

**ELIZABETH  
RYDER  
WHEATON**

PRISONS AND PRAYER; OR,  
A LABOR OF LOVE

Elizabeth Ryder Wheaton

**Prisons and Prayer;  
Or, a Labor of Love**

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**Wheaton E.**

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# Elizabeth Ryder Wheaton

## Prisons and Prayer; Or, a Labor of Love

### Dedication

To the Railroad Officials who have so generously and cheerfully provided me transportation; their EMPLOYEES, whose kindness has so many times lightened the weariness of my journeys; the State and Prison officials, who have heartily welcomed me and set before me open doors; the THOUSANDS OF PRISONERS AND OTHERS who have shown by word and deed their appreciation of my efforts to help them to a better life; to the many who have in any way ministered to my necessities or offered an encouraging word by the way, and to my SPIRITUAL CHILDREN, these pages are cheerfully inscribed by The Author.

### THE HARVEST TIME

The seed I have scattered in springtime with weeping,  
And watered with tears and with dews from on high,  
Another may shout while the harvester's reaping,  
Shall gather my grain in the sweet by and by.

Chorus—

Over and over, yes, deeper and deeper,  
My heart is pierced through with life's sorrowing cry,  
But the tears of the sower and the songs of the reaper  
Shall mingle together in joy by and by;  
By and by, by and by, by and by, by and by,  
Yes the tears of the sower and the songs of the reaper  
Shall mingle together in joy by and by.

Another may reap what in springtime I've planted,  
Another rejoice in the fruit of my pain,  
Not knowing my tears when in summer I fainted,  
While toiling, sad-hearted, in sunshine and rain.

The thorns will have choked and the summer sun blasted  
The most of the seed which in springtime I've sown,  
But the Lord who has watched while my weary toil lasted  
Will give me a harvest for what I have done.

—*W. A. Spencer*

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## Preface

Dear Reader: Over twenty years have passed since God called and commissioned me to go to those that were bound. Within five years from the time I entered upon the work, I had been enabled to preach the gospel in every state and territory and had held meetings in nearly every state-prison in the United States and in the prisons in Canada and Mexico. My first trip to Europe was made in 1890. I have not only held meetings in prison, but have endeavored to "preach the gospel to every creature"—to those in authority, governors, prison and railroad officials, and trainmen, as well as to those in churches, missions, prisons, hospitals, alms-houses, dives, brothels, saloons and the slums. In all places God has fulfilled His promise to be with me and has given me evidence that my labor was not in vain in Him.

When I was made to feel that the Lord required me to write of the victories He had wrought and of the work yet waiting to be done I was amazed and am still, though it is more than ten years since God first told me to write for Him. Early left an orphan, my childhood was spent in the country where I had to walk two miles across the fields and through deep snows in order to get to school, and my life-work has been crippled by my lack of education. How then can I write? Yet the command of the Lord has been upon me and the cry of the needy has rung in my ears. Words cannot describe the cruel wrongs, the awful injustice, the scenes of desolation and degradation that have come to my knowledge. Much has been done, much is being done; and yet, O how much still needs to be done, in behalf of those in prison! Wrongs that are indescribable still cry to God for vengeance in this our own land. Cruelties that are beyond the power of language to describe *still exist*, and the cry of the oppressed comes up to the ear of Him who has declared "Vengeance is mine, I will repay."

One reason I have for writing, is to show the great need of Holy Ghost workers—those whose hearts God has touched—to carry the gospel to those whose lives are darkened, blighted and blasted, and tell them of a mighty deliverance from the bondage of sin, and of freedom in Christ.

Reader, if you could see the many inside prison walls going insane, you would not wonder that, by the grace of God, I am determined to prosecute my work as I have never done before, to save these poor prisoners from despair, and to do with my might what my hands find to do.

I have kept no diary or journal and nearly all of ten years' correspondence was destroyed at one time by fire. Hence I have written largely from memory, and without any attempt to give an orderly and connected account of my work. I have endeavored to put before you, dear reader, such glimpses of the work and the field as would fairly illustrate that which has been done and that which needs to be done.

I ask for my imperfect work your kind consideration, and trust that you will overlook my many mistakes and pray God's blessing to rest upon the effort; and if I can only awaken in your hearts a deeper compassion for lost girls and fallen men and the heart-broken friends who mourn the loss of loved ones, I shall not have written in vain.

In the selection, arrangement and preparation of manuscript, I have been assisted by several friends who have been much interested in the work, whose labor and patience can only be rewarded by Him whom we serve. Among these are Brother and Sister Shaw, of Chicago, who have so kindly given the introduction to the work, having full knowledge of its contents and ability to judge of its merits. I will also mention Brother and Sister Kelley, of Tabor, Iowa, who have rendered valuable assistance.

With many prayers and tears I send this work forth, hoping it may find a place on your book-shelf and a corner in your heart, and that you and I, dear reader, may meet where there are no prison walls, iron bars, nor breaking hearts. And may there be gathered there with us at Jesus' feet many of those whom we are striving to comfort and save, while together we crown our Savior Lord of all,

and through an endless eternity worship Him who gave His life a ransom for the lost—"because He loved them so."

*"Mother Wheaton."*

## Introduction

This world is, to a large extent, a great prison house. Nearly all of its inhabitants are prisoners surrounded by walls of sin and darkness. Many are bound down by the curse of rum, others by the besetting sins of lust, unholy temper, envy, revenge, malice, hatred, jealousy, prejudice, pride, covetousness, or selfishness resulting from a carnal mind. Out of the vast multitudes that are led captive by the devil at his will, a few that have violated human law have been sentenced to various prisons and reformatories. This book has much to say about the men and women behind prison walls. It records the sad story of many prisoners in a way that very few can read without being moved to tears and that will awaken sympathy in the hardest hearts. It also tells of the work of God among prisoners both in this and other countries. It records some of the brightest of Christian experiences on record, showing how many prisoners that have been slaves to worse than human law and have lived in greater darkness than in the prison dungeon, have been made free by being translated into the light that outshines the noonday sun, and how they have been enabled to live noble, Christian lives behind the bars.

We are well acquainted with the author, having known her for several years and having had the privilege of entertaining her in our home more or less during that time. This acquaintance has enabled us to know something of the burden that rests upon her soul for prisoners. She has doubtless spent more time in the work, visited more prisons and traveled farther than any other living prison worker. She has visited practically all of the prisons of the United States and Canada and most of them many times, and twice she has crossed the sea. Her mission has been a mission of loving service, with but little financial reward. But the Master who laid this work upon her heart has given her rich reward for all her toil and privation and suffering, for many have been converted through her instrumentality. Some have gone to their reward. Many others, both in and out of prison, are living honest, useful lives.

Had this work been written only for the hasty reader who has but a few hours at the most to give, much that it contains might better have been omitted; but such as these can easily select from its pages that which is most to their liking, while those who are deeply interested in the work of soul-saving, as well as the prisoner whose spare hours drag heavily and slowly, will here find food for study and encouragement that will repay for many days of careful reading.

In many respects, such a work as is here represented has never been done by any other person. For these hundreds of pages give but a few glimpses, as it were, of the work "Mother Wheaton" has done. We have assisted her in gleaning from the many hundreds of letters still in her possession (though much of her correspondence was destroyed by fire) and in arranging and preparing matter for publication. We have listened as with eyes filled with tears she has told us of the needs of the work, and with every day thus spent we have become more deeply interested in the work to which her life has been given. In a memorial service it was said of the late Bishop William Taylor: "He was not an organizer nor an administrator; not a statesman, in the ordinary use of those terms. He was rather a great religious pioneer. He blazed pathways through unknown moral wilds, and left the work of organization mainly to those who might follow after." Such, in her field of labor, has largely been the work of Mother Wheaton.

No place has been far enough away, no stockade hard enough to reach, no day warm enough or cold enough or stormy enough, no prison official or stockade captain sufficiently abusive, to discourage her when she felt that the Master bade her go forward.

With a burning love for all the sinful and all the needy, she has gone from north to south and from east to west, seeking the lost as one seeks for hidden treasure. Through nights of weariness and days of toil she has sought them and loved them and wept over them, man or woman or child, as a mother weeps over and loves her own. She has borne their burdens and shared their sorrows—ever

bringing to them the cheering word, the testimony or inspiring song, the faithful warning, the earnest prayer, the plain gospel message, the hearty hand-clasp, the loving "God bless you."

We believe and pray that these pages may be greatly used of God to reach thousands of hearts and stir up many to carry forward the work so dear to her, when "Mother Wheaton" has crossed over to meet those that are waiting to welcome her on the other side.

*Yours, in Jesus' love,*

*Etta E. Shaw.*

*S. B. Shaw.*

Chicago, Ill., 1906.

"Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not the hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?  
For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

—*Tennyson.*

## **CHAPTER I.**

### **Biography and Call to the Work**

I was born May 10, 1844, in Wayne County, Ohio. My parents, John and Mary Van Nest Ryder, were honest, hard working people, and were earnest Christians. One year after my birth, my father died, leaving my mother with five little children—three boys and two girls. Mother married again and had two children. The little girl was buried the day before mother died. My half-brother, J. P. Thompson, still lives in Ohio. Five years after my father's death my mother followed him to the better land, and I, with the rest, was left an orphan. Well do I remember the night my mother died. She was so troubled about leaving her children alone in the world, but continued long in earnest prayer until she had the assurance that God would care for them, and then she sang the old-time hymn,

"There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,"

and went shouting home to glory. What a lasting impression is made on a child's heart by the life or death of a godly father or mother!

By mother's death I was almost crazed with grief and could not be comforted. At her grave I was separated from my brothers and sister, and went to live with a family to whom mother had given me before her death. Some time after this, the family moving away, I went to live with my grandparents, under whose careful religious training I remained until married. I received little education, as my opportunities were very limited.

From my earliest recollection I was deeply convicted of sin. This conviction followed me until at the age of twelve years I gave my heart to God and received the witness that I was His child. I united with the people called Methodists and tried to walk in the light I had, until God called me into His vineyard.

## MARRIAGE

At the age of eighteen I was married to Mr. J. A. Wheaton. We lived happily together, but in two years I was called to give up not only my dear husband, but also our little baby boy. They were buried in one grave, and I was again left alone in the world. O my breaking heart! I was in despair! I did not know then God's wonderful comforting power as I now do. I was scarcely more than a nominal Christian, a fashionable proud woman, moving in high society, left to face the battle of life alone. To try to drown my sorrow I rushed deeper into society and fashion—only to be plunged into deeper despair. What I suffered during those years is beyond the power of tongue or pen to describe. My anguish of heart and mind were so great that at times reason almost tottered on its throne. And had it not been for the goodness and mercy of God in sending me timely aid through true Christian friends, I should never have been able to have triumphed over it all.

Soon after I was converted, I felt the call of God to His service. I longed to be a missionary. My heart especially went out to the colored people and the Indians, and to the poor unfortunate ones of my own sex. Their sufferings touched my heart, and it was this class with which I did some of my first prison and missionary work in after years. But in those days there was very little encouragement to a woman to do such work. O how those who are called of God now should appreciate their privileges!

Though hindered and discouraged, this call did not leave me. I lived in the church for years, always doing my part in church work. I was proud and vain, but knew no better; yet I longed to be all the Lord's.

## SANCTIFICATION

Several years after my conversion I heard of holiness or entire consecration to God, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit for service. After this, for about ten years, I was under conviction for a clean heart, seeking for a while and then growing careless, receiving little help from the formal professors around me. As I counted the cost, at times it seemed too great. I knew it meant to give up fashionable society, home, friends, reputation and all: and to take the way of the lowly Nazarene. I heard at this time of a holiness meeting about forty miles from home, which I attended. Here I heard the pure gospel preached, and light shone upon my soul. I saw that none but the pure in heart could see God in peace. After wrestling in prayer until about three o'clock in the morning, I seemed held by an invisible power, pure and holy, and was so filled with awe that I feared to speak or move. Soon I heard a wonderful sound, soft, sweet and soothing, like the rustle of angels' wings. Its holy influence pervaded my whole being; a sound not of earth, but distinctly audible to both myself and the sister who was in the same room! I listened enraptured. I feared it was death, and my breath grew shorter and shorter. I did not move nor open my eyes. Presently Jesus stood before me, and O the wonderful look of love—so far above the love of mortals, so humble, meek and pleading! In the tender voice of the Holy Spirit came these words: "Can you give up all and follow me? Lay your weary, aching head upon my breast. I will never leave you nor forsake you. Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world." I was enabled by the Holy Spirit to say, "Yes, Lord Jesus." I knew it was Jesus. When I said "Yes, Lord," the power of God fell upon me, soul and body, and I was bathed in a sea of glory. When I had recovered from my rapture, Jesus had vanished as silently as He came; but the blessing and power remained. The sister whispered and asked, "Did you hear that sound?" And then she told me that this was for my benefit. This occurred November 11, 1883. That day the people looked at me and wondered, seeing the great change God had wrought in me by His power. The night following we had an all-night meeting. Again God spoke to me by His Holy Spirit, saying, "Go and honor my Son's name, and I will go with you." I prayed, "O Lord, if this is Thy voice, speak once more." The same words came again. I obeyed and God did most wonderfully reveal Himself to me. I knew I was called to His service and to work for lost souls.

## MY CALL TO PRISON WORK

The question is often asked me, "How did you become interested in this work, and learn to understand the needs of the prisoner?" It was through this call from God. None of my relatives or friends were ever convicted of crime. When I was a young woman I attended the state fair at Columbus, Ohio, and with a delegation visited the state-prison at that place. While waiting for a guide to show us through the prison a young man was brought in by an officer. I saw him searched, and later as the heavy iron doors closed behind him with a clang, my sympathies were aroused. While being shown through the prison I saw this young man with his hair close cut, dressed in prisoners' garb, placed by the side of hardened criminals. There my first interest was awakened to try to make the burdens lighter for the prison-bound. As we were leaving the prison I noticed some small articles which had been made by the inmates in their spare moments. Among these I saw and was especially impressed with a miniature statue of a prisoner dressed in stripes, holding in one hand a ball and chain, the other hand shading the eyes. Upon the pedestal of the statue were these words, "What shall the harvest be?" I shall never forget the impression then made upon my mind. It is still fresh in my memory.

Years after this, shortly after my commission to preach the gospel, as I was traveling one night to reach an appointment, stopping at a station in Iowa to change cars, three prisoners in handcuffs, who were being taken to the state-prison, were brought in. My heart was moved with deep compassion for them. Many were curiously inspecting them, as if they thought they had no tender feelings. Approaching these men, I gave them my hand, saying, "I am sorry for you, but God can help you in this hour of trial," and I tried to cheer them, and told them I would sometime visit them in the prison if I could. I did not then know I was so soon to enter upon my mission. But the burden of those in prison kept coming heavier upon me. I told my friends I must go and

## PREACH THE GOSPEL TO PRISONERS

but they for a time thought me almost crazy. But as one of old, I felt that "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." So I gladly obeyed the divine call and went forward.

But I was not led into this work by any morbid sentimentalism or enthusiasm. These would have worn off when the novelty was gone. No, this work was given me of God, who Himself laid the burden of the convict world upon my heart. Day and night there came up before me the cry of despair from inside prison walls—the wail of woe from those in dungeons whose hearts were breaking and whose minds were shattered and whose souls were lost in despair, and the call came direct from the mouth of the Lord, "Go and stand in the breach! Tell them of a Savior's love—of a way of escape through the blood of Jesus Christ, who is mighty to save and strong to deliver them from the snares of the enemy that has sought to destroy them soul and body. Tell them there is deliverance for the captive. Tell them there is consolation in the gospel of Christ for those who are heart-broken and forsaken and forgotten by all but an omnipotent God. Tell them that God lives and rules and reigns in heaven and is able to save to the uttermost and to comfort in their dying hours with the hope of eternal life beyond this vale of tears."

But how could I go? The Lord Himself showed me how to go and where to go and that I was to leave results to Him and He would give the increase—that He would multiply the bread and fish for the hungry multitudes—He would feed the famished souls to whom He sent me, just as when He walked this sin-cursed earth—that He was the same yesterday, today and forever. I saw that my life must be entirely and forever surrendered to the Lord for His service, and that my future was to be left entirely in the hands of the Master whose I am and whom I serve.

Thus the call came day after day and night after night until I believe I should have gone insane had I not then and there yielded my time and talent, all I had or ever would have, to the service of Christ to go just when and where He would have me go, do as He would have me do, and trust Him for my support. I was shown that I would never come to want. I was made to understand that these poor unfortunates in prison were just as dear to God's heart as I was and that souls would be required at my hands were I to fail to comply with the commission to go and lift up the fallen and comfort the dying and relieve those distressed in body and mind. I was made to know that there was power in prayer and that God could save the very lowest criminal or the worst woman on earth and by the transforming influence of the Holy Spirit and the cleansing blood of Jesus, save, purify and sanctify and lift them up even within the pearly gates of heaven; and that instead of devils in human form, they could be made saints that could take up the glad refrain unto Him that had redeemed them and washed them in his own blood and made them kings and priests unto God.

Yes, God called me. And His name shall be exalted through all eternity for what He has done for me and through me during all these years. His has been the hand that fed, clothed and supported me. Never has God failed me in this pilgrim journey and He has supplied all my needs. My heart goes out in gratitude and thanksgiving while I write, for all He has done for me. O, the heights and depths, lengths and breadths of His boundless love for lost humanity! How wonderfully has He led me! How His guiding hand, His protecting care have been over me! Amid discouragements, disappointments and misunderstandings God has given me victory through the blood of our precious, loving Savior; and I know that He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we can ask or think.

When I saw the criminal at the bar of justice, I was reminded that we must all soon appear at the judgment bar of God. Then I saw that the Lord wanted me to tell of a Mighty Deliverer from the sins of intemperance, unbelief, skepticism, infidelity, covetousness, licentiousness and hypocrisy. My eyes were opened to see that thousands of poor helpless souls were drifting to their eternal doom without God and without hope, and that oftentimes in their hours of most desperate need there was no

one to help, no one to point them to the blessed Savior and to really snatch them as "brands from the burning."

Then I took courage and said, "Yes, Lord, I will go and do my best to help save them from destruction and an eternity in hell." Since then I have spent more than twenty years of constant toil among the masses and have reason to declare that God has given me success beyond what I could have thought possible.

Multitudes have been saved, representing all ranks and stations of life. Many are today singing the songs of the redeemed with the glorified hosts in the other world, who were counted by many to be beyond redemption, already doomed and lost forever.

For such I have taken courage and have pleaded before the Lord His written Word, asking for their soul's salvation; and now they are forever with the Lord. O faithless one, is there anything too hard for the Lord? And has He not told us "All things are possible to him that believeth" and "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out" and that "if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"? During these years that I have stepped out on His promises I have proved that His word never fails. It is faith in the living God which brings results in the salvation of immortal souls. Never have I doubted God's power to save the vilest person, and now I want to tell, for His glory, just a little of what God has wrought as well as show something of what needs to be done. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for a faith prompted of the Spirit that will not waver—a confidence in God which takes no denial but cries "It must be done." In answer to such a faith, criminals of the deepest dye have been awakened and saved and women of the worst possible character have been converted and reformed and purified, and some have been set apart for the service of God and have done a mighty work. Others, as we have said, have gone to swell the grand, triumphant strain around the throne of God, where angels and archangels unite to make all heaven resound with the praises of our King—among those of whom it is said, "These are they which came up through great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." After I see the King in His beauty, clothed in majesty and glory and power, I want to look in the faces of those whom God has used me to help, who have come up from inside prison walls and from haunts of sin—yea, from the scaffold itself—those who have died in the triumphs of a living faith, victorious over death, hell and the grave.

Since my call to the work of the Lord He has caused many homes to be opened to me and has given me many very dear friends. Among those of earlier years were dear Brother and Sister H. L. Hastings, of Boston, who kindly gave me a home and cared for me in sickness and special time of need. And in later years are those at the Missionary Training Home at Tabor, Iowa, with whom I have made my headquarters since 1895. I would specially mention Mrs. Hattie Worcester Kelley, who had a call from God to assist me in prison work and traveled some with me until her health failed; also Mrs. Georgia Worcester and her husband, and her father, Elder Weavers, who is president of the Home; with their faithful helpers in charge and assisting in the work, who have given me a hearty welcome among them.

It was here I became more directly interested in foreign missionary work. I have at different times taken with me in my prison and slum mission work several of the missionaries now in foreign lands. Among these are Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Worcester, now in Africa, whom I accompanied on their way as far as London; Grace Yarrett, recently sailed for India, and a number of others.

