

An Hour in the Penitentiary.

During our sojourn in Philadelphia, last summer, we one day accepted an invitation to visit the Penitentiary, there. We had letters to the kind-hearted Warden, Mr. Scattergood, (a most appropriate name, by the way,) who extended to us all the courtesy we could have desired. We were conducted through the Prison, and in company with Mr. S. we entered several of the cells. The Superintendent learning we were from Boston, informed us that a prisoner was confined there, for passing counterfeit money, who hailed from Massachusetts. He had been there some two or three years, and we found him a very intelligent man. His cell was exceedingly cleanly, and upon the little table in the corner, we discovered several standard books, a bible, &c, which gave evidence of having been thoroughly read by the prisoner. He was said to be very industrious, and certainly appeared comfortable, under the circumstances. His name was George —. He remarked that he was very glad to see any one from Boston, and seriously regretted that he should have been one of the few Bostonians, comparatively, who had disgraced the honored name of the "Old Bay State." He was happy, apparently, and as we parted, we shook his hand, and remarked that it was possible we might call on him again, in a few weeks. "You will be sure, Sir, to find me at home," said he, with a smile, as we left the door of his cell.

As we entered the reception room once more, a bulky despatch was handed to the Warden by one of his deputies, and upon opening it, he informed us that it was a pardon for one of the convicts. We enquired if it would encroach upon the prison rules, under such circumstances, to accompany the Warden to the cell, while he should read it to the prisoner, and were kindly informed that we could join him. We soon reached the cell, where we found a fresh faced young man, of perhaps twenty-four, who was busily engaged at a little loom, weaving.

"Good morrow, John," said the Warden, blandly, as we entered.

"Good morning, Sir."

"Thee keeps busy, John?"

"O, yes Sir—but it's very dull."

"Does thee tire of work, John?"

"No Sir—but I think of home."

"And thee would like to visit home once more?"

"Oh, Sir—if I could but do so—"

"And thee would not return again?"

"I would try to deserve better, Sir."

"Well, John, what would thee say, if I should tell thee that I had a pardon for thee?"

"Oh, Sir, such news would be too good."

"But thee would like to hear it?"

"I care not for myself, so much," said the poor prisoner, and tears filled his eyes—"but for my wife and child, I would be so happy—"

"And thee would shun wicked company, John?"

"Oh yes—and I would labor for my wife and little one—"

"Well, John, here is thy pardon," continued the good old man—and he read the document, which freed this unfortunate being, who had been the dupe of other knaves. We had the pleasure of seeing him released, after a three years confinement; and of learning that he joined his young family, to whom he has since been a faithful guardian.

We passed out to the anteroom again—where we encountered a new comer, who had just reached the prison, as we reentered. He had been sent up for five years, on a charge of embezzlement.

He was elegantly attired in the latest style of fashion, and possessed all the non-chalance and devil-me-care appearance of a genteel rowdy. He twirled his watch chain, looked particularly knowing at a couple of ladies who chanced to be present, and seemed utterly indifferent about himself or the predicament he was placed in! The Warden read his commitment, and addressed him, with—

"Charles, I am sorry to see thee here."

"It can't be helped, old fellow!"

"What is thy age, Charles?"

"Twenty-three."

"A Philadelphian?"

"Well—kinder, and kinder not!"

"Thee hast disgraced thyself, sadly."

"Well, I ain't troubled, old cock."

"Thee looks not like a rogue."

"Matter of opinion!"

"Thee was well situated—"

"Yes—well enough—"

"In good employ."

"Well—so-so."

"And thee has parents?"

"Yes—"

"Perhaps thee hast a mother, Charles?"

The convict had been standing during this brief dialogue, perfectly unconcerned and reckless, until this last interrogatory was put. Had a thunder-bolt struck him, he could not have fallen more suddenly than he did when the name of "mother" fell on his ear! He sank into a chair—a torrent of tears gushed from his eyes—the very fountain of his heart seem to have burst, on the instant! He recovered, partially—and said imploringly to the Warden—

"Don't you, Sir—for God's sake don't call her name in this dreadful place! Do what you may with me, but don't mention that name to me!"

There were tears in other eyes besides the prisoner's, and an aching silence pervaded the group who surrounded the unfortunate convict.

The black cap was drawn over his head, he was lead to the adjoining apartment and stripped, and shortly afterward he reappeared upon the corridor. He passed silently on, in charge of a Deputy keeper, to a lonely cell in a distant part of the prison, the door creaked on its hinges, he disappeared, the chain dropped from the outside bolts, and Charles — was a close prisoner for five years to come!

We left the Prison with heavy hearts, relieved, however, by the reflection that this was one of the best devised institutions of its kind in the world (notwithstanding the libels of Charles Dickens,) and that its administration in the hands of Mr. Scattergood, secured to its unfortunate inmate the most "equal and exact justice." [Boston Times.

[For the Times and Keystone.]

PHONOGRAPHY. The Burlington Free Press has the following comical illustration of the new science of Phonography, or rather an old science submitted to a new multiplication. It is as good as any thing we have seen in "Kornstock's Phonetic Magazine:—"

"We are credibly informed that it is in contemplation to get up a class in Phonography, of bad spelling, at Winooski City, forthwith, the special object of the enterprise being to teach young gentlemen and ladies, in that thriving neighborhood, to spell the wurdz that tha employ in makin luv to eech other, so infarnul badly that tha can nether be red nor understud by eny person but the wun to hoom tha are directed. Axiduntz hav hapend in konsekwens of a want of a knowledge of the lauz of fonografe. Our informant adz that this is a grate cntre, and that thar ar a grate frieny peopl to the aket."

