



BREAK THE NEWS GENTLY

Now that New York has had two rebellions in as many penitentiaries the psychologists are "working" overtime and telling us all about it:

"The lifers did it; the Baumes Law (life for fourth offense) is the cause; poor board, crowded cells and too much work; snotty guards, etc."

There's the case as they put it, but I'm saying the psychologists are crazier than the raving maniacs of the leading bag-houses throughout the world—the cause of the uprising dates back to the time when their bosses condescendingly allowed them to work for a dollar a week at the age of thirteen—that dollar still sticks in their craw.

Their revolt dates back to the time when they were expected to sweat 12 or 8 hours a day for board and lodging as represented by the dollars and cents they handled as go-between 'twixt paymaster and pay-grabber—men do not rebel because of present injustices but because of a series of injustices that culminates in "the last straw"—in other words rebels are grown, raised, brought up, trained—then condemned.

The last straw would not have broken the camel's back had not the other straws been there!

• • •

Those men early saw the futility and foolishness of working for nothing and elected to do illegally that which "pillars of society" and their bishops do legally—or extra legally (murder included).

Of course it occurred to them that they might be caught, but it never did occur to them that in a penitentiary they would find the very thing they were trying to dodge—"work for nothing"—embarrassing to say the least—the captains of sobriety had provided for this (bosses 'n everything) they had vision, the reprobates!

But it backfired upon them with the full force of the jail arsenal—isn't it strange how things will do that when the straw-pile gets big enough!

• • •

Injustice, crime and rebellion we have had since the world began—"Cain killed Abel" (he should have bumped Adam the source of injustice); "Jacob masquerades as Esau" the defeat the aims of Ike in dishing out "seniority rights", and so on to date—and let me tell you in strict confidence:

Crime and revolt you will have until such a time as all the people get a square deal—additional injustice such as bigger whips, the most excruciating of torture, abuse, insults etcetera will not and cannot remedy this condition—may as well cure a broken nose with a "night stick" on a bright sunny afternoon.

The Baumes Law, bum hash, bum cells, bum work and bum guards are merely the straws that that that steers the wind . . . let that pass.

Here I must deliver myself of mine opening statement of this article, to show you how I spoiled it:

I'm in favor of higher wages for the prison guards.

(There she is.)

If I had said that to start out with, my article never would have been read, both of my readers (the editors and linotypers) life would be hanging by a thread, due to apoplexy—and I might be trying to out-gallup a mob of angry workers—'sa good thing editor, we had the presence of intellect to break the news gently. Nevertheless I'm, as I said, in favor of giving those society's "throwbacks" more money so they can support themselves and families—they might learn to respect themselves and others if nobody respected them—they might become tolerable—but that's a long story.

For years the great states have been paying such low wages to guards, that it attracted none but the deficient and the vicious and, naturally, the continued low wages make for more viciousness and they become unbearable to themselves and the prisoners.

But take off that straw and the camel will still walk bow-legged.

• • •

I've recited the above facts for the purpose of indicating the direction in which the remedy lays: reduce the load.

Yes, take it all off,—the camel will walk better!

Start with the kids—a dollar a week is injustice—it is swindling—it is crookedness—lowest form of thievery and highest crime.

It breeds crime and makes morons of men.

It is the eating of the seed corn.

How times have changed!

• • •

Newspaper all excited over the revolt prints the warden's picture with a sprained look on his face, and screams: "Warden Betrayed." Allow me to tell you, gentlemen, when 1700 convicts revolt it indicates someone else (not the warden) was betrayed.

Maybe the warden's hokum wouldn't sell?

Betrayed? Never!

Out-generated—mebbe.

T-B. S.