## **FAMILY REUNION AFTER A SEPARATION OF FIFTY-TWO YEARS**

The following from a paper published in Elkhart, Ind., December, 1902, under the above heading, will explain itself:

J. M. Ryder of Indianapolis, Ind.; Emanuel Ryder of Bryan, O.; Elizabeth Ryder Wheaton, prison evangelist, and Lida Ryder Hoffman of this city met in a family reunion Dec. 8, after a separation of fifty-two years, this being the first time in all these years that the brothers and sisters, who were left orphans in early childhood, have been together. \* \* \* The brothers and sisters sat for a group picture as a memento of the day, and left for their different missions and homes, not likely to all meet again this side of the great River.

I also give the reader a sketch written by my brother and published in his home paper at Bryan, O., some years since.

Like Moses and the prophets of old; like Jesus and his disciples; like Martin Luther and John Wesley, and a host of other great lights who have been chosen at different times to be teachers and leaders of the children of earth, so in like manner and like purpose was Elizabeth Ryder Wheaton chosen.

Her chief mission has been to the inmates of jails and penitentiaries, reformatories and the lowly outcasts in the houses of perdition, among people who never find room in the pews.

Unconnected with church or other organization, but aided by an angel band, a Christ love, great charity, force of character that knew not fear where duty called, she has worked for the uplifting of the fallen.

For twenty years she has toiled and struggled in her great life work, giving her teachings, her songs and her prayers, shedding tears of love and sympathy for the poor souls in the bondage of sin.

For twenty years she has traveled up and down her home land and several foreign countries.

The world her country, to do good her religion, giving her light, her life, wherever the most needed; never stopping, except from sickness or exhaustion from overwork; often meeting friends on the long and rugged road who gave her sympathy, shelter and food; at other times the floor her couch and but little to eat—but whether good or bad conditions, always thankful.

In her chosen work, in the past twenty years, no person has done more good or has had so much influence in causing people to lead better lives, to quit sinning, to get out of hell and enjoy the happiness that follows from leading conscientious, truer lives.

Her good intentions, her words of warning and sympathy, her sweet soul songs of love, her prayers in angelic power, have moved the people outside of the churches in the different avocations and walks of life as they had never been moved before, the masses perceiving by subtle agency that here was a person deserving love, respect and honor.

She had great influence with the employees of the different railway companies, the good-will of the superintendents of many of the great railway lines of the country, frequently getting passes from New York City to San Francisco and return, a distance of seven thousand miles, for herself and companion.

She has spoken in more reformatories, jails and penitentiaries, and, I believe, done more good, unconnected with any organization, than any other in the twenty years.

### **HER LIFE HISTORY**

It is too long a story to attempt to go into details—to tell of her trials, hardships and sickness; to tell of her individual successes, as well as her successes when she has swayed great bodies of people, moving the half of them to tears, causing them to have higher thoughts, better motives, and to bless the hour she was among them; or of how she entered the southern stockades alone, even when warned by the Warden that her life might be taken, and in ten minutes had the inmates as tractable as little children, where the officials would not enter, except in a body and thoroughly armed; how she stood her ground when menaced by drunken western desperadoes; or of the times she divided her raiment and her scant purse with the destitute, and the many times she escaped great danger by being forewarned, etc.

Bereft of both parents at the age of five years, and cared for by cold and indifferent strangers, she misses the mother's love, guidance, sympathy and protection.

When she started out on her mission she left a good home with all the substantials and many of the luxuries of life, with but little education, without money or friends, alone to travel unbeaten paths, to do a work that no one had ever tried before; untrained in the great work she was to follow, but impelled by a higher Spirit force she could not resist. "Do this work. I will be with you to the end. When great troubles come, I will be your shield and your helper. I will warn you of great danger. I will protect your life. You will gather many sheaves, and, when you are through with earth, have a high place in the heavenly abode."

Whenever needed, the angel band assists her to say the right words for the time and occasion, according to perceptions and conceptions of the people addressed.

She is gifted with a voice that is always musical, clear and distinct, and of such compass that it can be heard a mile, or down to the minor notes, but always with the pathos that touches the tender chords of the soul.

Now she is old, broken in health and strength. Soon she must lay her weary body down, a willing sacrifice for the lowest children of earth.

And now with this brief outline of the work, the life and the powerful soul magic of Elizabeth Ryder Wheaton, I close.

*Respectfully,  
Emanuel Ryder,  
Brother of Mrs. E. R. Wheaton.*

## CHAPTER II.

### A Letter to My Prison Children

You, dear ones, are my especial care and have been for over twenty long years; and your eternal good will continue in a sense to be first in my thoughts while life lasts.

My own childhood was lonely and desolate. As I have already told you, my father died when I was one year old, and mother died when I was only six. I was taken from my mother's grave by an old man who had, with his wife, asked mother for me before she died. My stepfather went to law with my grandfather, who was guardian for myself and sister, for my father's fortune, and the suit was carried from one court to another until all was gone and we little children were penniless.

Sister and I were reared by our grandparents, and were given a very limited education. We were taught to work as rigidly as if we were paupers. The experience was hard but I can now see how good it was for me in after years to know how to do all kinds of work and be able to do with my might what my hands found to do.

All my life I have known much of SORROW AND DISAPPOINTMENT. It has seemed that I have never been allowed to keep long anything that I loved. When I was a child, my pets would sicken and die, and the friends that I loved best would either move away from me or die; and my heart was being continually crushed and broken by these trials.

I loved to learn and was passionately fond of music, but I was not permitted to gratify my desires in either direction. Why all this was true, I know not, unless it was that I might learn deeper lessons of sympathy and compassion for others that are in trouble.

Perhaps, dear ones, because of these very experiences I can feel more deeply and tenderly for you and I want to tell you that amid all the sorrows of earth I have found *one Friend* that has never forgotten or forsaken me and that has promised never to leave me. *And this same Jesus loves you.* If you but give Him your hearts He will never fail you. Though all the world should forsake and despise you, Jesus loves you just the same.

It is He that has put into my heart this love for you and your souls' salvation that I cannot explain; this love that grows deeper and stronger and that can only be made plain in the judgment. He has taught me to feel for you when you are forsaken and forgotten, when even friends turn away because you are doomed to the prison cell, the stripes, and even the scaffold.

Often you are misunderstood and misjudged, and sometimes you grow bitter towards every one, and sometimes you censure your best friends. I plead with you to look on the bright side. Think of all God has done for you and how wonderful it is that He loves you with all your sins, that He loves your precious, immortal souls.

You are my children. For Jesus' sake, and yours, I am a homeless wanderer on earth. I have given up home and friends and have gone into the darkest places of earth, and have endured hardships and faced danger of every kind. I have endured untold sorrow of mind and heart. I have wept and prayed night and day, and for you I have sacrificed all.

But dear ones, notwithstanding all this, I am happy in the love of Jesus. His love is everything to my heart. His love and sympathy is enough for me, and I know that He is able to provide all that I need. He has kept me nearly sixty years, and I am sure that He will not now forsake me.

Let this encourage you, dear prisoners, to know that God loves and cares for you. When the way looks the darkest, when all hope fails, when the last friend has forsaken you, then look up to Jesus and believe His word. I know your trials are hard to bear. I think of you as you leave the jail for the penitentiary with the handcuffs on and the sheriff and the deputy guarding you so closely, and the world against you. I think of you as the prison doors close behind you. I think of you in your loneliness as the days and months and perhaps years go by, and again I say, yes, I know your

trials are hard to bear. But look up through the dark clouds and remember that God lives and that He loves you. In your little lonely prison cell He is with you and is waiting to save you. Do not conceal your sins, for God's Word says, "He that covereth his sin shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy."

Let the past be cleansed by the blood of Jesus. If you trust Him, He has promised to separate your sins as far from you as the east is from the west. Do not rest until His Spirit tells you this is done. Then, "forgetting the things that are behind," press forward to those things that are before.

Obey the rules. Show by your daily life that you intend to do right, the very best you know. If those in authority over you seem to be unkind or unjust, bear what comes as brave soldiers. Even inside of prison walls you can win glorious victories over self and sin.

There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. I seek to show you the way to the kingdom of heaven, where there is no more temptation, no sin, no sorrow, no pain; to the place where Jesus has gone to prepare a home for those who love Him, follow Him and trust Him.

My heart yearns over you in your sad exile from wife, children, mother, father, husband, brother, sister, friends. Truly the way of the transgressor is hard.

But, my prison children, I beg of you do not go from one prison to another. Flee from sin. I do not and dare not smooth over your sins. Prove yourselves worthy of the confidence of good people. Give God your hearts and be true to Him and He will not forsake you.

Some of you are doomed to the scaffold! How long, O Lord, how long must such things be in a Christian land? O, that I had the power to abolish capital punishment! But I will do all I can to help you prepare for death. Jesus loves you. He was taken from prison and executed as a criminal. He was innocent, yet He suffered death for a guilty world. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. "And being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." And though you pass through the valley of the shadow of death, if you but trust Him, He will go with you and you need fear no evil.

## CHAPTER III. A Plea for the Prisoner

### IN THE SHADOW OF THE WALL

By Olla F. Beard

(The writer of this poem was a personal acquaintance and friend. At the time the poem was written her father was warden of the penitentiary at Fort Madison, Iowa, and she took great interest in his work.—E. R. W.)

Oh, those wond'rous gloomy walls!  
What a chill their shadow calls  
To creep and tingle through our veins!  
Moving all our soul contains  
Of pity for the woes within—  
Those who move within this pall,  
Those who bear a load of sin,  
In the shadow of that wall.

Yes, you think their lot is hard;  
So do all you can t'retard  
Their sad downward course in time,  
And save them from a greater crime.  
But pause and come with me to view  
Various pictures in the hall  
Of the innocent and true,  
In the shadow of this wall.

There's a mother, good and true,  
With a face of palest hue;  
Eyes are dimmed and faint to-day,  
With their brightness washed away  
By the tears she's nightly shed;  
Yet she does not fail to call  
Blessings on her dear boy's head,  
In the shadow of the wall.

There's a father, too, bowed o'er  
With age, and his head is hoar.  
Ah! it surely broke his heart  
With his honored name to part.  
Now instead of his boy's arm,  
A cane-stalk keeps him from a fall,

As he walks about his farm,  
In the shadow of the wall.

There's a wife, too, in the gloom,  
Yet within her heart there's room  
For the one whose name she bears;  
She will share e'en now his cares.  
Vows were said to God above,  
And, tho' friends forget to call,  
She will keep her vow of love,  
In the shadow of the wall.

There are children, bright and gay,  
Now at school and now at play;  
Why do playmates push them off,  
Only at their tears to scoff?  
Can innocence, then, guilty be?  
Why are they shunned, each one and all?  
Ah! these children e'en we see,  
In the shadow of the wall.

And O, for shame! to scorn some one  
For the deed another's done;  
For their road is hard at best;  
They should never once have guessed,  
From the things you do and say,  
That you once those facts recall—  
How they're living day by day  
In the shadow of the wall.

But a word we'd say for him  
Who inhabits those walls dim:  
Shun him not; help if you can—  
Let him try to be a man.  
When he's paid now for his sin,  
Let not scorn bring other falls,  
Just because he once has been  
In the shadow of the walls.

He has yet a heart, tho' scarred;  
He has yet a soul, tho' marred;  
And he has to live and try  
Till his time shall come to die.  
Sweet Charity, that suffereth long,  
Let us now as guard install.  
She will lead him from the wrong—  
From the shadow of the wall.

We would not pet the sin and crime;

Let reproof fall in its time.  
But reproof should have an end,  
When the sinner tries to mend!  
Give him every chance you can—  
Lend a helping hand to all;  
Lead the woman or the man  
From the shadow of the wall.

## A LETTER TO PRISON OFFICERS

Dear Prison Managers: You and I are trying to help the prisoners to a better life. We want to elevate, to lift up these men and women to a higher plane of existence. How are you to proceed? What are you to do, is the question. How are you to command the respect of those under you? Just where to draw the line, and how to enforce discipline? What advantage will you give to the men who are striving to obey rules, and do what is right? Something must be done, and done soon. The criminal classes must be reached, reformed, saved and sent out of prison better prepared to face the world and the temptations which will be thrust upon them at every turn. Great responsibility rests upon you. Many of you are doing nobly and accomplishing great good.

There is hope for every prisoner. You can reach them by kindness. Brutality will never accomplish anything in the way of prison reform. By such a course a man is often turned out of prison a demon, a fiend in human form, or an idiotic criminal.

But to make him a good man, a noble creature, as God intended he should be, he must have kindness shown him. Be *firm* and *honorable* in all your dealings with the convict, for he has his rights, and they should be respected if we are ever going to make the prison world better.

Let us ask God for help to know how to reach the manhood, the womanhood, the better nature in the creature God has seen fit in His wise providence to make just a little lower than the angels, in His own likeness and image. He intended all should be free and equal, but the people license the saloon, the gambling den and the brothel to degrade their brothers and sisters. Some say these are necessary evils! I say never, never! Let there be better conditions.

There is hope for the sinner if we only get the Holy Spirit to teach us how to reach him. I never go into the presence of convicts without earnest prayer to God to give me wisdom, and the Holy Spirit to teach and guide me what to say and sing, and how to reach their hearts. God has given me what success I have had in helping the criminal classes, in giving hope to the discouraged and in relieving the minds of some who were partially deranged. Oh, this wholesale slaughter of men's minds! It is horrible. It is heart-rending. And yet some go right on committing the greatest crime against these men, by robbing them of their reason which God intended them to enjoy as their birthright.

Which is the greater crime, the whipping post and the lash with all their attendant horrors and misery, or the iron rule that crushes out all hope in the name of discipline? I believe in law and order, and that men must be in subjection to rules and regulations. I always urge upon them implicit obedience and subjection to the rules of the prison. But these should be reasonable and humane.

What you and I need is to know our man and then we will know how to deal with him. Study human nature as well as the law, and study the law of the all-wise God in the Bible and see if you will not have a clear conscience as well as a clear brain to manage and control those under your direction.

I know prisons that are regulated entirely by kindness, and oh, the blessed, restful, quieting influence there is there, and scarcely any insane. All are satisfied with the treatment they receive and they are willing to die for their officers. I know these things, for I am behind the scenes.

After long years of service as a prison missionary, in nearly all the state prisons in all the states and territories, I find only an ever increasing desire to be a worker together with Christ in reaching the masses of prisoners who are incarcerated in our state, county and city prisons. My success has largely been due to my sincere and intense desire to lead them to a better life here and life eternal in heaven, and to the victory gained over myself to never let anything or anybody prevent my doing all I could for the prisoner, as if he were my own child or brother. Again, my determination has been to give all a fair trial and a liberal amount of confidence. Yes, we must place ourselves in their condition; let our boy or brother, our mother or sister be in prison, let us think how we would exercise every means we had in reaching or relieving them.

All prisoners are human, and yet, how few professors of religion show interest in them. They are doubted at every turn. Daggers are driven to hearts which are longing for a better life, a purer atmosphere, a new creation. Poor souls! God pity them. O the hearts that cry out for better things! the souls that are yearning for the good and true! O the thousands of prisoners who may be diamonds in the rough, jewels for whom Christ died. Souls, immortal souls are at stake. We must soon meet these things at the judgment. O to be clear of the censure, the rebuke, the reproof of God Almighty in the final day of accounts.

O brother, sister, have we had charity that suffereth long and is kind? Have we tried by example and precept to show the criminals that we were really their friends and sincerely cared for their souls? How long has the good Lord borne with us, and shall we not be in earnest to save those who are not Christians, to encourage them to a better life, to cheer up the dying convict, to show them there is a God in Israel who hears and answers prayer, one who said, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him"?

### WORTH WHILE

It is easy enough to be pleasant  
When life flows by like a song,  
But the man worth while is the one who will smile  
When everything goes dead wrong.  
For the test of the heart is trouble,  
And it always comes with the years,  
And the smile that is worth the praise of the earth  
Is the smile that shines through tears.

It is easy enough to be prudent  
When nothing tempts you to stray;  
When without or within no voice of sin  
Is luring your soul away.  
But it is only a negative virtue  
Until it is tried by fire,  
And the life that is worth the honor of earth  
Is the one that resisteth desire.

By the cynic, the sad, the fallen,  
Who had no strength for the strife,  
The world's highway is cumbered to-day;  
They make up the item of life.  
But the virtue that conquers passion,  
And the sorrow that hides in a smile—  
It is these that are worth the homage of earth,  
For we find them but once in a while.

—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox.*

## PREJUDICE

I find but little difference between humanity in prison walls and the humanity outside. Prisoners are our brothers and our sisters. We must soon meet them all at the judgment. They are naturally supposed to be guilty of crime of some kind. But they are not all criminals. Wicked men, willing to shield themselves, oftentimes throw suspicion on others, who are placed under arrest and convicted by circumstantial evidence or false testimony. Others, of course, are of the worst types of humanity. Some of them seem unworthy of the name of man or woman, yet even these Christ died to save, and God is able to deliver them and how shall His name be better glorified or His power be more manifest, than in their transformation?

Very many are so prejudiced against all those who are counted as criminals that they believe them to be utterly incapable of any good and are quick to believe that they see in them evidences of the deepest depravity.

A sad yet amusing illustration of this fact comes to my mind. Chaplain H., of the Reformatory for Boys at Kearney, Nebraska, is an honest-faced, true-hearted young man, full of zeal in the service of God. At one time when I stopped at Kearney he called for me at the train. As I looked at him he said, with a smile, "Did you think it was one of the boys whom the superintendent had sent for you?" I replied, "Yes; I did at first; you are so young, Mr. Chaplain;" and then he related to me the following circumstances which I give as nearly as I can in his own words:

"At one time Prof. Mallalieu and myself had been to Lincoln on business, and were returning together. We were quietly resting, and I was sitting with closed eyes, meditating, when a lady happened along and recognized the Superintendent, and said 'Have you got a boy there, taking him to the Reform Schools?'

"Considerably amused, he replied: 'Yes; this is a very bad fellow; I have had a lot of trouble with him, and have just recaptured him, and now I am watching to see that he doesn't make his escape.' The woman leaned over and, scanning my face and features, said: 'He has an awful bad look on his face; you can see he is a criminal and needs to be under strict discipline.'"

The dear young chaplain said, as he laughingly related this instance, that he learned a lesson in human nature that day. That woman, who imagined that she saw in the face of that young looking, honest, devoted Christian young man evidences of guilt and depravity, was only one among thousands who are led by prejudice when they imagine that they are exercising great discernment.

## A LOOK INTO THE CELL

Reader, could you and I walk together down the cell-house corridor in almost any of our large prisons, at almost any hour of the night and pause and listen to the sighs and smothered sobs and often to the deep groans that might be heard welling up from hearts that are broken and crushed by sorrow and remorse; could we, dear reader, cast one sidelong glance in passing the rounds of the cell-house with the guard, who, with muffled tread wends his ceaseless march throughout the night, your heart, as well as mine, would be deeply moved. On those stone floors, guarded by double locks and iron bars, as well as by the living sentinel, you might see many a mother's boy kneeling in silent prayer to his mother's God, and as he prays and communes with his own thoughts, you might hear again the groans of anguish as the poor unfortunate thinks of home and mother, wife and children, or other loved ones.

Then look with me into that poor man's cell, void of comfort, with nothing that would remind you of home; a close narrow cell, a poor hard cot, a straw pillow, if any, and kept under strict watch day and night; left many times without one ray of hope, without a gleam of sunshine or a kind word. I wonder there are not scores of insane men in our state prisons for every one that we find, and there are many, very many, who are either partially or entirely insane. I am convinced that oftentimes men are crazy when the officers suppose they are only obstinate and rebellious and mean. Often do I note insanity lurking in the eyes and often as the prisoners file past me at the close of a service and I clasp each one by the hand, as is my custom, among the many who are so glad to have a kind word and a hand-clasp at parting I notice those who are not sane by the peculiarity of the clasp of the hand. Some have a clasp like a mad-man, others a limp, lifeless hand-shake, with cold, clammy hands. Oh, what wisdom is needed to know how to deal with these poor, helpless souls! I find many of them with hearts as tender and sensibilities as acute as any I meet outside.

## INSANE PRISONERS

While I was having a service for the criminal insane at Anamosa, Iowa, state prison, a young man was very anxious to see me and tell me something. As I waited to talk with him he said to me in *such a pitiful way*, "Go and tell my dear mother I will try to help her. Won't somebody help my poor mother?" This was the burden of his heart. Poor boy! in his partial derangement his whole concern seemed to be for her. He is only one among many!

