men clad in hideous striped garments. Your guide informs you that when a man is brought here the hardest thing of all is for him to don the striped clothing. He says not even the clang of the heavy door, or the the adieu of the outside world is so hard as the putting on of the hateful prison uniform. One peculiarity you will soon notice—the absence of talking. All is silent for these condemned men are not allowed to talk and laugh like their more moral or more acute brothers on the outside. But there is one thing the prison authorities cannot forbid and that is the expressive look of the eyes, and these silent men say more with their eyes than could some men with their tongues. At the Christmas time the men were given a treat. For a Christmas present they were allowed to laugh as much as they pleased, and it is said that their souls expanded and after a year of silence and gloomy looks they fairly raised the roof by their hilarity.

You will see all sorts of people here as in the outer world. I expect to see only crime stamped faces, but I saw refined faces, youthful faces were there, wherein crime had not yet written his deepest wrinkles, and old faces that looked like the marks of hell themselves. Some faces were fatherly and good. What stories lie behind some of those! What stories of good lives, of kindness and tender solicitude, that were wrecked and spoiled by some fierce temptation that made all the former beautiful life but ashes and hatefulness. How strange is the human heart! Strong as a god in some things, standing out for years against fearful odds, and at last yielding to some temptation that was trivial and falling from the very highest respectability to the very dirt of human life.

How many hands are there stained with blood? By the side of how many little narrow cots does there stand at night a bloody figure pointing to a wound? I could not tell. They were all clad in the same stripes, their lips were sealed as to their crimes, and one could not tell whether a man was there for life, or simply for a week or a month or a year. If I only could have read their hearts! What beautiful pictures I might have seen, beautiful but sad. What faces of pretty children and patient wives graven on their hearts; what kind words said by mother, what tender messages of sweet hearts treasured up here like flowers amidst nauseous rubbish.

Alas for the frailty of human hopes and human loves! What boy starting out in life, fresh and hopeful, facing the great world would ever think of spending his days shut up in a prison, seeing only a bit of the blue sky surrounded by high walls? The ways of the human heart are past finding out, we know not ourselves. Circumstances drive us as with a lash and the days find us where we never expected to find ourselves. What high prison walls loom for

you and me we know not. We hope that temptation may not goad us on to desperation—ah, yes we hope.

We hope—ah yes, and hope
Is all of life.

We hope to find a rosy dawn
Beyond the night of strife.
We hope some day our tears will cease,
Some day we'll find an isle of peace
We hope—ah yes, and hope
Is all of life.

WILLIAM REED DUNROY.

THE RULING PASSION.

An actor who plays juvenile roles met a leading man on Broadway. The leading man was dressed in deep black. There was a wide band of crape on his hat, and he had discarded the patent leather shoes an actor loves for shoes with a subdued polish that spoke of grief.

"What is the matter?" asked the juvenile gentleman.

"My father is dead," answered the leading man, in a heart-broken voice.

The juvenile gentleman expressed his sympathy.

"When did he die?" he asked.

"Last week. We buried him today—gave him a nice funeral," answered the heart-broken voice.

"Large attendance?" asked the juvenile gentleman.

A smile of enthusiastic delight flashed over the mourner's face.

"Large attendance!" he cried. "My boy, we turned them away."—*Washington Post.*

UTTERLY PREPOSTEROUS.

"Help! Help!" screamed the literary critic, jumping out of bed and wildly running about the room. "I'm going mad!"

"What's the matter, William!" asked his wife, in terror.

"I had a dream," repeated the literary critic, quaking, "in which I thought I heard one of the people in Henry James's novels swear."

DREW THE LINE.

Mrs. Hicks—Here I am, keeping two girls, and I have to work like a slave myself.

Hicks—Why don't you get another girl?

Mrs. Hicks—Not much; come what may, I simply won't work nights.



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