It is sed 2 be peculiarly apliable 2 lep yef, weth a femi9 hoos n0ty sutor has bgun 2 bush, pops at him an epistol 2 incite his rs of sparkin; for instance:

"Dr N8—Xcus me 4 wailin u, by zid of my 22lar preceptor, hos b9 regnd 2ward our sex 0 to clothe us with nrg and 40tude, (in lep yer,) 2 set 4th our grfs and sorows, by ritin 2 those ho have dvSed in their a10shins usward. It is a 10der task, but a 4-2n8, for our sex to rels our luv afairs. U no nr a10shins had led me 2 giv up the pre10shins of 1 sutor, and (o f S) to discard the proferd in10shins of anuther, wen by agilite and 4sight I mit hav mad re10shin of you all. Is it then a 1der that b4 I nu u, or thort, or ruminsed upon becomin ur yf, my hart was :lite and ga? or that it shud hav becom al 2mu12s and fut of 4lornity? Ah, N8, (I wud not x10u8 the truth,) but my sorows hav risen from ur in a10shin."

If u wud not be so un42n8 as to driv me 2 an erly 2mb, then answer the 4goin, and make me ur yf.

Pennsylvania.—William Penn, the founder of this State, in one of his letters to his friend Richard Turner, gives the following account of the origin of the name given to the State.

"5th. 1st. mo. 1681. This day my country was confirmed to me, under the great seal of England, with large powers and privileges, by the name of Pennsylvania, a name the King would give it, in honor to my father. I chose New Wales, being as this, a pretty healthy country; but Penn, being Welsh for a head, as Penmanmoire in Wales, Penrith in Cumberland, and Penn in Buckinghamshire, the highest land in England, called this Pennsylvania, which is the high or head wood land; for I proposed, when the Secretary, a Welshman, refused to have it called New Wales, Sylvania, and they added Penn to it; and though I much opposed it, and went to the King to have it struck out, and altered; he said, it was passed and he would take it upon him—nor could twenty guineas move the under Secretary to vary the name; or I feared, lest it should be looked upon, as a vanity in me, and not as a respect in the King, as it truly was to my father, whom he often mentions with praise."

LOCAL ITEMS.

High School.—The semi-annual Examinations of the Central High School commenced yesterday morning at 8 o'clock, and were continued through the day as late as seven o'clock, P. M.

The usual degree of spirit was exhibited on the part of the pupils, whilst an equal amount of attention was given to them by a respectable and evidently much pleased audience. The whole time of the examination was divided into four periods of three hours each, with the exception of the first, which included but two hours.

We select a few of the numerous items contained in the programme of the first day's examination, which we shall mention particularly, finding it impossible to embrace them all.

During the second period, (from ten to one,) the pupils were examined in the following branches: French, Spanish, Vranography, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy and Physiology. Such of the pupils as were not engaged in the above examination, were occupied in off-hand Drawing and Composition, of which they acquitted themselves in a very satisfactory manner.

The method adopted in the High School, to teach the French and Spanish Languages, deserves a special notice. The gentleman who is at the head of this department, does not consider the study of modern languages as a mere study of words and grammatical rules; he looks upon it in the same light as the study of ancient languages is looked upon in the regular colleges. With him the study of French is also the study of History, Literature, and Science. Being himself a mathematician and a classical scholar, he can afford to direct the attention of his pupils to the really useful part of his teaching.

It is generally admitted that the principal object of a classical education is to give to the student a greater facility of expression in his own tongue.—Professor Bregy has practically demonstrated in the High School, that the same end may be obtained through the more useful study of modern languages.

The other departments under examination presented equally gratifying results, and if we have spoken with more details of the study of the French, it is because the value of this branch of learning, though fully appreciated by the parents of the pupils of the High School, is not generally understood by many who are strangers to it.

In conclusion we will state that the examinations will be resumed this morning, and conducted in the same manner as they were yesterday. We call upon all who are interested in the cause of Public Education, and urge them strongly to go and see, and judge for themselves.

A NOBLE DEED.

On Monday last, about noon, a boy about fifteen years of age fell from one of the Union Canal boats, lying at Vine street wharf, into the river Schuylkill. He had already sunk several times, and no doubt would have met with a watery grave, but for the timely assistance of a young man named Henry Ovenshine, who threw off his hat and gold watch and chain, and fearlessly dived into the water to his rescue. He made several unsuccessful attempts, and finally dived under the water, caught hold of the rudder of the canal boat, and with his legs searched for the body on the ground. This extraordinary perseverance was at length rewarded, the dying boy catching hold of his pantaloons in his struggle with death, and it was thus that he brought him on the surface, where means for his recovery were immediately applied with success. He now lives and is in as good a state of health as ever, the result of the humane perseverance of Mr. Ovenshine. Mr. O., though young in years, being only turned of 21, we understand has already been several times instrumental in saving the lives of other fellow-beings who came near meeting death in a similar manner. He is engaged as clerk by Messrs. Harraden & Hays, at Vine street wharf, Schuylkill, and is, we are informed, entirely unconscious of having performed a meritorious act. Whilst being engaged in saving the life of the boy, some villain purloined his gold watch and chain, which he had left on the wharf. Strict inquiry was immediately instituted, and the thief, finding it was getting too hot for him, dropped it on the wharf and made his exit.—Ledger.

The Quantity of conduit pipe laid in Kensington during the year 1848, was 10,436 feet—making a total of 64,822 1-2 feet laid since the introduction of the Schuylkill water into the District. Last year 23 fire plugs were laid, making the whole number now in the District 121. *July. 1849*