## A TOUCHING INCIDENT

At one time I was on the train going north from Indianapolis. My brother, J. M. Ryder, was with me. I was singing a hymn, and walking to the end of the car as I sang I saw two men bound together by handcuffs. One of them I supposed to be an officer. He was a fine looking man, well dressed. It was a few days before Christmas, but I noticed some holly-berries pinned to his coat. I remarked, "You have holly-berries before Christmas day!" With tears rolling down his face he answered, "My little girl pinned this on me. She said, 'Papa, you will not be here when Christmas comes, and I will pin it on now before you go.'"

I said, "You are an officer, are you not?"

"Oh, no!" he said, "I am a prisoner," and then he told me his sad story. Money belonging to some one else, a relative, if I remember rightly, had been left in his care. Under pressure of need he used some of it, being confident that he could replace it before it was needed; but the shortage was discovered, he was arrested, found guilty and sentenced. With a broken heart he said, "I never will live to serve out my sentence. This will surely kill me. I am not a thief, but I was so sure I could replace the money before it was needed."

Reader, think you this man was any more a criminal at heart than thousands who move among men honored and respected? Who can question that there are thousands who, perhaps, do not transgress the letter of the law, yet more deliberately and wilfully wrong their fellow men than this poor man? And this case is only one of many; and where shall we draw the line? Oh, let us have fervent charity one for another.

I am not biased in my judgment. I know sentimentalism is not salvation. That can come only through true repentance and faith in God and must be evidenced by restitution and good works; but if you could see, as I have seen, the meetings in the prison guard-room between husband and wife, mother and son, or between father and his wayward boy, if you could see the tears and sobs as they meet and part, and above all at the last parting before execution, I believe you would never feel like criticising or being harsh in your judgment again. Could you have gone with me during these twenty years, could you have had the confidence of these prisoners as I have had it, you would realize that they are, in very many cases, as truly open to conviction and as easily reached as those outside of prison walls, and are they not my children? Do I not know their faults? Do they not confess to me their guilt? But back of all I see Jesus hanging on the cross of Calvary, between two thieves, dying, and in His death agony, while the blood is oozing from the print of the thorns upon His brow, while the eyes are growing glassy in death, with the cold death sweat standing out upon His face, I hear Him say to the penitent thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." And again, as He remembers all those who have so cruelly wronged Him, he cries, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." If the Son of God gave Himself for us, if with His dying breath He prayed for His persecutors, if He who knew no sin and understood all hearts could say, "They know not what they do," God help us to be willing to forgive those who have transgressed the law either of God or man.

These prisoners need a helping hand, need a friend with wisdom, tact and judgment, one in whose heart there is the one thought above all others of the need of their immortal souls, their eternal destiny.

You and I, reader, must do our part in reforming a lost world, in saving lost sinners. Then let us remember how good God has been to us by keeping us out of prison, by keeping us out of the evil surroundings and influences that might have brought us there. Let us give the poor prisoners a fair show and fair play. Many of them long for better things, for one more chance to prove themselves worthy of the confidence and sympathy of their fellow men. After twenty years of toil among those who are bound, I do bless God that He ever called me to carry to those in prison the glad message of His love and seek by love and faith and prayer to lift them up to better things.

## PREPARED TO DIE

Once while holding services in a prison, there came to me a prisoner saying, "Mother, I want to tell you I was saved since I saw you." (Only a few days previous.)

Then he told me that he was under sentence of death and that he was so troubled that he cried to God to forgive his sins and pardon his crime, and that God had forgiven him and that he was now prepared to die. He said that when the Lord forgave him he was so happy that the officers put an extra guard over him, thinking that he had suddenly lost his mind.

I exhorted him to maintain his faith in God and never doubt His saving power; to walk softly before God; to keep humble and meek and pray much. Truly there is pardon for every sinner who, in the depths of his soul, repents of his sin. God's love and power are so great that He will save to the uttermost all that come unto Him, not willing that any should perish.

Reader, perhaps you have not the opportunity to know these souls as I know them, and so to help you understand them I give in other chapters many extracts in their own words, taken here and there from the thousands of letters I have received. I believe this will help you to understand that hundreds, shut out from the companionship of their fellow beings, are as easily moved by kindness, as capable of gratitude, as easily won to repentance, as willing to give up sin, as thousands of those outside, who perhaps have never been tempted as they were tempted and have never fallen as they have fallen. In quoting from these letters few changes have been made, except in spelling, capitalization and punctuation.

Some young souls are making, for a stated time,  
This, their maiden effort, on the sea of crime.  
Oh, Christians, teach them early what to me is plain;  
Crime ever *has* and ever *will* result in lasting pain.  
Do not be *too* lenient, nor *too* soon forgive,  
Lest all *vice* should flourish and no *virtue* live.  
Society demands it, the *guilty* should atone—  
But take care you punish those, and those *alone!*  
Keep them in your prison till by *virtue* shown  
They will know what *is* and what is *not* their own.  
But let all be careful lest by *word* or *act*  
Those who should *reform* them from their *good* subtract.  
Rule them wisely, gently—by some *humane* plan,  
All their faults to conquer as best becomes a Man.  
When your work is finished and their habits changed,  
Give them honest labor, by the State arranged;  
Show them honest labor *can* a living gain,  
While the *social outcast* harvests *want* and *shame!*  
Treat them fairly, kindly; teach them all the true  
Will be friendly with them while *the right* they do.  
Both principle and policy declare this course is wise;  
Then why longer act the fool and wisdom's voice despise?  
Crime never *can* nor *will* decrease until in *Wisdom's School*  
Men learn the noted lesson, "Right *through* Law should Rule."

—H. P. McKnight.

## **CHAPTER IV.**

### **A Brief Pen Picture of Prison Life**

For the instruction of children and others who have never visited one of our large penitentiaries I insert the following sketch of such a visit written by Mrs. F. M. Lambert, author of "Holy Maternity," which was written for this work:

The prisons and buildings connected with them are enclosed by a high stone wall. Of course there is a gate, or gates, opening upon driveways leading into the yard where the shops are located. The gate is securely locked and guarded, the guard having a little room built on the wall over the gate. There is a main entrance to the building through which criminals as well as visitors enter. The officer closes and locks the large door behind you upon entering. On Sabbath mornings many things are seen and heard there. The officers come in and take up the work of the day. The warden or deputy takes a large bunch of keys and opens a side door that leads into the cell room, and the guards follow him into the corridor. Soon is heard the rattling of the keys, and the opening and closing of heavy doors, followed by the tramp, tramp, of many feet. Passing out at a side door with the officer, you may watch the men passing down to their breakfast in the dining-room, which is on the ground floor of the chapel, perhaps one hundred feet from the prison building.

Each guard marches with his company of men, from twenty to fifty in number. They march in single file, each man with his right hand resting upon the right shoulder of the man in front of him.

The officers wear dark blue uniforms, while the convicts are dressed in suits made of heavy woolen goods, generally striped, the stripes being black and white, a little over an inch wide, even the caps being striped, and of the same material as the suits.

You follow the officer across the yard, and notice the large greenhouse with its beautiful plants, flowers and shrubs. But, looking back, you see the great high wall of the prison, and remember that the little spot in the prison yard and the sky overhead is all the glimpse of the world that these poor men get, and, no doubt, is all that some of them ever will get, for some of them are shut in there for life.

## THE CHAPEL SERVICE

You follow the officer up the steps of stone into the entrance hall, and watch the men pass out of the dining-room up the stairway into the chapel; then you follow and are led to a seat near the pulpit, facing the assemblage. Your eyes wander quickly over that strange lot of from two hundred to five hundred men, and, in some prisons, over a thousand constitute the audience. When all are seated, the guards seat themselves on high stools placed along the sides of the room, facing the rear door, while the prisoners face the pulpit at the farther end of the room.

Then the prison choir sings and the organ peals forth its beautiful strains, the prisoners joining in the singing. You cannot keep back the tears as you look into their faces and think that only for sin they might be free. Verily, "the way of the transgressor is hard." Prayer is offered, and the chaplain, and those who have permission, talk from the written word of eternal life. Invariably your eyes sweep over that strange audience, and here and there you see a man, or perhaps a young boy, in tears, and you know the tender chord in their hearts has been touched. God grant it may be so! Several testify to hope in Christ.

Services over, the prisoners are marched to their cells and locked in. They must all attend the morning service, but are not compelled to attend the Sunday school in the afternoon. Few prisons conduct Sunday schools. In the afternoon, in company with the chaplain and some of the guards, you may visit the cell rooms, and are allowed to distribute papers and tracts, and speak personally with each prisoner.

The cell room is a long room with a stone floor and whitewashed walls, the cells running through the middle of its entire length. The cells are narrow, little rooms, perhaps four feet wide and six or seven feet long. They vary somewhat in size. They have doors of strong bars of iron, and no windows. All the air received must enter through this grated door in front. The back of each cell joins with the back of the row of cells on the other side, thus forming a double row facing in opposite directions.

Rows of cells are built in tiers, one row above another, with a narrow platform running along in front, with an iron railing.

Each man's name, and the number of his cell, is placed over his door. A wide corridor runs all around the main room, which admits the circulation of air from the large grated windows. Sabbath is rather a hard day for the men, for they had rather be at work than locked in lonely cells, with only their own thoughts and troubled consciences for company.

Many of the men who are there for long terms have their cells fixed very nicely, and one can usually tell those whose hearts cling to home or friends. But there are some who seem to care for nothing. One boy had his cell ornamented with festoons of newspapers folded and torn into patterns representing lace curtains. Another, a life convict, had his cell festooned with colored tissue paper. This man was a trusty, who had the care of the flowers and plants. In some prisons the cells are not provided with Bibles, and some prisons have no chaplains.

Some of the men are very expert at making beautiful things, such as pin cushions, picture frames, hair-braided watch guards, pen-holders, workboxes, toy chairs and many other things. One man I saw was making designs for embossed rocking-chair backs; another had his tools for repairing watches.

## THE WORKSHOPS

On Monday morning we may visit the workshops and see the men at work. Here we see all kinds of work; farm implements, such as hoes, rakes, pitchforks and many other things, probably all made of iron. These tools pass through many hands before they are complete. Each process is done by a separate set of men. For instance, the hoes are made by some and sharpened by others. It takes only a few seconds to sharpen a tool. As soon as this is done it is passed on to others who polish it, and the handle is inserted and painted.

Some rooms are so warm from the many furnaces, and the red-hot irons which are being beaten into shape, that a person can scarcely stay long enough to see the work done, and is glad to move on to cooler departments. The men seem to look well, but you cannot help wondering how they ever work and endure the terrible heat. They are not allowed to talk to each other, and are continually under the guard's eye. Here and there one looks up with a nod and a smile.

Each man in the shops is given a certain amount of work to do, and if he does any more than his allotted task, he is paid for it. The amount is kept for him. But very few except long-timers and experts can gain any time to do extra work.

After going through all the shops we pass on to

## THE HOSPITAL,

which is in the rear of the chapel, and in the same building. Here are sights that touch hearts. Some are dying with consumption, and some with broken hearts. One poor boy's sunken cheeks and thin, wasted hands especially touched me. Taking him by the hand, I began to talk to him. He said: "No one cares for *me*." "Yes, God cares for you and He loves you." "Why does He let me stay here and die if He loves me?" "Have you a mother?" "Yes, I have a good Christian mother, but she doesn't know I am here." "May I write and tell her you are sick? I am sure she wants to know about you?" "Oh, no; I had rather die all alone than to have mother know I am here."

So it is all through these places. For, though I have briefly described one prison, they are all in a great measure alike, yet vary in different states to some extent. All are not so clean and neat as this one spoken of, and though a prison might be lined with costly gems, it is still a prison, and without Jesus in the heart it is only a living tomb to those confined therein. Let none think that it is a pleasant place to be. One man may want to be a Christian, or at least a moral man and a man of cultured tastes, and such men find it doubly hard when they must work side by side with the most degraded criminals. One may leave the prison worse than when he went in.

In these places children hide their ruined lives and breaking hearts from their dearest earthly friends. No mother to smooth the dying one's pillow, though small it may be! No sister or brother to wipe away the bitter tears that *will* fall; no father to say good-bye. O mothers, let the memory of your boy's innocent childhood fan all your tenderness and love into a flame that would leap over the highest breastwork Satan could erect and take your boy or girl back to your heart. If you have been a true Christian and have done your duty faithfully, trust still in God. What we need is faithful teaching among the unsaved, to warn them against their danger, before they get into such awful places.

## **CHAPTER V.**

### **Letters of Introduction and Kind Words from Governors, Prison Officials, Etc**

From the great number of letters which I have received, of the character indicated by the title of this chapter, I give a few which may be of interest to the reader. These will suffice to show the general interest of those in positions of honor and trust and their willingness to share a part in the work I have tried to perform for humanity, by making it possible for me to prosecute and carry it on. Many letters of like topic have been lost or destroyed, and, space being limited, I hope those who have done a like part may not feel slighted. The true records are kept by the recording angel, and every one shall receive a just reward. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Such letters received in the Southern states will be found in the chapters on work in Stockades and Prison Camps. Also some relating to Street and Rescue work in the chapters on these respective topics. I should like very much to give some personal letters from railway officials, expressing their appreciation and interest in the work, but I have refrained lest by such some might be caused some annoyance. To them much gratitude and credit is due, from all who have received encouragement or spiritual benefit through my feeble efforts made in the name of Jesus.

## FROM GOVERNORS

*Executive Department,  
Indianapolis, Ind., Dec. 4, 1891.*

Hon. J. B. Patten, Warden,  
Jeffersonville, Ind.

Dear Sir:

This will be presented to you by Mrs. Elizabeth Ryder Wheaton, an evangelist whose work is especially among prisoners. I hope it will suit your pleasure and convenience to extend to her the privilege of addressing the prisoners of your institution.

*Yours truly,  
I. J. Chase, Governor...*

*Executive Department,  
Indianapolis, Ind., Aug. 3, 1893.*

Capt. Jas. B. Patten,  
Warden Prison South,  
Jeffersonville, Ind.

Dear Sir:

This will be presented to you by Mrs. E. R. Wheaton, a prison evangelist of long experience and considerable reputation. She comes with the highest recommendations of her work from prisons heretofore visited. She desires to conduct services in your chapel, and I trust you will afford her every reasonable facility for so doing.

*Very respectfully,  
Claude Matthews.*

*Governor's Office.  
Topeka, Aug. 5, 1893.*

Hon. S. W. Chase,  
Lansing, Kans.

Dear Sir:

This will introduce to you Elizabeth Ryder Wheaton, a prison evangelist, who comes to us very highly recommended.

She is desirous of holding service, or taking part, at least, in the prison.

Any favors shown her will be appreciated by

*Fred J. Close, Private Sec'y.*

Dear Chase:

I have just come in, and take pleasure in endorsing the above letter. I bespeak for this lady a full opportunity to address the prisoners, as I have no doubt but that the service will be productive of good.

*Yours,*  
*L. D. Lewelling, Governor.*

*Executive Office.*  
*State of Idaho.*  
*Boise City, Dec. 19, 1895.*

To Whom It May Concern:

This will introduce Elizabeth Ryder Wheaton, a lady who is devoted to prison work. Any favors shown her will be gratefully appreciated.

*Respectfully,*  
*W. J. McConnell, Governor.*

*Executive Chamber.*  
*Lincoln, Nebraska, Oct. 10, 1896.*

Warden Leidigh:

My Dear L.:—

This will introduce to you Mrs. Elizabeth Ryder Wheaton, who is interested in prison reform work and in visiting prisons for the purpose of holding suitable services on the Sabbath day. Kindly extend such courtesies as you can, and make the necessary announcements so that she can conduct services in the chapel, and much oblige,

*Very truly yours,*  
*Silas A. Holcomb, Governor.*

*Executive Chamber.*  
*Carson City, Nevada, Dec. 13, 1902.*

Mrs. Henderson:

Mrs. E. R. Wheaton, the bearer of this, desires to do some charitable work at the prison and she desires to have services there tomorrow, as Mr. Henderson is not there. She is coming down with Mr. Harris and will explain her mission to you.

*Yours truly,*  
*R. Sadler, Governor.*

## PRISON OFFICIALS

*Sheriff's Office.  
Suffolk County.  
Boston, Oct. 24, 1885.*

Mr. Bradley:

Let the bearer visit the jail and see any person she desires to.

*J. B. O'Brien, Sheriff.*

*North Carolina State Penitentiary.  
Raleigh, N. C., Nov. 14, 1885.*

Mrs. Elizabeth R. Wheaton.

My Dear Friend: Your postal just to hand, and in reply I am glad to say my daughter is much better than when you were in Raleigh, but she is still very far from being well. The general health of the prisoners is very good at this time. I shall be very glad to have you at our prison as you pass on your way south. We have all of the convicts in the prison every Sabbath, and I shall be very much pleased for you to have service for us. We can arrange for the service on any Sabbath morning or evening, as may be most desirable or convenient to you.

I regret that I did not meet you when you were here last. May the good Lord bless you very abundantly in your Christian work.

*Your Friend,*

*W. J. Hicks, Architect and Warden.*

*Warden's Office,  
Nebraska State Penitentiary.  
Nobesville, Nebr., April 11, 1886.*

R. J. McClaughry,  
Warden Penitentiary,  
Joliet, Ill.

Dear Sir:

This will introduce to your favorable notice Mrs. E. R. Wheaton, Prison Evangelist. Mrs. Wheaton is highly recommended by some of the most prominent persons, and any favors that you can show her will be in a good cause.

*Very respectfully,*

*C. F. Nobes, Warden.*

*San Francisco, Aug. 18, 1888.*

Mrs. E. R. Wheaton.

Dear Madam: I have just received yours of the 17th inst., and in reply will say that you have always been welcome to visit the jail and enjoy every privilege granted to others of your sex.

Mr. G.'s mother has not been allowed to enter his cell for some time past. The utmost freedom consistent with our rules of order is given to all those employed in the good work in which you are so earnestly engaged. Should you find it convenient to visit the institution again prior to leaving our State, we will be pleased to admit you, and should you prevail on the sheriff to allow the special favor you seek, we will gladly comply with the order.

*Respectfully yours,*  
*John Rogers, Chief Jailer.*

*Dakota Penitentiary North.*  
*Bismarck, Dak., Oct. 27, 1888.*

Hon. D. S. Glidden,  
Warden Penitentiary,  
Sioux Falls, Dak.

Dear Sir:

This will introduce to you Mrs. Elizabeth R. Wheaton and Miss Mary M—, Prison Evangelists.

They paid us a visit several days ago. While they came without introduction, I welcomed them and gave them opportunity to examine the prison; also called officers and prisoners together in the evening and held services. We were well repaid for our time and trouble. They left a lasting and good impression. I think that you will like their singing and prison talk. I bespeak for them a cordial greeting. Fraternal  
yours,

*Dan Williams, Warden.*

*Warden's Office,*  
*Penitentiary at Anamosa.*  
*Anamosa, Iowa, Dec. 2, 1888.*

This is to certify that Elizabeth R. Wheaton this day held religious services in the prison chapel at this prison, which were very interesting and instructive, and were highly appreciated by both convicts and officials. I am convinced that much good will result from the meeting. Mrs. Wheaton is very earnest in her remarks, and her singing is charming. I can heartily commend her to all prison officials whom she may choose to visit.

*Very truly,*  
*Marquis Barr, Warden.*

*Ohio Penitentiary, Warden's Office.*  
*Columbus, Ohio, Sept. 10, 1889.*

To Prison Officers:

This will introduce Mrs. Wheaton, who has been at our prison and worked among the boys. There is none who will command more respect and no more earnest worker than Mrs. Wheaton. She will do good Christian work wherever she goes.

*Respectfully,*  
*W. B. Pennington,*  
*Deputy Warden, Ohio Penitentiary.*

*Huntsville, Tex., Sept. 20, 1904.*

Mother Wheaton,  
Tabor Iowa.

My Dear Madam: Your favor of the 4th instant came duly to hand, and we certainly appreciate your kind remembrance.

I made the men a talk last Sunday in the Chapel and told them of your kindly words sent them by you through me, and I know they all appreciated it. May God bless you in your good work, and grant that your days may be long; that you may be able to turn many poor, wayward men and women from their evil ways.

With my very kindest regards, I beg to remain, madam,  
*Yours most sincerely,*  
*T. H. Brown, Asst. Superintendent.*

Dict. T. H. B.

*Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Aug. 31, 1891.*

To My Brethren—Wardens:

Gentlemen: Having observed the work of Mrs. Elizabeth R. Wheaton as a prison evangelist, I most cheerfully recommend her to your kind consideration and co-operation. Her presence is a benediction, and her work is in no sense subversive of good discipline, but, on the other hand, is most healthful and helpful.

