

Northern Messenger

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The Strayed Sheep.

Return, ye foolish ones! whose weary feet,
Far from My pastured flock and sheltering fold,
Have wayward strayed. Unguarded from
night's cold,
To prowling beasts a prey; or, parched with
heat
Beneath the sun's fierce beam, ye feebly bleat
Your sorrows to the wind; seeking, in
vain,
Some 'satisfying portion' to obtain.

Bare rock and thorn-clad desert only greet
Your hopeless gaze; all 'nether-springs' are
dry.
By thirst opprest, with hunger inly faint,
Look up, forlorn ones, view your Shepherd
nigh
And with My voice again yourselves ac-
quaint:
And follow Me, who would not have you die.
Oh, turn ye! turn ye! ere the day be spent!
F. L. U.

The Regeneration of Skinny.

(Frank Barkley Copley, in 'Pearson's Magazine.'

(Concluded.)

In the week that followed he received several notes from the celebrated pickpocket, and at length Moke began to send him the 'Volunteers' Gazette,' Mrs. Booth's organ. In his cell Skinny pondered over Mrs. Booth's writings. She called convicts her boys! She said she had prepared a home for them to go to when they got out of jail. She repeated over and over again she would help them to find honest work.

Summer came and went, with Skinny still nervously fingering his morphine tablets. Con-

stantly he brooded over the remarkable woman that called convicts her friends and boys. Why, she spoke of them and addressed them as if there really was something good in them! On his bed of pain he tried to picture what she looked like. One night he cried out: 'My God! but she must be all right!'

From out their hiding place he drew the tablets, ground them up with the heel of his shoe, and blew the dust out into the corridor.

IV.

The struggle had lasted five months. It was in the latter part of October that Skinny applied to the chaplain for permission to write an extra letter.

'To whom are you going to write?' he was asked.

'Mrs. Booth,' he answered.

A look of frank amazement came over the chaplain's face.

'Oh, I know,' said Skinny. 'You'll all think I'm faking. But I don't care. Do I get de paper?'

He got two sheets, and on these he poured out to Mrs. Booth much of what he had gone through. He told her he didn't think he ever had had a chance. He told her the detectives were waiting to pounce upon him as soon as he was released, and he asked her if she thought there was any hope for him. Never a man awaited with more eagerness a reply to a letter. Days passed without its being received, and Skinny began to regret what he had done. Then one memorable day he received this:

34 Union Square, New York City,

November 6, 1896.

My Dear Friend: I was very glad to get your letter of the 27th. I should have answered it sooner only I am sure you will understand how busy I have been since I have come home.

I am very glad that you have written me so freely. I thoroughly believe all that you say, and I want to assure you that I, for one, think that there 'is' hope for you, and I will gladly do all I can to help and encourage you. I think there is every reason why you should be cheered to go on and do better, while you are even in prison as well as when you come out of it.

I am determined that those who are trying to lead straight, honest lives shall have a chance, never mind how many terms there are back of them.

I am particularly interested in those who 'never' had a chance; so you can remember now that you have at least one friend who will stand by you and help you while you prove yourself thoroughly sincere and earnest.

Do not forget that, however good your resolutions, you must seek a higher, stronger power than your own if you would become victor over the temptations that will assail you, both in prison and when you come out of it.

You have not yet sought Christ as your Saviour, but I do earnestly hope that my friendship may be the means of leading you to him.

I will gladly send you the 'Volunteers' Gazette,' and I hope that its pages may be a cheer and inspiration to you.

Now I pray that the dear Lord may fill your heart with hope, and enable you to begin to lead a new life right there in Sing Sing.

Believe me,

Your friend to help you,

MAUD B. BOOTH.

Skinny read the letter in a kind of stupor. One sentence, however, had burned itself into his brain. It had been underscored. 'I thoroughly believe all that you say.' There was a good woman in the world that believed in him. To make sure he was not mistaken, he again read the letter. Still he was not convinced, and for the third time he read it. Slowly its purport dawned on his consciousness. He had a friend in a good woman that was going to stand by and help him! Sitting on his cot in his little cell, there in the grim old prison, this convict, this thief, this thug, bow-