*Fraternally yours,*  
*Theo. D. Kanouse,*  
*Warden of South Dakota Penitentiary.*

*Warden's Office.*  
*The Anamosa Penitentiary.*  
*Anamosa, Iowa, Oct. 8, 1894.*

To all who entertain an interest in our common humanity:

We deem it only just and proper to express our endorsement of the labors and influence of Mrs. Elizabeth Rider Wheaton among the inmates of prisons.

Her visits to this prison have invariably been attended with good results, and she leaves within these walls a fragrant and wholesome influence.

*Most respectfully,*  
*P. W. Madden, Warden.*  
*J. M. Crocker, Chaplain.*

*Southern Illinois Penitentiary.*  
*Chester, Ill., Menard P. O., Oct. 22, 1893.*

Dr. V. S. Benson, Asylum for Criminal Insane,  
My Dear Doctor:

This will introduce Mrs. E. R. Wheaton, a prison evangelist who wishes to hold open air services at your place. I am deeply impressed with her earnestness and eloquence, and feel that she has done us good down here.

*Yours truly,*  
*J. D. Baker, Warden.*

*Superintendent's Office.*  
*Virginia Penitentiary.*  
*Richmond Va., June 8, 1893.*

To Whom It May Concern:

Mrs. Elizabeth R. Wheaton, evangelist, whose mission is among prisoners, has visited and held meetings at this institution which have made a decided impression upon the convicts, and I heartily recommend her to the favor of prison officials and other good people.

*Very truly yours,*  
*B. W. Lynn, Supt.*

*Colorado State Penitentiary.*  
*Canon City, Colo., April 11, 1904.*

To Whom It May Concern:

I wish to say that Mother Wheaton, who has from time to time visited the Colorado State Penitentiary, has been the means, I believe, of accomplishing much good with the inmates of this institution. Her earnest efforts and kind, motherly advice have instilled in the hearts of the prisoners an apparent desire to be better men. I certainly most earnestly commend her to the kindly care of those whom she may meet.

*John Cleghorn,*  
*Warden Colorado State Penitentiary.*

*South Dakota Penitentiary.*  
*Sioux Falls, S. D., March 12, 1904.*

Mrs. E. R. Wheaton,  
612 E St., Elkhart, Ind.

Dear Madam:

I take this opportunity of thanking you for the visit made to this institution some time ago. Your work among the prisoners has had good effect in more ways than one. A number of the inmates have told me that your encouraging and Christian talk to them has helped them and that they are trying to live Christian lives and that by the help of God they expect this to be their last term in prison.

Hoping that you may be able to visit this institution again, I am,  
*Yours truly,*  
*O. S. Swenson, Warden.*

*South Dakota Penitentiary.*  
*Sioux Falls, S. D., June 5, 1905.*

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to certify that Mother Wheaton, the bearer of this letter, has visited the South Dakota Penitentiary in the capacity of a missionary. I am glad of the opportunity to say that she is doing much good to those unfortunate enough to be placed in an institution of this kind and I heartily commend her work.

*Very respectfully,*  
*H. T. Parmley, Warden.*

*Nebraska State Penitentiary.*  
*Lancaster, Neb., May 22, 1905.*

Mother Wheaton's visits to this institution always seem to cheer up the inmates and make most of them look forward to better things. They feel that she has a mother's heart for all.

*A. D. Beemer, Warden.*

*Office of the Commissioners of the*  
*District of Columbia.*  
*Washington, Aug. 19, 1893.*

Mr. W. H. Stoutenburgh,  
*Intendant Washington Asylum.*

Dear Sir:

The commissioners direct me to ask that you will give the bearer, Mrs. Elizabeth Rider Wheaton, a hearing, and such favorable action as you properly may with respect to the object of her visit, which is to arrange for the holding of religious exercises at the asylum.

*Very truly,*  
*W. Tindall, Secretary.*

## PERSONAL LETTERS

*Kansas State Penitentiary.*  
*Lansing, Kan., Oct. 17, 1894.*

Mrs. E. R. Wheaton.

Dear Sister:

I am in receipt of your card and am glad to hear of your good success. I enclose you a money order for eight dollars and seventy-five cents, of which fifty cents comes from the deputy warden, and the balance from prisoners. You will remember that I gave you one dollar and twenty-five cents, making a total of ten dollars.

Excuse me for being so particular, but money drawn from the prisoners goes on record, so would like your receipt to show for it.

Wife and children are well.

*Fraternally,*  
*F. A. Briggs, Chaplain.*

*Kentucky Branch Penitentiary.*  
*Eddyville, Ky., Nov. 13, 1897.*

Mrs. Elizabeth Rider Wheaton.

Dear Sister:

I suppose you remember your visit to our prison; the boys often speak of you. We would be glad to have you visit us again whenever it would be convenient. I will soon have to submit my annual report and I write you that I may get a statement from you that I may embody in the report. I herewith enclose statement; if you will sign and return to me I will be very thankful. I have forgotten the lady's name who was with you. If you could get a like statement from her for me I would be glad to embody it also. In my report I will speak of your visit in a way that will introduce you into other parts of the United States.

Hoping to hear from you soon, I am,

*Yours most respectfully,*  
*D. F. Kerr, Chaplain.*

*Missouri State Penitentiary.*  
*Office of Warden.*  
*Jefferson City, Nov. 22, 1897.*

Dear Mother Wheaton:

Your card duly received and we were all glad to hear from you, D. especially. Enclosed you will find a letter from her which she is very anxious for you to answer. Mrs. Pike and I both ordered books from Mr. McKnight at Columbus and are perfectly delighted with them. Mrs. Spahr has ordered one too. We are all about as usual, some three or four sick. We have fifty-two women at present. Hope you

are well and prospering in the Lord's work. Will be pleased to hear from you often.

With much love,

*I am sincerely yours,*

*Belle Magee,*

*Matron State Penitentiary.*

*Pittsburg, Kan., April 18, 1898.*

My Dear Mother Wheaton:

Your kind letter just received. God bless you for your kind, sympathetic heart. I have often thought of and prayed for you. I still feel that God will open the way for me to re-enter the prison work. I am trusting Him. He is my all and in all.

I hear occasionally from the boys at Fort Madison. God has used you marvelously. May you be spared long to tell to those around what a dear Saviour you have found.

*Your son in the gospel,*

*C. S. Laslett,*

*Former Chaplain Fort Madison, Iowa.*

Eph. 3:18-21.

*Anamosa Penitentiary.*

*Anamosa, Iowa, Oct. 5, 1899.*

Dear Mother Wheaton:

At last we have your handkerchiefs finished, and can send to you. The girls did not get those tiny slippers finished in time to have them at the turnkey's office the evening before you went away, so will enclose them now. They are very small, but we know you will appreciate the motive rather than the result.

They are all doing nicely and I feel quite encouraged with the present outlook.

I trust that you are better and that your general health may remain good for years of usefulness yet in life.

With best wishes from myself and my father, the Deputy Warden,

*I am sincerely yours,*

*Mrs. Angie M. Waterman, Matron.*

*Kansas State Penitentiary.*

*Lansing, Kan., Oct. 5, 1899.*

Dear Mother Wheaton:

Your card of yesterday reached me today, but too late to attend your service at the Home, which I would have been pleased to do. Accompanied by our daughter we went to Kansas City, Mo., Monday evening for a short visit and returned home yesterday noon. I examined eight new prisoners just before starting and upon my return found sixteen more. Then two more today. Twenty-six in all this week! So I have been very busy.

Your handkerchief was found in Chapel and my sexton and night watch want you to know that you have found "two honest boys in the pen." I send it enclosed.

Are you going to remain here over another Sunday, and if so, will you be out again or do you go to the Military Prison?

The little book to Baby Esther, the poem and a tract, came this evening, for which please accept grateful thanks. May the blessed Lord greatly bless you in your noble work. May He comfort, strengthen and keep you.

*Sincerely yours in Jesus,  
R. A. Hoffman, Chaplain.*

*Iowa Soldiers' Home.  
Marshalltown, Iowa, July 18, 1901.*

Mrs. Elizabeth R. Wheaton.

Dear Sister. Your card came, after a little delay, duly to hand.

We regret very much your being sick and especially with that dreaded disease, the smallpox. There has not been a case of it at the Home and not any in town that I know of.

Our family is well. Matters at the Home in usual shape. Thirty-four of the boys have died since January 1, and so we are being mustered out, because of service no longer needed. It will be a wonderful relief to us all to be invited to that "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Your visit here was well received, much enjoyed and very profitable. Your coming again will be hailed with delight.

*Very truly, your brother,  
Jesse Cole, Chaplain.*

*Michigan State Prison.  
Jackson, Mich., Sept. 9, 1903.*

Dear Mother Wheaton:

The work still progresses nicely. Many of the men speak in the highest terms of the services you held here and wish to hear you again and those who pray often remember you in their prayers.

We are very thankful to you for your interest in the inmates of Jackson Prison. God bless you in your mission of love. We send the sincere wish and offer the earnest prayer that God may make your book a strong influence in the upbuilding of Christian life and character.

*Sincerely,  
Frank McAlpine, Chaplain.*

*Rusk, Tex., April 7, 1904.*

Mrs. E. R. Wheaton.

Dear Sister: Your kind postal was read to "The Boys" last Sunday and I was requested to answer it. They enjoyed your words of love and sympathy very much. The "old timers" remember you well, and the new men know you through the old ones.

John B. Reagan is Assistant Superintendent, J. H. Meeks, Warden or, as he is called here, Underkeeper; J. H. Walker, Assistant Financial Agent, and I am Chaplain.

We would like so much for you to visit us. If you make arrangements to come let me know and I will meet you at the depot.

*Yours in the work,*

*J. L. Dawson.*

Accompanying the following tribute from Bro. Munro, chaplain of the Mission to the "Tombs" Prison in New York City, we give cuts of the old "Tombs" where I have held services a number of times, and of the "New Tombs" which has not been occupied a great while. Also a short extract taken from the annual report of the chaplain.

*Gospel Mission to the Tombs.*

*Rev. J. J. Munro, Chaplain.*

*New York City, June 24, 1904.*

Dear Sister Wheaton,  
Prison Evangelist,  
Chicago, Ill.

I am glad to hear that you are writing a book on prison labors. You certainly have had much experience in that line. I trust your book will have a wide circulation in which the marvels of God's free grace to men and women behind the bars will be fully seen.

I take much pleasure in commending your prison labors for the Master. For when you came to the Tombs it gave me great joy to hear you speak to the prisoners. And your earnest words for lost souls will not be soon forgotten. Success to you and may God's richest blessing be with you.

*In the Master's name,*

*John J. Munro.*

## EXTRACT

"Crime among boys and young men has increased greatly during the last few years. I cannot account for this except on the ground of a noticeable increase in the social high pressure.

"The temptations today are greater than ever and swamp the young men by the hundreds before they reach their majority. I meet these boys in prison—white and colored—and talk to them. I find out their needs and try to help them.

"Nowhere in the wide world can the power of sin be more clearly seen than in the Tombs Prison. It is a wreckage pool where hulks and derelicts that have been abandoned in the ocean of life come to a standstill. What an army of fallen humanity! They can go no further. When they realize their condition they weep, groan and bitterly lament over their misspent lives. Can these men be transformed by the power of the Gospel? These moral and physical wrecks, with bleared eyes, sunken and emaciated cheeks and many other marks of sin. What a besotted multitude! Yet the Gospel of Jesus can reach them. 'He can save to the uttermost all that come unto God through Him.'"

### Nebraska State Penitentiary

#### A. D. Beemer, Warden

*Lancaster, Neb., May 22, 1905.*

To Whom It May Concern:

I have lately become acquainted with Mrs. Elizabeth Wheaton, familiarly known as "Mother Wheaton," the prison evangelist, and I take pleasure in recommending her and endorsing her work among those who are detained in prisons and jails.

Her manifest Christian spirit, sympathy with the unfortunate and condemned ones, sincere humility, all entitle her to the esteem and confidence of all, and I believe her work productive of much good.

*Signed,*

*P. C. Johnson,*

*Chaplain of Nebraska Penitentiary,*

*Lancaster, Neb.*

*Huntsville, Tex., Aug. 8, 1904.*

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to certify that Sister Elizabeth R. Wheaton, prison evangelist, has visited our prison and held a profitable service. She is a consecrated woman and has her heart in the work. Would to God that we had more such women. May the Lord raise them up and help these poor unfortunate men who are confined within prison

walls. All the prisoners who know her love her and call her mother. May the Lord in his mercy preserve her and give her many souls for her labor.

*W. T. McDonald,  
Chaplain Penitentiary.*

*Charlestown, Mass., Oct. 30, 1885.*

Dear Mrs. Wheaton:

I am sorry I had no opportunity to see you before you left. I trust we may see you on your way to the south. Mrs. Chapman informed me last evening of your whereabouts and the Warden wished me to convey his regards to you and say that he should like to see you here again, if convenient or consistent with your plans, on Sunday next (Nov. 1).

Accompanying this please find some notes from different prisoners. The Warden would be glad to have you here some Saturday P.M. in order that you should be in the yard, at liberty with all the men, that you might speak with them at your freedom or pleasure personally. I trust that the divine light is flooding your spirit and I pray it may do so forever.

I hope that Christ is ever a satisfying portion to you and that your comforts in Him are numberless and rich.

May God Almighty fill you with himself.

*Respectfully,  
J. W. F. Barnes,  
Chaplain Mass. State Prison.*

P. S. Also find herewith a paper drawn up by one prisoner and signed by thirty-three others.

*J. W. F. B.*

*Charlestown, Mass., June 4, 1887.*

Dear Sister Wheaton:

Things here seem to be getting on to the praise of Jehovah. I had a good, long letter from Sister B. this morning. It is most blessed to feel that Jesus abides in the ship and commands the winds and sea as well. Praise his glorious name!

What a blessing it is to be on the altar in God's service, ready to go or stay; ready to labor or to rest; to bear burdens or be free.

I trust that the fullest rays of the Sun Divine may warm your heart and make your life fruitful.

God be with you richly in all things.

*With best of wishes,  
J. W. F. Barnes, Chaplain.*

### **Massachusetts State Prison**

*Charlestown, Feb. 13, 1896.*

Dear Mrs. Wheaton:

Your postal to the Warden concerning – was put into my hands. This is the first moment I have had to devote to an answer. He is in the city working. He has made excellent friends. He stands well in the church he has joined; is connected with a very large Bible class of young men and frequently has to be its teacher. He is active in the church, but closely confined to his work.

We are in fair condition, comparatively, in the prison. We have tonight, 761 prisoners. I send you one of our reports with this.

A. is still keeping a Rescue Mission and doing well.

I presume you are still after the welfare of the prisoners. I have been very ill since I saw you, but am able to be at my work again. Our little prayer meeting on Saturday P. M. still goes on doing good. The Lord is with us in the enlightening and building up of souls.

Such work as you used to do has been left out of the prison life and no one is allowed now to go into the chapel on Sundays. Once each month I take in some people to help us sing in our praise service. The same people every time, however. Pray for us.

*Sincerely yours,*

*J. W. F. Barnes, Chaplain.*

### **Massachusetts State Prison**

*Charlestown, June 14, 1899.*

Dear Sister Wheaton:

Yours came on Monday last. I was glad to hear from you, and to get the enclosures in your letter. They are good—very good—for my work and my own life. I heartily reciprocate all your good wishes for me and pray that you may be preserved from all evil.

We have had some blessed conversions here and one or two of our men have gone to their reward in great peace and joy.

F. is doing well and much loved in his work for Christ. He is at same address I sent you before.

*Truly yours in the work,*

*J. W. F. Barnes, Chaplain.*

## CHAPTER VI.

### Some of My Prison Boys

The writer of the following letters was one of the most remarkably conscientious persons I ever knew. As a prisoner, he was very highly respected by the officers. His chaplain has ever remained his sincere friend and counselor. Years have passed since he left prison life and he still remains an earnest Christian and an honorable member of society. No one but his pastor, employer and former friends know his past history.

He was converted in prison during services I held in 1884 or 1885. He presented me some years ago with a book of poems of his own writing. Not being able to carry them with me, I have lost trace of them. Otherwise would be glad to furnish some of them to my readers.

To Mrs. Wheaton, My Dear Mother in the Lord:

I call you by this name because I am young and have lost my mother in the flesh, and I am writing this letter because, as you have given up all for Jesus' sake, you only can help me as I wish. You can pray for me as a mother prays for a son. I am twenty-four years old, have an eighteen years' sentence, have served four years of it and expect to serve the whole of it for I have no influential friends to help me.

I had not been here a year until I realized what eighteen years of prison life meant—the deprivation of all earthly pleasures, and the wasting away of youthful hopes and ambitions in vain regret. Grief, misery and despair overwhelmed me every night, and every night I wished that I were dead. A great struggle was going on in my soul. A struggle for either life or death, and, thank God, life had the victory.

I am now a Christian. A night of revelation came to me in which God, as Judge, and Jesus, as Saviour, revealed to me—the one, the power and glory; the other, the love of God.

But my way is not like the peaceful flow of a river, but like a stream of cascades. By leaps I draw nearer to God. In the meantime I do not keep the image of Jesus before me. Pray, dear mother, this special prayer for me, that my faith may be constant; that self shall no more come between it and Jesus; that surroundings shall not weaken it; that youth shall not neglect it. Jesus has stamped my soul with his blood. It can never be effaced, but my soul does not thrill as often as I wish with the joy of right-doing. Belief in Jesus permeates my whole being. Why do I sometimes stray from his love? Repentance is doubly grievous then, and repent I must. My conscience compels me. The prayers of a saintly woman will be heard. You will pray for me for Jesus' sake.

*Yours in the Lord,*

*Signed.*

*Thanksgiving Day, 1885.*

Dear Mother in the Lord:

With what mingled emotions of joy, gratitude and love, I read your faith inspiring letter. I did not expect it, for one Sunday in the chapel the Chaplain read one from you addressed to us all in general. He also told us something about your way—what a lonely, weary way. What a sorrow yours has been! Can we poor mortals ever forget our sorrow? Does it not rise to the surface at times and overwhelm us,

so that nothing but the soothing presence of Jesus can comfort us? "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you."

A common saying here is: "I don't believe in a man coming to prison to reform." Ah! little they know what reform is, for where on earth does one need the Spirit that reforms more than in prison? Our poets tell us that prisons are the types of hell. I bless God for bringing me to this prison. Out of its depths I cried and He heard me, nor do I pray to be free from its thrall. Indeed I do pray for His will to be done in me and beseech Him to keep me here until He calls me to Himself, rather than I should go free again and forget Him. That I never can. Though I fell to the lowest depths, I could never forget Him. Dear Mother, we will meet Him—Jesus—in Heaven. Oh! I do not want the pleasures of this life! I do want to be, like you, His humble follower. How I wish I could be near you always that your faith might ever increase my own. I need, very much I need, the pure and tender influence of a holy praying "mother." My own mother had a loving heart, but neither she nor my father did I ever see praying. My precious Saviour was never revealed to me from the lips of either. What would have become of me had God deferred this discipline? Would I not have gone on in sin until too late, even had I been sent here for a short term of years? My only thought would be for them to end, that I might pursue again the delusive hopes of sin.

I fully realize my position here. I see the providence of God that makes it a blessing.

I would tell you the way Jesus came to me, or rather how I came to Him. When first I came here I did not think of what was in store for me—eighteen years of prison life. I was wild and thoughtless. The strangeness of the place helped to divert my mind, but the solitude of my cell at night forced me to look into the future. At length my fate dawned upon me. Oh! it was terrible! During the day I would try to forget the thoughts of the night by being more wild than ever, but the night brought the ordeal again and it was driving me to despair. I longed to be dead, but one night the thought came: "Suppose you were dead, what then? Would you be at rest?" I say thought, but if ever the Holy Spirit spoke to the soul of man, it spoke to mine that night. In an instant I saw the enormity of my sins and the punishment in store for me. In terror I cried: "O, what shall I do? Oh, I cannot die! I cannot meet this doom!" Need I say that my cry was not in vain? No, the spirit of Jesus taught me of Himself that night, and the Chaplain showed me some words in the gospel of John. I never read the Bible before, but there were Christ's words, and those words I now read often. The Psalms and St. John contain for me the Way of Life.

I do not forget you in my feeble prayers morning and night, and I hope you will be indeed my "Mother" for Jesus' sake. Amen.

*June 16, 1890.*

My Dear Friend and Spiritual Mother:

I thank you very much for your kind letter, which I received today. I pray that you may die in the harness, leaving your work to just pass over the river into Heaven.

Have you heard that our dear Chaplain's helpmeet has recently taken this journey? The Chaplain takes it just as one would expect he would, calmly, with faith unabated, rather increased, for he said to me the day after the funeral: "The peace of God in my heart passeth understanding." This evidence of real trust in God's mercy, and that He is and heaven is, has been the means of bringing me nearer to God.

I am reading a book by "H. W. S." entitled "Frank: the Record of a Happy Life." It is very inspiring. I have been convinced for some time that the higher Christian life was a reality, and had experienced its blessings. But I lived upon the experience, drawing my strength from it and not God, consequently I soon got back to where I was before. But the Holy Spirit has of late been urging me to seek it again, so that I have consecrated myself anew to the Lord, and he has blessed me wonderfully, taking away the irritable feeling that certain trials were sure to bring me. I forget self and think only of doing good to those who before I felt like shunning. It makes me very humble in my happiness. Dear Mother, I am sure you have enjoyed this blessed experience of living moment by moment to God, being kept by Him from all sin and the power of temptation.

I have read that many Christians do not believe that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. This appears very strange to me. I don't see how they can be so blind. When this blessed thought was shown me I could not help believing it, it seemed so plain, and was really needful for us to have in order to live up to the commands of the gospel.

*Tuesday P. M., 17th.*

They are celebrating the Battle of Bunker Hill today. We have had our holiday and are now in our rooms for the rest of the day. It is a perfect summer day, mild, with a refreshing breeze floating through the windows. My bird hangs above me chirping, enjoying himself, while the murmur of voices in the guard room, with now and then the joyous shout of a baby, make me feel like shutting my eyes and imagining myself far away from these stones and bars.

I firmly believe that an educated Christian who is wholly consecrated shall be used by the Lord where an uneducated one would not. You know it was to Paul, the highly educated, that was intrusted the greatest work of the Apostles, viz: To convert the heathen world. In Athens, the center of intellectual life, he preached, quoting to them from their own poets and converting certain philosophers of whom was Dionysius, one of the city's judges. Intellectual ability is a talent which the Lord requires us to use for His kingdom. We need never fear for education, "While near the school the church spire stands," as the Quaker poet, Whittier, puts it.

Our prayer meeting is growing both in numbers and in interest. We hold an election of officers today. I resigned the leadership owing to my duties in the library being such that I could not attend regularly. I, however, accepted the place of chairman of the standing committee. The Warden has allowed the teachers of the night school to organize a society for the purpose of general culture. Last Friday the constitution and by-laws were submitted for approval. Next Friday the election of officers will be held. I have been embarrassed by several members asking me to accept the position of president. I know that I am not qualified for the position, but they think otherwise and are persistent. These, and other tokens of regard and respect for me by my fellow prisoners, I am very grateful for.

It makes me feel, too, that my Christian life here has not been without results among them. They respect my scruples—something I hardly think people outside are in the habit of doing. You will understand that I look upon all this as the Lord's doings, and feel no self-praise over it. To Him be all the praise for giving me the courage and strength to let my light shine before the men in this prison. O! it is good to be on the Lord's side, to let Him order my way. I pray that I may never have a will

of my own in this respect. I feel so perfectly willing to remain here and serve Him in my feeble way, only praying that if a larger opportunity comes to me I shall not be found wanting, only believing that with the opportunity will come added strength and power from on high. The Holy Spirit has so witnessed to my spirit that God is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, and that Jesus is my Saviour, that the bare thought of being unfaithful brings intense pain to my soul. No, I can never be happy away from my Saviour. With His faith filling my being, His peace shall abide with me.

I pray daily for my spiritual "Mother," that the Lord shall bless her in all heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that the Holy Spirit shall rest upon you, giving you the word of truth to speak to the lost souls in all the places you go to.

With much love, I remain

*Your son and brother in the Lord,*

— —.

*Oct. 23, 1894.*

My Dear Mother:

I have been waiting to hear from you so I could write and let you know of the good news that has come to me. I am no longer in prison. I have been let out on parole. This means that I am still a prisoner, but am given larger liberty. I shall not be allowed to leave this city nor engage in mission work, that is to give my whole time to it. I have to report to the secretary of the Board of Prison Commissioners every month. When I get a room I am going to devote the most of my spare time to study. I go to a mission at the North End, but have no regular church connections. I have been living with Mr. — since coming out, but will leave him within a week. He has been a good friend to me. He has been so ill all this year that he has been to the prison only a few times.

I am happy in my new life. The Lord is blessing me wonderfully. There is no other life worth living here below but following in the way of the Lord.

With much love, I remain

*Your son in the Lord,*

— —.

## A TALENTED YOUNG MAN

Soon after entering upon prison work, I found in one of our eastern prisons the writer of the following letters and articles. He was at that time young, gifted, scholarly and very prepossessing in appearance. His penmanship was beautiful, perhaps the most so I have ever seen, but he had fallen under evil influences and the very gift that should have been used for a better purpose proved a curse and at the time I first saw him he was under sentence for forgery. He seemed to be clearly converted in a meeting I held in the prison and proved faithful during the remainder of his term. But after he went out into the world I lost trace of him. He was only one among thousands who need sympathy and help and encouragement. I trust that, if living, he is still true to himself and to God. Some of his letters follow, also the discourse on the Agony in the Garden in the form of a letter found in the appendix is of his writing.

*Oct. 29, 1885.*

To Mrs. – Wheaton.

Madame: Not being able to shake hands, and having thus been deprived of the pleasure of verbally telling you what we had to say, we now have recourse to our pen. Our hearts have heard, understood and treasured your words of last Sunday.

Dear Lady, yours is a special task. In your field of labor are gathered crowds unnumbered, inert, inanimate, forming, as it were, a great desert, a Dead Sea uninhabited by any living thing. There lies a small world to be reconquered; such are the men who are to be reclaimed. How act upon them? How move their hearts? How gain mastery over them? In these questions lies the secret of the future.

Holiness in your heart and the omnipotent hand of Jesus in yours cannot fail to bring about the reformation of a host of criminals. He will save them. Oh! climb the heights, display the brilliancy of those universal truths in whose presence every being gifted with reason and accessible to reflection feels compelled to bend the knee. Deeds, examples, striking evidence and incontestable proofs of abnegation, devotedness, charity and sacrifices are required. These are the sermons that awaken souls from their torpor; these the weapons that triumph over the world, however criminal, careless, frivolous and hardened it may be.

*Signed.*

*December 1, 1885.*

Mrs. Elizabeth R. Wheaton,  
Somewhere in America.

Let me begin this letter by saying something very true concerning

## RUM

Let thy devotees extol thee,  
And thy wondrous virtues sum;  
But the worst of names I'll call thee,  
O, thou hydra monster, Rum!

Pimple-maker, visage-bloater,  
Health-corrupter, idler's mate;  
Mischief breeder, vice promoter,  
Credit spoiler, devil's bait.

Almshouse builder, pauper maker,  
Trust betrayer, sorrow's source;  
Pocket emptier, Sabbath breaker,  
Conscience stifler, guilt's resource.

Nerve enfeeblor, system shatterer,  
Thirst increaser, vagrant thief;  
Cough producer, treacherous flatterer,  
Mud bedauber, mock relief.

Business hinderer, spleen instiller,  
Woe begetter, friendship's bane;  
Anger heater, Bridewell filler,  
Debt involver, toper's chain.

Memory drowner, honor wrecker,  
Judgment warper, blue-faced quack;  
Feud beginner, rags bedecker,  
Strife enkindler, fortune's wreck.

Summer's cooler, winter's warmer,  
Blood polluter, specious snare;  
Mob collector, man transformer,  
Bond undoer, gambler's fare.

Speech bewrangler, headlong bringer,  
Vitals burner, deadly fire;  
Riot mover, firebrand flinger,  
Discord kindler, misery's sire.

Sinews robber, worth depriver,  
Strength subduer, hideous foe;  
Reason thwarter, fraud contriver,  
Money waster, nations' woe.

Vile seducer, joy dispeller,  
Peace disturber, blackguard guest;  
Sloth implanter, liver sweller,  
Brain distracter, hateful pest.

Wit destroyer, joy impairer,  
Scandal dealer, foul-mouthed scourge;  
Senses blunter, youth ensnarer,  
Crime inventor, ruin's verge.

Virtue blaster, base deceiver,  
Spite displayer, sot's delight;  
Noise exciter, stomach heaver,  
Falsehood spreader, scorpion's bite.

Quarrel plotter, rage discharger,  
Giant conqueror, wasteful sway;  
Chin carbuncle, tongue enlarger,  
Malice venter, death's Broadway.

Household scatterer, high-hope dasher,  
Death's forerunner, hell's dire brink;  
Ravenous murderer, windpipe slasher,  
Drunkard's lodging, meat and drink!

The rum vender's power is something enormous. We do not delude ourselves into thinking that the fight for national prohibition will be easily won. In many respects the liquor dealers will prove an enemy harder to vanquish than the slave dealers were. For slavery was an institution with a local habitation. It was restricted to certain well-defined limits. The whole world knew where it was and what it was doing. But rum is everywhere. Its upholders are woven into the warp and woof of society in every city and hamlet. It has a thousand heads, and it can hide them in times of danger with wonderful facility. Slavery was bold, brazen and defiant. It could be nothing else. But the liquor dealers, with equal bravado and strength, are enabled to resort to the cunning and subtlety of the serpent, when bravado is imprudent.

Then the liquor dealer's influence over his victims does not end with control of the bodies. His slaves are his allies. He owns them, many of them, body and soul for such a cause. They will fight for rum and vote for rum as persistently as the saloonist himself. These facts may as well be appreciated. When it comes to defiant antagonism, when temperance men boldly array themselves in professed opposition to the traffic in alcohol, the struggle will be severe. But it is certain there will come no time in the future when it will be less severe. The liquor power is *a rapidly growing power*. God knows it is strong enough now, but it becomes stronger with each passing day.

Are we willing that such a class of men not only hold such an enormous power, but add to it indefinitely? In the census for 1880 the capital employed in the manufacture of liquor was over one hundred and eighteen million of dollars, and the number of persons employed in the manufactories and in saloons aggregated over one hundred thousand. No nation can afford to leave such power in the hands of such men. It is suicidal.

Having *said my say* about "Old Devil" and his "Clerks" I guess I'll write a *little* letter to

My Dear Sister:

Your good, kind letter was duly received. We sincerely thank you. When meeting with savages who don't treat you respectfully please ever remember that in M— everybody who knows you or about you loves you. Mrs. D. told me to write to Mrs. Wheaton because "*she is a lovely Christian.*"

"O taste and see that the Lord is good." Psa. 34:8.

That is the right way to find out that He is good. We may think He is good, we may have some idea that He is so—but to know it, and to know how very good the Lord is, we must taste his goodness. He alone is good. He is goodness itself; and because He is this, He wants us to taste, to enjoy Him.

Good men and women, and good children, will one day be like the angels in heaven; and they begin to be such already in this world. If it were not for them, if they were not here to be the bearers of peace and happiness, the ministers of mercy and of love, to wretchedness and woe, to the weary and the bowed down, how wretched would this world be! A thousand blessings upon you, beloved sisters, who, from the goodness of your great big heart, endeavor to do good to others. It is through such holy and devoted daughters of our thrice holy King and Father as Sister Elizabeth that we taste and see how good the Lord is.

"You see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand." Galatians 6:11. "I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers." Philemon, 4.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Romans 15:13.

"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body." Hebrews 13:3.

We salute thee, sister.

*Your real brother in Jesus,*

*L. J.*

*Charlestown, Mass., Oct. 18, 1886.*

Mrs. Elizabeth R. Wheaton.

Dear Sister—John 17:20, 21: "Everyone members one of another." "If one suffer all suffer." I do not know that the relation and consequent influence of member upon member can be better illustrated than by the connection of the body, mind and spirit, and the power that any one of the three has over the other two.

The mind depends upon the body to carry out its desires, and the mind is in constant subjection to the body in health and in sickness. The body is controlled by the mind as the ship is directed in her course by the man at the helm. The spirit looks out through the eyes of the body and is entranced with the scene of beauty, or is crushed with the sorrow with which it is seized, according as we look upon a thing of beauty or the eye rests upon things withered and dead.

The life and experience of every man attest the fact that thought and emotion, and the body in which the organs of thought and feeling are placed, are inter-related in such a way and to such an extent that the mind and body control, to a very great extent, the activity of each other. The wise man, looking at the inner life and the outer manifestation of it, from a little different point of view, expresses it thus: "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. The spirit of a man will sustain his *infirmity*, but a wounded or broken spirit who can bear?" Says a writer in the Laws of Health: "If a man thinks he is an invalid he is one; if he thinks himself incompetent he is incompetent, and so through the whole list." By faith in Christ, as true and confiding as the trust of a child; by boldness at the throne of grace; by firmness in resisting temptation, and by resolution in the performance of every duty we are able to maintain the connection we have formed with Christ, the head of the body; to

bear the fruit of the vine; to suffer with each other; to be honored with the members of the body, and to rejoice with those who rejoice.

As the connection of the body, mind, moral nature and spirit is such as to give one part influence over the other parts and the power to modify their health and action, so the relation which is formed with the household of faith, when we come into Christ, is to be honored by striving for the faith of the gospel and by an effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

If one in Christ now, this oneness can be maintained among the brotherhood in but one way, and that is by being one with Christ and God in purpose, plan and effort for the salvation of men and by striving together for *the faith* of the gospel. The unity of God's people cannot be maintained by erecting standards of our own—by making our own opinions bonds of fellowship and tests of soundness—by prescribing this and forbidding that. The unity is to be maintained by striving together for *the faith* of the gospel. The same thing is true with reference to the multitudes who are following Christ as they have learned him. The unity of all these distracted bodies is not to be brought about by any effort to form a union, but by an effort on the part of each one to grow up into Christ, the living Head; by all agreeing to disagree in their opinions; and by all striving together for *the faith* of the gospel. This lesson is to be taught the world by the disciples of Christ, and if we do not teach the lesson aright, we may expect, and we ought to receive the question: What do ye more than others?

When we are growing in favor with God and man; when we are increasing in the knowledge of divine things; when our lives are hid with Christ in God; when we are appropriating the spiritual food which God has furnished; when we are proving to the world that we have passed from death unto life; when we are loving each other with pure hearts fervently; when we are continuing steadfast in the apostles' doctrines and in the fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers, we are giving to the world and to professed Christians everywhere a living demonstration that we are striving together for the faith of the gospel.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. III John 2.

*Yours in His love,*

*L. J.*

## UNDER DEATH SENTENCE

In 1887, I found the writer of the following letters, with nine other men, under sentence of death in the prison at Ft. Smith, Arkansas. Before his cell door stood his wife and four little children. They all seemed heart-broken and I was deeply impressed with the sad, touching scene. After talking with them and praying for them, I was led to believe that the man was innocent of the crime for which he and another young man had been condemned. The evidence against them was purely circumstantial. The other man was afterward given his liberty, but this one was held, as many believed, for want of money to hire lawyers to properly plead his case. I still believe him to be an innocent man.

I left the state a short time before the day set for the execution, but prayed the Lord to let his life be spared if he was innocent. Some time after I learned that he, with several others, had been given a life sentence in the Ohio penitentiary. I went to the President and Attorney General in Washington, D. C., several times, trying, if possible, to secure his pardon. They were kind and courteous and after looking up the evidence would have granted him a pardon if the judge who had passed the sentence would request it, but he refused to do so and finally died. Then all hope seemed gone. The wife died of a broken heart. The children all died and the dear old parents, broken-hearted, lingered on, hoping against hope, until now they, too, may have passed away. But the poor man lingered in prison, with health, hope, friends, youth, all gone; forgotten by the world, waiting for death to end his misery. I say hope gone; I mean, hope for freedom here. His hope of heaven proved an anchor to his sorrowing heart. He proved himself a consistent Christian and a good, quiet, obedient prisoner. A letter from Chaplain Starr, Columbus, Ohio, tells me that he had been finally pardoned and was released January 4, 1904.

I find in my possession two papers received from Washington regarding his case of which I give the reader verbatim copies:

### Department of Justice

#### Washington

Case of M—, Western District of Arkansas.

Offense—Murder.

Sentence—To be hanged.

Petition for pardon filed March 11, 1899.

Commuted to life imprisonment on June 7, 1899.

*James F. Reed, Esq.,*

*U. S. Dist. Atty., Western Dist. of Ark.,*

*Fort Smith, Ark.*

### Department of Justice

**Washington, D. C., March 8, 1895**

Mrs. Elizabeth R. Wheaton,

902 H. Street, N. E.

Sir: The papers in the above case have been referred, in accordance with Department practice, to the United States Attorney for the Western District of Arkansas for his consideration, and he has reported adversely thereon, being of the opinion that the case is not one in which executive clemency should be exercised, trial judge concurring.

In the absence of a counter showing, the report of the United States Attorney will be considered as disposing of the case.

By direction of the Attorney General.

*Very respectfully,*  
*William C. Endicott,*  
*Attorney in Charge of Pardons.*

*Fort Smith, Ark., Feb. 20, 1889.*

Dear Sister in Christ:

Yours at hand. It found a small portion of us praying to God for aid. We keep up our prayer meeting. There is but three of us who attend regular. It is myself and Mr. M. and T. We want to do all we can to save our souls. I am one who is to be executed on the 19th and I am ready to go if God says for me to go. I am sure to meet you in Heaven where there is no unjust court. I want you to pray for me in good faith, for the prayers of the righteous are powerful and I want you to remember the day I am to die and pray for my soul to go to God where I can see everlasting enjoyment.

I am sad, sister. It hurts my heart to think I have been a good, affectionate man on earth and now I must die for the wicked world or man's evil. I forgive all and will die an innocent man. "God receive my soul" is my prayer.

Brother and sister B. came and prayed for us last week. Write me again and I will give you all the news.

*Yours truly,*  
*M-*.

I had to stop writing to get to prayer meeting and I tell you, we had a good time. It does me good to get to say a word for Jesus, in jail or out. I am as happy as anyone could be in prison, I am sure. I am blessed with a sure love of God who can save or destroy. We don't have preaching very often in here. There are ten in here who are found guilty of murder. It is no wonder people think they can't get justice. I am sure it is on account of so many bad people being in the territory and around it.

I am thankful I am even spared to see a few more days and to let me have more time to try for justice. I am doing all I can and so are my friends and relatives. I have a good father and mother to pray for me day and night and am sure there is many a prayer gone to Jesus in my behalf.

Hoping to hear from you soon, I say good-bye. I am,  
*Yours very truly,*  
*M-*.

*Fort Smith, Arkansas, March 13, 1889.*

Dear Sister in Christ:

Yours at hand. It found me well and still pleading to God to prepare my soul to meet my fate on the 19th of April. It is an awful day for me to think of. I do hope and pray to God I won't be put to death in such a cruel manner. I don't deserve such a death, or any punishment at all for the accused crime. I don't fear death, but I don't want to disgrace so many good people as it will be a disgrace on all my relatives and me as clear of murder as a child, and I don't believe God will allow me to be put to death without a cause, but if God tells me to go on the scaffold I will obey Him.

I had a dear brother come to see me this week, and when he left me it just looked like it was the last sight of the dear brother, although he said, "I will come to see you again before –," then he choked down and went away. He meant, "Before you are executed." It would do my dear old parents an awful sight of good to get a letter from you, stating what I said in regard to a future home. I do wish you would write them.

We keep up our prayer meeting as regular as the time comes, except we are hindered by a good cause. Seldom we miss our meeting and prayers together. I am sorry to say there is only three of us and I am all the doomed one of the three. I want you when you are visiting prisons in Texas to inquire for a man by the name of John H., as I have heard he was arrested in Texas somewhere and was in jail. This is the same name as the man we are accused of killing, and it may be the same man. I wrote to Paris, Texas, but he was not there. If you find him let me know at once. You can ask him if he ever knew Henry M. and William W. He might deny us, so you can give me a description and I can tell if it is him. Ask him of what nationality he is.

God bless you all and send me relief at the last hour. Amen. I am,  
*Your true and affectionate brother in Christ,*  
M–.

*Fort Smith, Arkansas, April 11, 1889.*

Mrs. Wheaton,  
Dear Sister in Christ:

Your kind and welcome letter at hand. I hope you are being blessed by our Almighty God. I am sure you are worthy of great praise in well-doing. I am very sorry to inform you I am not pardoned yet, but I thank God I have been respited till June 29. It was thankful news for me and I am sure it is the power of our God who wants justice done in everything here on earth. Oh, what a great promise Jesus has promised us all if we will humble ourselves and get low down at his feet! I am one that wants to bow as low as I am required. I am a servant for Jesus as long as I remain in this sinful world.

I am so glad my dear old pa wrote you. I don't get any letters from him. I suppose he writes so pitiful to me the jailer won't let me have his letters. I do not know any other cause. I receive letters from my brothers and sisters regular. I thank you for the letter father sent you. My misfortune is an awful burden on their poor, old and feeble hearts, but I pray God to stay them and help them to bear their sorrows and I am sure He will do so.

Mr. W., my partner, is granted a free pardon and the President did not have time to investigate the evidence in my behalf, so he respited me for further investigation. Several of the senators are taking an anxious part for me and it is

thought I will get a pardon. I trust in God I will be set free and can be able to help catch sinners for Jesus; I am sure I am willing.

I am sorry to inform you Brother M. was convicted of a brutal murder as the evidence shows. I hope he is not guilty, but we must not say.

It is a sad place here. Brother George B. and Brother T. have gone back in the world. There is nothing done for Brother George yet and his time is short.

The President refused to do anything for M., that one-armed colored man, so he must meet his Jesus on the 19th of this month. There is three more, but the President has not ruled on their cases yet. I don't know whether they will be hung or not. I hope not. God help them all.

I want you to please write me. It does me good to read a letter from you. Write soon.

M—.

*Fort Smith, Ark., May 1, 1889.*

Dear Sister in Christ:

Yours at hand. It found us all in good health, and for myself, I am looking to Jesus. We still keep up our prayer meeting. It is a great comfort for me to get to tell Jesus how I feel and to hear the other brothers pray and talk for Him. Of course I know it is hard for me and some others to bear this punishment, yet I feel the kindness of our kind Saviour in my poor, sad heart. I only ask God to save my life and I am willing to spend the rest of my days in his service. I can only trust God that all will come out right.

I will tell you of the dear ones who were hung on the 19th. It was J. M. and A. Both were colored men. M. had the Catholic priest pray for him and he said he was going to heaven. He was very moody and pale; but he seemed to know his doom. Poor fellow! God pity us all, for we have souls to save. A. joined the Methodist church and was baptized the same day he was hung. He was the bravest soldier I ever heard of. He smiled and said, "Good-bye, Henry." I had to shed tears to see and feel the nerves quivering when he and I both knew that it was death caused the quivering of his pulse. Poor boys! They are better off than I am, if they had made their peace with God.

Brother M. was convicted and is sentenced to be hung July 17. There is five to be hung on that day. One colored man and one Indian woman and one Indian man and F. C. and Brother M. Myself and George B. got a respite. His is till June 21 and mine till June 29. W. got a free pardon and I am held on the same evidence. It is because I was poor and did not send a man to plead for me at Washington, but people think I will come out all right yet. I leave it all to God, who can do me justice without money.

For the sake of each poor unfortunate soul you may chance to meet, I ask God to be near you and show and tell you a word to say to the poor condemned ones—a comforting word for their souls' sake. Joy and peace be with you. You have my prayers, as weak as they are. Jesus be with us all. Amen.

Write me soon.

M—.

*Ft. Smith, Ark., May 20, 1889.*

Dear Sister in Christ:

Yours at hand. It found us all well but Mr. T. He has been complaining, but he is better now. We were blessed with Mr. and Mrs. B. to sing and pray for us this morning and it was a great comfort to us all. She was refused at first, but after she came in and told us we sent her to Mr. C. and he told her to "sing and pray for those men as much as she wanted to." It is queer for a living being to not want the distressed to find relief, but it seems as though there was but little mercy shown us here, and, dear sister, I am sure there are some good hearts in here and God surely will not allow them to be put to death. Yet it has been done, and it can be done again, and I am not trusting in a single word or act of man. I am reading my Bible and asking God to open my heart to all faith and charity and reveal all the required secrets to my heart so I can become one of his children in faith and be sanctified in Him. I am so glad you wrote me. It does me good to hear from you. Write soon, as I can only stay here till June 21. Good-bye.

M—.

*Columbus, Ohio, March 30, 1890.*

Dear Sister in Christ:

Yours found me in some better health than I was when you last saw me. I am so glad you will continue to write me. Like all other persecuted souls, I sometimes think I have no friends. But it cannot be so in my case.

I do not faint or shudder at the idea of dying in prison. It is just as near heaven from this prison as it would be if I was at home in the tender care of dear parents and brothers and sisters. Yet I cannot say I am as happy here as there at home. I am not. I feel sure my time is short in this world. I have a hard time. I am in a sea of tears daily. Oh, it is so hard to be bound and shut out from a free world, but this is all for some purpose, unknown to me at present, but by the help of God, I my burden will bear.

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,  
And when my voice is lost in death,  
Praise shall my nobler powers employ  
In that Eternal World of joy."

"Lord, remember me for good,  
Passing through this mortal veil;  
Show me the atoning blood  
When my strength and spirit fall.  
Give my sorrowing soul to see  
Jesus crucified for me."

"May God be your helper and bless you," is my prayer continually.

I do not aim to impress on your mind that I am punished by the prison laws, for I am not. I haven't had a bit of trouble with any one since I came into this institution. I have to work hard and I do more than I ought to, but I am afraid I won't please my superiors in power over me. I put in many a sleepless night from weariness of my daily labors. But I could not stand any punishment, so I had better over-do myself

than to be over-done. My sorrow is now as much as I can bear. I am in need of all good praying people's prayers, so I ask you and your friends to pray for me.

I am honored with all the attire of a first-grade-prison man. I have the red stripes you told me to get and my mustache. The boys you know are well.

M—.

*Columbus, Ohio.*

Dear Sister in Christ:

Blessed be our God! He has saved us thus far and has given us an ark to carry us over Jordan, safe to Eternity. We, as fallen men, sometimes err in thinking we are not under God's protection, but I say we are. Jesus came, not to bring saints, but sinners to repentance. It is not the righteous that are called, but sinners. There is only one way and that is by Jesus Christ, and that is to humble ourselves to all that is right. Life has yet many opportunities for serving God and his Church. Hitherto the Lord has brought me and still in his loving hands I will cheerfully, hopefully rest and trust till the shadows of earth shall be changed for the sunlight of eternity, when my heavenly home is reached, to be blessed forever with the Lord.

Sister, Brother M. says "God bless you," and you have his prayers. Bro. F. C. says he hopes to see you soon. Bro. B. is all right as far as I know. They all say write to them. Bro. T. has forgotten his pledge. May God soften his heart again to say "Thy will be done."

I close by asking you to write soon. God bless you and all co-workers. Good-bye,  
M. —.

## SENTENCED FOR LIFE

Early in my prison work I found in one of our penitentiaries a man sentenced for life who claimed to have acted only with the motive of self-defense. That man is still confined in prison, though he is one of the best of prisoners and has given evidence of being a good, Christian man, worthy of pardon. I wrote to the governor once in his behalf, but too late to avail anything, as his term of office was just expiring. While that poor man has been held there, pardons have been granted to Chinamen, Spaniards and other foreigners who were wicked and guilty, yet this Christian man has been kept in confinement all these long years, until there is only one other besides himself who is now left of the prisoners who were there on my first visit. The other has gone insane and I have feared that the one of whom I write would lose his mind also. His article on the need of prison reform entitled "Meditations of a Prisoner," found in another chapter, will, I believe, commend itself to every fair-minded reader.

I give a few selections from his letters. I feel sure he should be a free man. O the indifference of those who have the power to free such worthy cases and will not! May God give power to the faint and grace to the afflicted and let us pray God to show the governors of our land to whom to give pardon and freedom and from whom to withhold.

*State Prison, December 21, 1902.*

Dear Mrs. Wheaton:

Your kind and welcome letter received and I was very glad to hear from you and I do hope you will soon be strong again. The world needs many Mother Wheatons, so it can ill afford to lose you, but if the Lord calls you home we must all submit, for He does all things for the best.

I was much surprised to see by your letter that you had written to Governor S. in my behalf. From my heart I thank you, dear Sister, and may God bless you for your kindly interest in me. But Governor S. will leave the office tomorrow and the newly-elected Governor will take his seat. It is too bad that you have gone to all that trouble for nothing. But the fact that you did so will always be most gratefully remembered by myself and Charles G. He also wants me to send his kind regards and thanks for your good will to him.

When you have your book ready please send me one. Could you say about when it will be ready? I suppose you would like to know how we spent Christmas. It was spent in the dining-room, but we had a nice dinner and were kindly remembered by the Warden and Chaplain and everything was very nice and pleasant.

I will close with kind regards and best wishes, and may God bless you.

Sincerely yours in the Master's service,

E.

*State Prison, Aug. 19, 1903.*

Dear Mrs. Wheaton:

I have just received your welcome letter and was very glad to hear from you, also to know that you were well. It is a wonder you never get tired of traveling so much. When I think of how you are constantly battling for the right in the interest of lost sinners as we are it brings forth the thought in my mind—does it pay? If one only looks at the general result he can but say—it does not pay that one pure life should be worn out in the cause when so few are made to see the error of their ways and turn to the path of truth and right along the way of righteousness.

But again, if one life is truly brought into the light and a soul saved, then we must admit it pays. And I know that your pilgrimage of mercy brings forth good, for all who know you speak kindly of you. Well, if a little spark of love is kindled in the heart of the most hardened by the kindly deeds of another, who can tell how great that spark may become? So let us not weary of well doing but press on, hoping for the best and accepting the worst in true Christian resignation.

I gave your message of love to all the men here. All were glad to hear from you. O, my dear friend, I am so often troubled in heart by the attitude of some people. Certainly I have been very sinful. I have fully realized all that was wrong in my life. It has been my endeavor to cast it all out of my life and to build on a foundation of righteousness and faith in its place. I have been blessed in my effort by the help of many who I feel have a personal interest in me. At the same time no man has been more inhumanly treated by those who profess to be Christians than I have been and am.

Yes, my friend, we are commanded to pray for such people. This I have done for nine years, but the persecution still goes on. May God forgive them.

Now, a few words about the prison. Everything is changed here. We have all new officers and guards, also another Governor. The Chinese cook you spoke to was pardoned last January. I was denied.

I am, with love, your sincere friend,  
E.

*January 24, 1904.*

Dear Sister:

Your welcome letter duly received and I was glad to hear from you and to know that you were well.

Well, sister, I am again denied a pardon. Guess I must die here. Well, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Still the lack of a Christian spirit is felt as rendered to me. You remember the Chinaman who was cook for the Warden? Well, he was pardoned, likewise several Indians and many others who were without faith, but Christians—oh, well, prison is a good place for them it seems.

With kind love and best wishes to you, I remain,  
*Yours in His service,*  
E.

*State Prison, Feb. 29, 1904.*

Mrs. E. R. Wheaton:

Yours received and I was glad to hear from you. I am getting along very nicely, but the heart is often sad. Oh, I was so much disappointed, and while I was almost heart broken over it I have also felt sorry for the friends that stood by me. Why, just think of it—there are five members on the Board of Pardon, and they all voted against me! So you see it is not the Governor alone who is against me, but every one of them.

My dear friend, I don't think you would be able to do anything for me. The Lord is strong certainly, but the ones who have my freedom in their power leave the

commands of the Lord out of the question. Read the 18th chapter of Matthew, from the 21st verse to the last of the chapter, and you will see what I mean.

Now, dear sister, may God help, bless and comfort you in this seemingly cold world of ours, is the prayer of your friend,

*E.*

## FAITHFUL INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF PRISON WALLS

Another case with which I was very much impressed in the early days of my missionary work was that of a young man of rare ability, gifted and sensible, who was spending a term in one of our United States prisons. He was converted and began working for God among the other prisoners. After faithfully serving his time, he left the prison with good prospects. He was taken into an office and did exceedingly good service for the company, also for God and souls,—his past being known only to his pastor, employers and prison officials. After several years he married a most estimable lady who was doing missionary work. They prospered well. He was promoted from one position to another. For nineteen years he has lived a devoted Christian. All who know him honor and respect him. His wife has recently passed over to the kingdom of heaven. He is still living a true and noble life and he is only one of many who have served time inside of prison walls, who are living for God outside and for Heaven at last. I quote a few extracts from letters received from him during the time of his incarceration.

*In Prison, January 12, 1885.*

My Dear Friend:

Your kind note was received and I was very much pleased to hear from you, but was pained that you should think for a moment that I was forgetting you. Since you left us we have had several very earnest and interesting meetings—the fruit of your presence and labor among us. Praise God, He can find his way inside prison walls as well as outside. He is no respecter of person. Many men, not before confessing Christ or even anxious sinners, have stood up manfully for prayers and may God give them grace to accept and believe. It is very simple, my dear sister, is it not? How I wish that all could see it! It only means total surrender to Him, to give up the old longings and desires and trust Him from day to day. Then comes the "perfect peace" which is vouchsafed to them whose mind is stayed on God. Of course, you will see us again. Our dear Chaplain and Warden are doing everything possible for the spiritual welfare of all the men. The Warden dignified our first meeting by giving us his personal religious experience at the commencement of the service, and he is willing and anxious to encourage in every way possible the religious sentiment now prevailing. As for our Chaplain, I do not believe there is his equal. I who am so closely associated with him can truly testify to his untiring zeal in behalf of all of us. If ever there was a living man, free from any selfish or worldly motives, I believe it is he. The moral tone has been increasing ever since he came among us. I shall not feel at all slighted if you save your strength and time by not writing to me. Just send me some little message by F. or any others (for I see them all daily), and I shall be just as well pleased. It is not because I do not like to have you write me, but I had rather spare you, or help you.

If you will let me know the address of that dear lady at Raleigh whom you stayed with, I will gladly make her something and would like very much to make something for any other of the dear friends who are good to you on your pilgrimage of love and mercy. Shall not forget to make something for your brother. May God bless and keep you and make his face to shine upon you for many years yet to come, and may we finally meet in heaven where there shall be no more parting and sorrow.

Your loving brother in Christ,

C. W.

*August 8, 1886.*

My Dear Friend:

Do you think we have forgotten you? Why, no indeed! We think and speak of you almost daily, but you are moving so that we hardly know where to locate you. A day or two ago L., who is my friend, got a postal card from you, and as he cannot write, by permission just now and I have the privilege to do so, I drop these few lines for him as well as for myself.

How glad we are to know the Lord has prospered your work. How literally is the promise of Christ fulfilled, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." It seems so wonderful that all people are opening their doors to Christian workers, the doors which a few years ago were closed and to be opened only through the power of God, who, as Daniel said, would "set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed," but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and shall stand forever. Our Sabbath School is not in session this month but will renew its course the first of September. We like our new Warden very well. Our dear Chaplain is still with us and is quite well and engaged as ever in his life work. His place would be very hard to fill here. I have been reading this morning the 34th Psalm—"all my fears," "all his troubles," "all his afflictions"—a deliverance from all. "There is no want to them that fear Him." This Psalm is full of comfort. Praise His name! We can find help and comfort in any part of His holy Word. We all pray for God's blessing upon you and your work and for the conversion and salvation of all whom you minister unto. It does not seem too great a thing to ask of the Lord. Both L. and F. send their love to you and L. will write you soon. Also Mr. A. and Mr. R. and many more send love and best wishes. I shall always consider you my friend, and if in the Providence of God we shall never meet in this world I hope to meet you with recognition in our eternal and glorious home above.

*Truly your friend,*  
C.

*January 29, 1890.*

My Dear Friend and Mother:

Your letter received yesterday made me very happy. It was so good of you to write so soon and send such a nice long letter, too. I trust I am getting to value a letter from you as I ought, as I realize more and more how your time is so zealously occupied and needed. I have ever valued your letters for the help they gave me, but I value them now for their scarcity. In the future, when perhaps you may be no more, I shall esteem them among my most valued treasures. Yet I may be called first! We know not the hour, whether in youth, or old age, or in our prime when the angel of death shall come to summon us to eternity. "Watch therefore, be ye also ready," are words that I try to keep ever in mind, or rather to keep my mind so stayed on Christ that moment by moment He shall keep me saved so that I shall never need to whip myself into keeping watch for my Lord. I am glad you believe in and have the blood cleansing freedom from all sin. It is an experience that meets with much opposition from worldly Christians and from some whose good works follow them. These latter really enjoy the experience, but are prejudiced at the name given to it by others. I know that it meets with much opposition. The "Christian Witness" comes to the prison every week. It is an exponent of holiness and very interesting, as well

as spiritual. I have a magazine which contains a story of an ex-convict which would do some good to those who think there is no hope or reform for such an individual. I shall mail you the magazine, and if you can read it do so and give it to others to read.

After a silence of several years my father has written me again. You know he is living in C. and was formerly an instructor in the State Prison at S. He is now old and broken in health, making him incapable for steady work, so he is residing at a soldiers' home. He expresses great anxiety in regard to my future, thinking me friendless, etc. I have written him a long letter reviewing the principal incidents of my prison life. How good God has been to me and how my mind is at rest as regards the future because I have left it in His hands. To find favor with my God is all I desire. Having that, whatever my condition I shall be like St. Paul, content. That is my view of a successful future or life. Wealth, power, ability, all things that men aspire to in this life, do not make or lead to success in my mind. Nothing but the favor of God brings it to man, and that favor comes through the "washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Oh, I am so glad that I know this—even me! How can man doubt the wondrous love of God when He is so patient to all who will but look and see. Well, said someone, that they do not want to look and see lest they should be healed and be saved. My poor old father is a church-member, but I fear he knows nothing about Holy Ghost religion, Jesus Christ's religion, pure and undefiled. I want to do just right all of the time. I know my heart is right because I hate sin and love righteousness. If the Lord has no other work for me when I leave here, I would like to labor under your guidance. When are you coming this way again? I would love to greet you once more before I die.

C.

From every nodding flower, from every whispering breeze  
From mountain's lofty height, from towering trees,  
From softly twinkling star, from lightning's giddy flash,  
From the softest twitter of a bird and thunder's awful crash,  
From hills the ants may call their own,  
From crested elders 'round their throne,  
From babbling brook, from storm-lashed wave,  
From nature smiling, nature grave,  
From earth and air, from sky and sea,  
There comes the self same voice to me,  
Like softest note of cooing dove,  
And sweetly whispers, "God is Love."

—A *Prisoner*.

## CHAPTER VII.

### Letters from Co-workers, and Some of My Prison Girls

In speaking of prisoners or of those within prison walls many think only of men being found there. This is due doubtless to the few women compared to the number of men found in these places. In my efforts to do good to all, I have been especially mindful of those of my own sex, and have ever endeavored to encourage and lift up my sisters who have fallen victims to sin and misfortune. I give in this chapter a few letters from sisters who are directly interested in the care and work for the prison bound; also extracts from letters from a number of my prison girls. The co-operation in my work and the kindness and hospitality ever shown me by the sisters, matrons, wives of officers, etc., are especially appreciated, and all these dear ones are often remembered at the throne of divine grace. These too shall all share in the fruit of the toil and labor in the final reckoning. Neither will my girls whom I have tried to help, that have shown their appreciation and have tried to serve the Lord, be forgotten.

Women who are the victims of sin and are condemned by society and the law, have as much right to be restored and encouraged when they amend their ways, as have men. The following letters are, I believe, sufficiently explanatory in themselves, and may be read with interest.

*Huntsville, Texas, Aug. 19, 1904.*

Dear Mother Wheaton:

Mr. Baker, Superintendent of Prison, said he would like for you to visit our prison once a year; they all were pleased with you. Dear Mother, please pray for little George, that he may be truly converted to God and take an interest in his studies. It seems that he has no desire for them. My greatest aspiration is to live to see him saved and have an education. How my heart goes out for him! I feel that I won't be with him long. I sometimes think that I had rather see him put away before I go, then I would know where he was. When you go to the Faith Home pray for us that if it be God's will that I may be relieved of afflictions and that my husband may be able to do a great and lasting work for the poor unfortunate men. Dear mother, I write you because I have confidence in you. May God bless you.

*Mrs. Mary McDonald.*

(Wife of Chaplain at Huntsville, Tex., a great sufferer.—E. R. W.)

My Dear Mrs. Wheaton:

Your letter to one of our boys was handed to me by him today. I enjoyed reading it, and want to write you at once. I think V. was very seriously impressed by your service here, although I have not yet had an opportunity to talk with him as I have wanted to. He was sick yesterday and not in school. Tomorrow I hope to see him again. I am so glad that you had the opportunity of seeing his parents. I know they will be greatly benefited spiritually by your visit. I am sure our blessed Lord leads you, as you carry peace and comfort wherever you go. Dear Mother, you comforted me. I was impressed, as I have never been before, by the *power of prayer*, and I know your prayers are heard and answered. This text came to me *over and over* while you were here, "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." I felt instinctively that your prayers could help me. Oh, my friends! I *appeal* to you to pray for me. I may be here only until April, but if God has work here

which He wishes *me* to do, I know He will order it that I shall stay longer. But I do want to be *filled* with His Holy Spirit, that while I stay I may do *everything* that is possible to warn and encourage these poor fallen brothers to seek a Savior's love and forgiveness. I *want* a power which I feel *might* be mine, but it has not yet come. I want to reach the boys and tell them of Christ's love, but I have not the power of speech. I cannot convince them that *my* Savior is their Savior too. So often they say to me, "Well, I guess that kind of a life is the best kind to lead after all, but I never will make a start in a place of this kind."

The next day after you left one boy said to me that he had never before heard a talk that had impressed him as he was impressed Tuesday. I believe he is seriously awakened. I think *three* others are, also, beside the one of whom I told you the day you left. I think V. is one.

There is a boy here who says he heard you in Kansas City eight or nine years ago. He was not at service, but saw and recognized you. He thought you would know him if you saw him.

Yours in Christian love,  
*Fannie A. Hoyt,*  
(*Teacher and wife of Officer.*)

Buena Vista, Colo., Oct. 24, 1896.

*Atlanta, Ga., Nov. 12, 1893.*

Dear Mrs. Gore:

This will introduce to you Mrs. Wheaton and Mrs. —, Prison Evangelists. You will be so glad to meet them and they to meet you and talk about our dear boys "shut in."

God bless you.

*Mrs. Charlton Edholm.*

Mrs. A. B. Gore, Oakland, Cal.

*Anamosa, Ia., Nov. 20, 1893.*

Dear Mrs. Wheaton:

Anna H. has written you about the death of Emma S. She had a hard cold, not so bad as some of the girls, however, when she left here. We tried to persuade her to remain here over Sunday, where it was warm, as it was very cold and stormy. She, however, insisted upon going. We of course could not compel her to stay, although we felt it was for the best. When she reached Algona she was too sick to go into the country five miles where she was going to stay. Tuesday morning she was taken out, and Thursday afternoon died with La Grippe or Pneumonia. Several of the women here have had La Grippe. All seem to be improving, as I insist upon their taking excellent care of themselves.

Now, Mrs. Wheaton, I hope you will write to Anna, also a letter to all the girls that I can read to them. They will be glad to think you have not forgotten them. Trusting that you are in good health and that you see good results from your labors, I remain your friend,

*Jennie A. Powers.*

*Jefferson City, Mo., Jan. 25, 1900.*

Dear Sister:

Your card was received in due time. All glad to hear from you. The quarantine is still on at the prison. No news there. No visitors allowed. No baskets sent in, only money. Mr. Cook has not missed a day at work since last winter. He was off twelve days to visit his dear mother. She will soon pass to the other side. Your card was filled with sadness. Be cheerful and rejoice, for soon you will go to glory to praise Him forevermore. I will write some to Sister Kelley. Write me a long letter. Chaplain P. has been on the sick list. Everything going on nicely. Never had a better warden than now in the last eighteen years that I have known this prison. Hoping to hear of your good health, I am ever,

*Clara Cook.*

*Western Penitentiary, Allegheny, Pa., June 7, 1904.*

Mrs. Wheaton:

I am glad to learn that you are about to embody your experiences as a missionary to the inmates of the prisons and penitentiaries of the various states in which you have labored in the name of the Master. It has been no easy work. It has demanded much faith, hope and charity on your part. You have gone with untiring zeal to those who are despised and forsaken on account of their criminal acts.

In the spirit of our blessed Lord and in obedience to His command you have gone year after year to the habitations of disgrace and sorrow and carried the cheering and helpful promises and the forgiving mercy of our dear Savior.

You will have a rich reward from our Heavenly Father. I am sure your words of gospel truth and your songs of praise have often touched the hearts of the female prisoners under my care. The most rebellious and hardened have felt and testified to the gracious power of the gospel of love as you have uttered it here. My hope and my prayer is that the Almighty Shepherd may guide, keep and sustain you in this noble work of your life.

*Sarah J Arner.*

Allegheny, Pa.

*Allegheny City, Pa., Dec. 31, 1893.*

Dear Mrs. Wheaton:

I will try and answer your kind and welcome letter which came to hand a few days ago. We were all very glad to hear from you. Our dear sister, Mrs. Jones, is dead. The dear old lady who was up to the workhouse with you when you were here. She was a dear friend to all the girls here, but she has gone home. She can come to us no more, but we can go to her. The last words she said when she was here was good-bye, and that she would meet us all in heaven. We have very nice meetings now and would like to have you with us. We pray for you every day and we want you to pray for us that we may see the right way and that we may go out of here with light hearts and go about doing good.

We had a nice Christmas. Our Warden treated us with turkey, and we were all so glad that he was so kind to us.

Well, we will begin a new year tomorrow, and I hope we will lead a different life, a better life, for if we believe in Jesus He will save us; yes, He will keep us through the dark valley. He will go with us to the end, as He has promised, if we will put our trust in Him. I have gained a great victory since you were here. I have forgiven an enemy that I thought I never could forgive.

Well, I will close by sending you my love, and as I have only one sheet of paper my friend will send this on to you. I remain,

Your sincere friend,

*Lucy F.*

*Allegheny City, Pa., Feb. 16, 1896.*

My Dear Mrs. Wheaton:

I am so glad to hear from you once more. I had been thinking of you so much of late and I asked God to let me hear from you or send you to us, and so you see He answered my prayer. I cannot express how glad we all were to receive your kind and loving letter. It was read to all and I do wish you could have peeked in to see how quiet all were to listen to it, and our two matrons, too, for they do love you.

I was very sorry to hear of your being so sick, but God has raised you up for He has work for you to do yet. I pray for you every night and morning that He may strengthen you and keep you, for you are to us like the rain is and the sunshine to the flowers, for we know that you do love us poor unfortunate ones.

Will you please send us the hymns called "Tell of the Unclouded Day" and the one called "When the Pearly Gates Unfold"? Dear Mother, pray for us all, but pray for me especially, for I am in great sorrow and trials. Pray that God may raise me up friends and that He may keep me.

Good-bye, hoping to hear from you soon, I remain, yours in Christ,

*Laura M.*

*Allegheny City, Pa., Feb. 16, 1896.*

My Dear Mother:

I wish I could tell you how much joy and happiness your letter gave me. It came just at the time when I needed it most. I am sick and feeble, suffering with spine and lung trouble, have not been able to work for the last three weeks. Can go to my meals and wait upon myself, and I have my Jesus with me. Oh, how He comforts and helps make the rough places smooth, and in the lonely hours of the night when the pain is almost beyond endurance, I think of my Savior and what He suffered without sin, and of what a weak coward I am to complain.

Mother, we are some of us so impatient when we have pain, and I am afraid I am one of those. Please pray for me that I may bear mine with Christian fortitude.

I hope it may please God to let me live to get out of this place and have a home for myself and baby, and if my dear Mother Wheaton would come and see me and rest herself for a few weeks, would it not be nice? Mother, I am a widow with one child and some means, but not much. Still I intend to use some of my money, when I have control of it, to do good to others. I have suffered, God has opened my

eyes and showed me my sins and selfishness of former years, and I thank Him for sparing me to see it in this light.

Many of the girls that were here when you last visited us have gone out and a good many are going out this year. Pray for them. I pray for you every night. God bless and keep you is the prayer of your friend,  
*L. R. T. No. 9722.*

*Allegheny City, Pa., Feb. 16, 1896.*

My Dear Mother Wheaton:

Your very welcome and unexpected letter received. It is impossible to tell you with what joy and heartfelt gladness we all gathered together to hear it read. You do not know how often your children speak together of you, of where you are and what you are doing and what keeps you so long away from your Western flock. It was so long since last we heard from you that we are beginning to think our Heavenly Father had need of you and had taken you home, but all praise to His name. He has spared you to send us another loving, encouraging message, which we promptly answer in love and sympathy, each one giving a word, although only three different handwritings will be seen. Remember when reading the words that twenty-five of your lone children are here represented in your letter.

You speak of wishing for your prison children when you were sick. O, how gladly many of us would minister to your wants, to be under the influence of your kind and loving advice, following in your footsteps of love and life as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord and Master. But though we are separated by so many miles, thanks be to the Almighty we can feel the influence of your continued prayers, and many of us are greatly encouraged to keep on striving, knowing that the crowning day will come by and by.

Each one says: "Ask Mother Wheaton when she is coming." Do not be too long in coming, for some of your dear ones are leaving every month during the spring, and we are anxious to receive your blessing before entering the cold, heartless world of sin and sorrow. Yet some of us will take Jesus with us, and in His name begin life again. Pray for us all that our hearts may be fully and entirely given over to God, with our hands in His hand, be led to the mercy-seat. Yes, dear Mother, we shall, with God's help, "strive to enter in at the straight gate."

These are the names of those who send you special love and requests for prayer: Emma M., Emma W., Pearl S. (who is very sick), Laura M., Anna M., Ella A.

With love and best wishes from our matrons, we close, hoping soon to see you.

Good-bye, God bless and keep you always and send you to us again. All join in best wishes to you.

*Allegheny City, Pa., Feb. 14, 1897.*

My Dear Mrs. E. R. Wheaton:

Perhaps you will be surprised to get this letter, but I have heard so much about you that I feel as though I was personally acquainted with you, so I hope you are well, dear Mother, and that you are doing work for the Master and that He will give you a great many souls for your hire.

O, I do want to see you. Indeed I would like to hear you sing and pray. The girls all want to see and hear you. Pray for them. One woman in here said that you were the only person that ever did pray a prayer that touched her heart and brought tears to her eyes. The old girls talk about you so much to the new ones that they all love you, although they have not seen you. They tell over and over of your love and sympathy and that you know how to reach poor unfortunate souls. You know that they need kind words and a loving smile to cheer up their broken hearts.

Dear Mother, you know that a smile goes where a dollar cannot go, for it goes to the heart and makes it so very happy.

Good-bye, hoping to hear from you soon, I remain,  
*Yours truly,*  
*Lina S.*

*Allegheny City, Feb. 14, 1897.*

My Dear Mrs. Wheaton—Dear Mother:

I will say dear, for you are dear to me. O, you do not know how I have been longing to see you and once more hear you sing some of your beautiful hymns. O! just to hear you pray once more in this world. There are only eighteen women of us now, and when you were here last time there were thirty-three.

O, dear Mother, do make me a special subject of prayer that God may keep me and guide me in the right way. I have been trying to lead a Christian life for six years now. When all earthly friends have forsaken me Jesus comes and speaks to me, and He alone comforts me, and I thank God for a full and free salvation. O bless His holy name! Hallelujah in the highest to God!

Our matron, Miss S. J. Arner, sends you her best regards. I am very sorry to tell you that Miss Osborn was called home by the death of her sister; pray for her and for me, Laura M., No. 9351, that God may spare my life that I may work for the Master when I am a free woman. The two Morgan sisters send you their love. All of the girls send love to you. Come on a week day and perhaps you can get the widow's mite.

Good-bye, I remain, yours in Christ,  
*Laura M.*

*Allegheny City, Pa., March 21, 1897.*

Dear Friend:

I received your very kind and welcome letter and was very glad to hear from you, and dear Mother Wheaton, your letter did me good as I sit and hear it read to me. I shall try to keep it, and get it read often to me, as it does comfort my broken heart. I am a poor orphan girl. My mother died when I was about twelve years old, and I have wandered on in sin and I have fallen by the wayside. Will you pray for me that I may come to live just as you do, my true, strong friend. I do wish I could see you today, to hear you pray and sing. All of the girls wish to see you and hope that you will come on some day through the week so that we can write out a money order for you. Perhaps it may be only a couple of dollars or three, but it will be like the widow's mite.

I remain, yours truly,  
*Lina S.*

*Allegheny, Pa., March 21, 1897.*

Mrs. E. R. Wheaton.

Dear Mother: We received your very kind and welcome letter. O, we are so glad that you sent us a letter and some tracts. Mrs. S. J. Arner, our matron, read the letter in the dining-room to all of us and we did enjoy it so much. Indeed I feel that I had a visit from a dear friend. I hope you are well and I pray for you that God may strengthen you in your labors. You have done a great work, but God has more for you to do yet before you shall pass through the pearly gates of Heaven, for you have cheered so many broken hearts. God sent you to cheer those in prisons. I was just thinking today, O, how happy you will be in the end when Jesus shall say unto you: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you." And O, dear Mother, He will say to you: "I was in prison and ye visited me." I am still looking unto Jesus. He has been my only friend for these years in prison. He keeps me day by day and makes me feel happy in prison. He causes me to hear "songs in the night." Pray for me that God may keep me and my children.

I dreamed that I was sent to preach the gospel to some poor soul and I have dreamed it three times over the same. First time I said, "No, I cannot do it," and the Lord laid me on a bed of sickness, and then I said, "Lord, I will go." I had no rest by night or by day until I consented to go.

All of the girls join me in love to you. We hope that these few lines may find you well and happy, for you are always so happy and bright. One of the old girls said that your face has such a happy smile on it and a light shines over you while you talk to them. Write soon.

*Laura M.*

This is an extract from a letter by an orphan girl, a type of many other poor girls whose fates are equally as sad:

*Spokane Falls, -, 1889.*

O if I was only free, the greatest pleasure of my life would be to go with you and work for God. Your kindness has won my heart. I have never had any one to be kind to me; I have known nothing but sorrow all my life. My past is almost a blank. Dear, kind sister, look on me with pity—a friendless, motherless girl. I am alone in the world. I was drawn into this place through cruel treatment. I have no money, and I am helpless. If God does not have mercy on me, I do not know what will become of me. If I had only a good, kind friend like you to guide me through life, I would have been a far better woman than I am. If God will save me I shall live in the future a life of honor and work for God.

Pray for me. Tell me in what way I am going to help myself. O sister, I am so troubled; sometimes I think I will end my miserable existence. But I know if I should take my own life that it would be a terrible sin; but how can I help thinking such things in a place like this? No friends, no home, and no money; sick at heart, sick in body, sick in mind.

*Lancaster, Neb., Jan. 27, 1895.*

Mrs. E. R. Wheaton, Washington, D. C.

Our Dear Friend: We received your kind letter of the 7th inst. We were glad to hear from you and to know that you were enjoying good health. Dear Mother, if we may address you thus, we were very glad to hear our friend, Mrs. Beemer, spoken of so well, for she is a friend never to be forgotten. And Mr. Beemer is just a splendid warden, kind to everybody; and we ask you to pray that they may be retained here for another time. Dear Mother, indeed we will know how to appreciate our freedom in the future. Of course you do not know our names, but I will give them in the following words that each sends to you. Hattie and Edna send their regards to you. Nannie says to pray for her. Annie sends her best regards to you and wishes you well. Hattie R. sends love and best wishes. Annie H. is the one who was sick when you were here and sends love to you, and knows that God answered your prayers that she might be restored to health. Effie joins in sending love, and my prayer is that God may bless you and help you in all your good work. So we close for this time, asking you to pray for us poor unfortunate girls.

We remain, your loving children,

*H., E., A., N., H., A. and Effie.*

*Canon City, March 27, 1899.*

Dear Friend and Mother:

I know you are my friend and everybody's friend. I heard your kind letter and cannot help writing to you. I cannot write very good, so please excuse mistakes. Your letter found all the girls well. I have often thought of you and wished that I could be a Christian like you; but I am a poor sinner and have been all my life. I never heard one word out of the Bible in my life till I got in jail. I never had any Christian parents, and therefore I am a deep sinner, but I want to do better. My conscience tells me that I must try to be a better woman. I have been a very bad girl, but I think my Savior will forgive me, if I repent in time. Sometimes I nearly go crazy just thinking what a life I have led. O if I would die now what would become of me? I want you to pray for me, mother, for I do believe you can help me by praying for me.

I have not long in here now. My time expires on the 25th day of December, 1899; pray that I will be a better girl. I want to go home to my brother if I can when I leave here. I am tired of this life. My soul is tired. O, I am so wicked! I have tried to pray the best I knew and I got scared. Something seemed to bother me, and I was afraid to go to sleep. Mother, why do I get scared? Is it because I have sinned so much? But I will try again and again. I am willing to do right and live an honest life, and I will or die in the attempt. I have had a lot of trouble in my life and it drove me to all my downfalls, but I can see that I am sending my soul to everlasting torment, so I want to turn now and seek for the Lord. Tell me how I can, mother.

Mother, this is the best I can do; may God bless you in all your undertakings. The matron was glad to hear from you and also the girls. Pray for me.

*Anna 4309.*

*Waupun, Wis., March 6, 1899.*

Dear Sister Wheaton:

Thank God I received your kind and Christian letter last week. We are getting along nicely with our meetings and I know and feel that God is with us every day and especially the eleven that have given their hearts to God and let His dear hand guide their every footstep.

Our dear Matron gave me your letter. I am as contented as can be. I believe it God's will that I should be here, and His will be done. I love our dear Heavenly Father with all my heart and soul and I love all my sisters and brothers and I love my enemies and I pray for them and ask God to bless them.

I have ten months more and I hope you can come here again before I go. Our Matron is with us in our meetings every Saturday. I read my Bible and pray three times a day, and I have more strength to perform my daily work, and I know our dear Savior will not forsake me or leave me alone because I know Jesus loves me now, and I know He will answer my prayers.

I told you before it is my second term, but when I sit in my little room reading my Bible I thank God for it, for I know it was God's will that I should be here a second time, for there is work for me to do here as well as when I am free, and He put me here to show me He wanted me for one of His own dear humble children and I know and feel it now.

"Happy day, happy day,  
When Jesus washed my sins away;  
He taught me how to watch and pray,  
And live rejoicing every day."

And I want you to pray for us all that we may have more of God's grace given to us day by day and help us to be humble and meek and willing to be led by His loving hand and pray for us that God will keep us from all temptation and sin and may we ever prove faithful. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies. Blot out my transgressions." Every word here is just as I feel in my heart.

"I may not do much with all my care,  
But I surely may bless a few;  
The loving Jesus will give to me  
Some work of love to do.

"I may wipe the tears from some weeping eyes,  
I may make the smile come again,  
To a face that is weary and worn with care,  
To a heart that is full of pain."

*Mrs. J. G.*

*Anamosa, Iowa, Aug. 11, 1901.*

Elizabeth R. Wheaton,

Tabor, Iowa.

Dear Mother:

We received your kind and loving letter yesterday. Was more than glad to hear from you, but sorry that you have been so sick; but I praise God for His healing divine. We did not have the smallpox in the prison. There were cases of them in town, but the warden quarantined the prison and vaccinated every prisoner. Dear mother, I am trying to get a parole. My petition is now before the Governor with a thousand signers, besides several letters from friends. I have had three good homes offered to me if the Governor will only parole me. I desire so much to be where I can live a better life and take care of my little boy and help my parents, who are in very poor health. I do pray so much for a better place and better companions, where I can do something for my own and others. Dear Mother, will you pray for me? I always remember what I promised you when you bid me good-bye; that was, to pray for you every day. I am so glad we have a Savior who will hear our prayers though we are behind prison walls and our prayers are weak.

With love and prayers,

*From D. F. to Mother Wheaton.*

*Anamosa, Iowa, Oct. 6, 1903.*

Dear Mother Wheaton:

I thought I would write you a few lines. We are all well at present. We cannot express how thankful we were for your visit to us. We only wish you could have staid longer. Mrs. Waterman has prayer and song service every morning. It is something wonderful. We all wish so much to hear your voice. Mrs. Waterman spoke to us about writing to you and I was only too glad to write and ask you to pray for us all. I believe and know it will do good. I am trying very hard to pray and be a good Christian. I will ask you to pray for me.

Respectfully yours,

*G. Mc.*

## CHAPTER VIII. Incidents in My Prison Work

### LETTER FROM THE PRISONERS AT CHESTER, ILL

*Southern Illinois Penitentiary,  
Menard, Ill., Nov. 27, 1902.*

Dear Mother:

We are writing you from within these dark grim walls. Although we are condemned as the outcasts of society and separated from friends and loved ones and continually laboring under great mental strain and worry, still there is no pain or sorrow great enough to destroy our happiness in our thoughts of you. Your love and thoughtfulness for us and our spiritual welfare is a priceless jewel that all the wealth of the world cannot buy nor sorrow rob us of. No, never. Although the world has condemned and despised us, but we know that there is one—if only one—that loves even the outcasts.

Several of your boys have gone from here since you were among us. Some have crossed to the beyond; others to blessed freedom. Still a greater number are left here with fondest recollections of all you have done for us, which is one of the greatest among our causes for thanksgiving. It is hardly necessary to say, Remember us. We all remain your sons until death.

*Your Boys of Chester, Illinois.*

An extract from a report of the Chaplain of the Southern Illinois Penitentiary will be of interest:

*Chester, Ill.*

To the Honorable Board of Commissioners,  
Chester, Ill.

Gentlemen:

I take pleasure in making a report of my first year's work as Chaplain.

The regular chapel services have been held every Sunday at 9:40 a. m. The chapel has been well filled at all regular services and crowded on special occasions. The attendance at religious services is voluntary, but most prisoners consider it a privilege to attend.

The words of encouragement I have received from prisoners in conversation and by letter make me feel that good is being accomplished. More than one hundred men have given me their names as Christians or seekers of religion.

I attend all calls made by the prisoners during the week and visit one cell house each Sunday evening.

My visits are so planned that I see each prisoner in his cell at least twice a month and give him a chance to make his requests known.

The men have been urged to study the Bible and have been furnished tracts and other helps in Bible study. I have been astonished in making my rounds to find so many men reading the Bible. One hundred and fifty new Bibles have been purchased during the year. Six hundred Sunday-school quarterlies have been furnished the

prisoners each quarter during the year and they have been urged to keep in touch with the outside world by studying these lessons. The Sunday-school lesson is read every Sunday as a scripture lesson and comments are made upon it.

The sick in the hospital and the shut-in prisoners in the cell houses are visited daily and are supplied with books and papers. Some of them read a book each day.

The Murphy Temperance Pledge has been furnished and more than five hundred prisoners have signed the pledge. If the saloons could be closed out poor-houses, jails and prisons would soon be almost empty.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*W. N. Rutledge, Chaplain.*

## SUICIDE OF A PRISONER

While on my way to the State Prison at Chester, Illinois, in the year 1888 (if I remember rightly) I was especially impressed by the sad appearance of a fellow-passenger, a mother, accompanied by three children. I was sure that she was in deep trouble. I said to my helper, "Mary, that woman is going to the Penitentiary." She said, "How do you know?" I answered. "I feel sure of it and I will convince you that I am right."

Having entered into conversation with the woman, I assisted her as I found opportunity in caring for her children. When I asked her where she was going, she said, "I am going to Chester." I said, "I, too, am going to Chester and will gladly assist you in getting off with the children."

At the station we parted, but the next morning, which was the Sabbath, as I passed through the guard-room of the State Prison I saw this woman talking to her husband, who was a prisoner. She sat beside him and he was holding one of the children and she had another in her arms. The third was playing near by. All were too young to know of the sorrow that had come to their home, or the shame that had fallen upon them. They were with papa and mamma and felt safe and happy. Alas! how little they knew how soon they were to be left fatherless!

I passed on and was busy during the entire day for I had the liberty of the prison and the privilege of working among the prisoners. So busy was I that for the time being I had lost sight of that poor wife and mother, but only the next morning the Chaplain called for me and said, "Sister Wheaton, I have oh, such a sad task before me this morning! I wish you would do it for me." I said, "Chaplain, I will try. I am willing to do anything that I can to help you." And then he said, "Do you remember the man and woman you saw yesterday in the guard-room talking?" I said, "Yes; I remember them well; I met the woman on the train on my way here." He replied, "Well, that man was so heart-broken at the thought of parting with his wife and children that he asked her to promise him that if he should die in the prison she would have him brought home for burial. She promised him she would do so and last night that poor man committed suicide in his cell and now someone must go and tell that woman of her husband's death." I said, "Chaplain, that is a hard thing to do, but I will try." He said, "I wish you would,—being a woman you can comfort her better than I could." Well, I went along the hall until I came to the door of the room she occupied, for, she too, as well as myself, was a guest of the kind warden's wife. I opened the door softly and looked in. In memory I can see her yet as she sat with one child in her lap while the other two little ones were playing around her knee. She was softly singing some old country tune. As I looked my heart failed me. I turned away in sorrow and returned to the Chaplain and said, "Chaplain, I cannot do it. I cannot break that poor woman's heart. I just can't tell her," and he said, "Then I will have to do it. Someone must tell her," and so he broke the message as best he could. Never will I forget the anguish of that poor woman's heart as she wept out her grief and suffering! I tried to comfort her as best I could. I took the same train with her as she started for home with her husband's body in the baggage coach ahead. As best I could I ministered to her and those poor helpless children as long as our journey carried us over the same road and when I changed cars I tried to utter some words of comfort, but oh, friends, what could I say, what could I do? Only the sympathy of the loving Savior could reach her case and I left her, never to meet her again on this side, but oh, may we not hope that in some way God found a way to have mercy upon that poor, misjudged man and that those loved ones may meet again where no mistakes will be made by judge or jury? For many believed that poor man to be innocent of the crime with which he was charged. If I remember rightly a barn had been burned and he had been accused of setting it on fire and had been convicted through purely circumstantial evidence. Brokenhearted over his disgrace and the thought of again being separated from wife and children, the poor man made a rope of the bed-clothing in his cell and used it to take his own life.

## "I HAVE NO FRIENDS."

On the 4th of July, 1903, I was in the Ohio Penitentiary at Columbus. Officers and chaplain were kind, as usual. After holding services in the hospital, I held service with the men under death sentence; then went to the prison-yard where all the others were having a holiday. There the Chaplain assisted Sister Taylor and myself to hold services in the open air. Many seemed glad to get the message of love in song and prayer and preaching and many came to shake hands with us, while singing the closing hymn.

One poor old man, a foreigner, handed me a little package about as large as a walnut. The paper was soiled from contact with his hand that warm day. The poor man in tears said, "Good-bye," and I forgot all about the little package till on the train that night going east, where I found it in my pocket and found inside a silk handkerchief and a 25 cent silver piece. On the paper was written his name and number and these words, "I have no friends." I wept over that small token of love as I do not often weep over a gift. I have that little handkerchief safe. It seems sacred to me. How I felt repaid for my hard day's toil.

That night while I was holding services on the train the conductor said, "Mother, I don't see how you stand so much hardship;" I said, "Conductor, I had even forgotten that I had had neither dinner or supper today."

I think I know something of what Jesus meant when He said to His disciples after ministering to a needy soul, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of."

Chaplain Starr in one of the following letters refers to the open air service on July 4th; also to some of the men under death sentence with whom I had labored. The Indian woman to whose death and burial he refers is the same one who is mentioned in the letters of W. H. M. in another place.

*Columbus, Ohio, July 11, 1903.*

Mrs. Elizabeth R. Wheaton.

My Dear Sister: Your letter received this morning was a very pleasant surprise. We have now an additional man in the Annex. There are three men sentenced to electrocution in September and October. What change may come we do not know. I gave them your letter; they will read it over by themselves, and the tracts also. They still say that your visit with them on the Fourth of July did them much good. I have also delivered your letter to D., and with it a letter from myself, giving him encouragement and offering to render him any friendly assistance. The old Indian woman, Elsie J., whom I think you have several times seen in the female prison, died on the 9th, and we gave her a Christian burial yesterday. She was converted and baptized some time ago. I am glad that you are preserved and sustained in your great work as prison evangelist. If D., and N., and W. write to you I will forward the letters to your address. With kind wishes and regards, I am,

*Your brother,*

*D. J. Starr, Chaplain, O. P.*

Your talk in the yard on the Fourth of July did good.

*Columbus, Ohio, Sept. 26, 1903.*

Dear Sister: Your recent postal came duly to hand. I received your letter in July from the South and wrote you a reply, but have kept it until the present time, not knowing where to mail it so it would reach you. I will now send it in this letter,

so that you will see that I have not forgotten you and answered your letter at the time. You inquire concerning the men in the Annex; we have now six men in the Annex. One of them has been granted a new trial and some others are expecting to get new trials. They do not take any great interest in religion, but yet they read the Bible some and talk about it. I will tell them of your interest in them and assure them that they are not forgotten in your prayers.

*Sincerely yours,*

*D. J. Starr, Chaplain, O. P.*

*Ohio Penitentiary, Feb. 22, 1904.*

Mrs. Elizabeth R. Wheaton.

Dear Sister: I have just received your letter from Washington, D. C., inquiring about the men in our prison death cell.

There are ten there now and two have been taken out for new trials. If these are sent back we shall have twelve. The largest number, until this list, ever in the Annex was nine.

Murders, as well as other crimes of violence to person and property, are on the increase and society is trying to protect its life—without much security, so far.

Perhaps three of the men are Scripturally penitent, three others interested and four indifferent to religion—so far as we can see. The men have Bibles, religious song books and papers, library books and religious letters from relatives. They are not allowed to correspond without especially good reasons for permits to do so. I hold a little meeting and Bible study with those who care for it almost daily at 2 p. m., at which time you might help us with your prayers.

Sentiment is not salvation. The trouble, both in the prison and out of it, is, men will not seek after God. Yes, I am busy and ought to be busy about my Master's business, and so are you.

With best wishes, I am,

*Respectfully yours,*

*D. J. Starr, Chaplain.*

## WAY OPENED IN ANSWER TO PRAYER

I had for many years prayed for an opportunity to preach in one of the largest state prisons. Again and again I had been refused by both the warden and chaplain. But at last through a new governor of the state I was permitted to enter this prison for religious services.

Calling at the office of the governor and asking permission to go to the prison and assist in the services, he said, "Certainly, we shall be glad to have you. There will be no difficulty, as we have new officers. You can preach in the prison." Before I had left the Governor's private office the warden of the prison being present spoke and said, "Certainly, they would be very glad to have you take part with them." I asked if I should not see the chaplain, but the warden said he would be all right, and be pleased. But I insisted that it was only courtesy to see the chaplain. And asking the governor to please write a note to him, he did so and remarked that the state carriage was waiting at the door and I should be driven to the chaplain's house.

Arriving at his home I was met by his little daughter who carried my card to her father and he soon came into the room asking what I wanted. "I should like, if you please, to take part with you in the services at the prison chapel tomorrow (Sunday) as I have been some years in prison work," I replied. "No indeed," he answered, "I cannot allow a woman to speak in my meetings. I will never permit any woman to take my pulpit." I made no reply, but that the state carriage was waiting for me and I must go, but said to him, "Here is a letter from the governor. Will you kindly look at it before I leave?" He took the message and noting its contents he changed color and seemed confused; saying, "I never did allow a woman to speak in my meetings. But seeing the governor's request and your years of experience, I will allow you to come in the morning and conduct the women's meetings." The governor's letter read as follows:

*Executive Department, Oct. 24, 1891.*

Dr. O. W. G.,  
Chaplain of Penitentiary.

Dear Sir:

The bearer, Mrs. E. R. Wheaton, is a prison evangelist of national reputation and experience, who brings letters of strong recommendation from wardens of the prisons she has visited, and I commend her to your kind consideration. She has expressed a willingness, if not a desire, to participate in your services tomorrow afternoon in the chapel and I trust you will afford her every facility for so doing.

*Respectfully,*  
*David R. Frances.*

## **A WOMAN CONVERTED AND HEALED**

I went praying for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. While I was speaking I was impressed to step down the aisle and lay my hand upon the head of a vicious looking colored woman. I afterward learned that she was a life time prisoner and a very dangerous woman. Instantly the power of God fell upon her and she was wonderfully converted then and there, and to the best of my knowledge is still true to God. The other women seeing this, their leader in sin (for so she was) so changed, were subdued and convicted of their sins. The meeting closed with victory for God. The chaplain was convinced and said, "You have won the worst woman in the prison. You have the hearts of all the prisoners now, for her influence is great. You come and preach to the men this afternoon. I am convinced." Years have come and gone. Governors, wardens and chaplains have been changed; but God does not change, and the doors of that prison are still open to me, and God always blesses every service.

Some years later upon visiting this prison again we found this poor colored woman much afflicted and walking on crutches. The sister with me and I prayed for her, and she was instantly healed, throwing her crutches aside at once. The matron then gave her the key to go down and unlock the outside door for us, having so much confidence in her. She received a pardon from the governor later.

Another woman in the same prison was also prayed for and was instantly healed by the Lord, of a large tumor, and ran and praised God for what He had done for her.

## **A CHANGE WROUGHT**

For some years another prison was closed to me. Why, I never knew. I prayed that the doors of that prison might be opened to me. When the Lord sent me back there I found such a change as I had never before witnessed in the same length of time. There was a good Christian chaplain, one of the best of wardens, and good deputies. Every prisoner was in an improved state of mind and morals, and all in harmony and glad to obey the rules of the prison. I was treated with courtesy and kindness, and was given all the time in the services, and was entertained. When I left I was conveyed to the depot with ladies as escorts, and a "trusty" as driver. Such are the wonderful workings of God through faith and prayer. The meetings in this state prison were owned and blessed of the Lord. The Holy Spirit led and all seemed to enjoy and appreciate them. The chaplain said, "How much good was accomplished!" All were united in harmony and God was glorified.

## **A CHAPLAIN IN MY AUDIENCE**

At another time, arriving at a certain city where there was a state's prison, I met in the depot a young lady wearing a Salvation Army bonnet. She was crying at not being met by friends as she had expected, and I asked her to go with me. She gladly did so and I proceeded to the prison to ask permission to hold services for the prisoners on the next day which would be the Sabbath. Obtaining the consent of the chaplain I waited till the time for the service on Sabbath morning and returned. The guard refusing to admit me, I sent for the chaplain. When he came he also refused me, saying he could not permit me to hold the service, as he thought I belonged to the Salvation Army. A friend suggested that I should go to the Governor at his residence, saying that he was a kind man. I did so, and was very kindly received. Having listened to my request he said, "Yes, you may have your meeting in the prison,"—he having heard of my work before. He wrote a card for me to carry with me, and I took it and returned to the prison. The preacher and the Sisters of Charity had all gone to the women's department. The men were out in the large yard. I called, "Boys, come on, we are going to have a meeting." How they hurried pell mell to the chapel! And such a meeting! The power of God fell. Just then the chaplain entered, much surprised of course, and I said, "Chaplain, I am permitted through the kindness of the Governor to hold this service. Will you please be seated?" Had a most glorious meeting, closing with results altogether satisfactory to the chaplain.

## **IMPRESSED TO TARRY**

While holding a meeting in a certain city, I was impressed day after day to tarry. I did not know why. I wanted to go, but still the Lord impressed me to wait. One evening a cry was heard, "A man is shot." Immediately the Spirit impressed me, "That is what I detained you here for." I rushed out into the night, and inquired where the man had been carried. They told me to the hotel. I went immediately, got admittance to his room and found him in a dying condition, with no one that knew God to pray for him. And there by the bedside of the dying man, some mother's boy,—dying without God and without hope in the world,—I tried to point him to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, hoping that the Lord would give him a chance at the eleventh hour to seek salvation, and I believe God heard my prayer for this soul.

## ENCOURAGEMENT BY THE WAY

In the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago one night, after addressing the audience and singing the Gospel to the people, I gave an invitation to all who desired to lead a new life and serve the Lord to come forward and publicly confess Christ and repent of their sins. Instantly a fine looking young man rose in the rear of the hall, hurried to the front and grasped my hand, saying that he saw me three weeks before in the Deer Lodge, Montana, State Prison. He said that three days before, he was released and had come to Chicago, and passing along the street he heard me singing a favorite hymn at the open air meeting before services in the hall, and was attracted in. With hand raised, he promised to be a Christian and live for God and meet me in Heaven. He said he had my Bible that I gave to the matron of the prison, who, when he was leaving, gave it to him. "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days." Many others gave themselves to the Lord that night but this was one of my prison boys, and I was his mother, in that sense, as my life has been consecrated to God for that special line of work.

The day following, on my way east, I was compelled to stay over night at a way station where we were to change cars. As I left the train I heard, as usual, the call of cab-men but passed on into the waiting room. Several followed me, but one took me by the hand and addressing me familiarly said, "Get into my cab, mother, it is all right; I'll take you where you wish to go." Mother Prindle, who was with me said, "Do you know Mother Wheaton?" He replied, "I have read about her," but the look in his kind eyes told me it was one of my boys from prison. He was now settled in life, a good man, with a wife and two children. He escorted us to the jail where I desired to hold services, then to the home of a minister, and from there to our lodging house.

I bless God, and will through all eternity, that the dear Lord ever called me to work in the prisons as well as in other lines of Christian work. There are many all over this land now serving God, leading good, honest lives, a blessing to their country and an honor to God's cause, who were found in prisons and slums, discouraged and having given up all hope of ever being anything but miserable and wretched. They are now serving the blessed Christ who came to seek and to save that which was lost, and destroy the works of the devil, not willing that any should perish, but rather that all should be saved. O reader, many are the lives we might rescue from the ranks of the enemy if we were more in earnest and lived in close touch with God, and more under the power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Once in a meeting I was attending, the minister in charge took another young preacher by the hand, and said: "I want you to preach for us." The one addressed came to the front of the platform and said: "Yes, I will; but first I want to say I was once in an insane prison, an awful place. No one will ever know all we had to suffer there. I was insane through drink—no one could help me. I was sin-hardened and hard-hearted, but this Mother (pointing to myself) came to our criminal prison and sang and prayed and talked to us, and was kind to us, and my heart was melted, and I wept—something I could not, would not do until then. Her kindness won me, and I was saved, truly sanctified, and I have been preaching the Gospel for four years."

## **A CASE OF CRUEL NEGLECT**

At the best, life in prison is hard. How much worse when cruelty and neglect are added to the necessary restrictions that are placed upon those in confinement. I knew of one young colored man in prison in the south who was compelled to endure the winter weather without proper clothing or covering. His one blanket was so short that his feet were so badly frozen they had to be amputated. Think you that such things as these do not cry to God for vengeance?

## ANOTHER SUICIDE

Well do I remember a promising young man, who, when I was preaching in a prison in a southern state, began trembling and ran back into his cell and called for an officer to bring me to him. I found that he was quite weak from a bullet wound he had received in a drunken row in a saloon, he having killed a man in the fight. He was a young man with bright prospects before him, but bad company and a love for strong drink had wrought his ruin. He told me of his uncle who was a minister, a prominent evangelist. I was much surprised that a nephew of so popular a minister should be in state's prison for such an awful crime, crushed with shame and remorse. Could it be possible? His mother was a rich lady.

This young man either because of his wealth and position, or because of his good conduct in prison, or both, was given privileges and often sent outside the prison grounds. Often I plead with him to come to Christ. But one day the old demon of drink had overcome him and having secretly obtained some liquor, while at a game of cards he shot himself. Let us throw the mantle of charity over that blighted life, and leave him in the hands of a just God. Who will be willing to answer at the bar of God for that soul? "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him and maketh him drunken also."—Hab. 2:15. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

## JUST OUT OF PRISON

"O the wrongs that we may righten,  
O the skies that we may brighten,  
O the hearts that we may lighten—  
Helping just a little!"

While traveling on the train one day, the brakeman said to me: "There is an ex-convict in the smoking-car." "All right, I will go in and see him," I said. I went and took him by the hand as he sat alone in the rear seat of the car, sad and dejected, with no money, no friends, no home. His mother had died while he was incarcerated in prison; home broken up, nowhere to go. How glad I was to take this poor soul upon my heart, and intercede for him in silent prayer; and then have him come into the other coach and share my lunch. At parting he promised me he would live a temperate life, and serve God the best he knew. I believe the dear Lord had me travel on that train to meet that poor unfortunate and help and strengthen his faith in Christianity, by showing him attention outside as well as inside the prison walls. How often a soul is saved from a downfall by a word in season; a kind hand-clasp, a "God bless you; cheer up, look up, better days are coming," etc. When hope is well-nigh gone, and friends have forsaken, and all has failed; yet we can always tell such that "God never fails."

## DYING IN PRISON

One day as I was alone in a gloomy prison a poor boy called to me and said, "Write to my mother, but don't tell her where you found me. Please don't tell her, for it would kill her. She never could live and know her boy was in prison." On the dirty floor, lying on a pile of still dirtier straw I found this poor prison boy dying. I fell on my knees and poured out my heart to God in his behalf.

"That head had been pillowed on tenderest breast,  
That form had been wept o'er, those lips had been pressed,  
That soul had been prayed for in tones sweet and mild;  
For her sake deal gently with some mother's child."

Do not tell me that it does not pay to labor and pray with these dear lost ones. For if I can be the means of rescuing but one soul from eternal punishment, thank God, it pays me.

## WILL IT PAY?

Some gentlemen were once looking at a large building erected for newsboys, that they might be brought under religious and refining influences. One of the spectators asked a large contributor to the benevolent institution this question: "Now you are erecting this building at a cost of many thousands of dollars, and I admire your motives, but suppose that after all this great expense only one boy was saved here—would you still think it paid for time, labor and money expended?" The man answered quickly and earnestly, "Yes, sir; if it was my boy." The most precious thing in the sight of God is a soul. For the redemption of every soul on earth was paid the precious blood of the Lamb of God. Count it not then a light thing in His sight for one to be saved or lost. For "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth—more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance." Hundreds have been saved under my observation and instrumentality both inside and outside of prison walls, and my motto has been, "Throw out the lifeline across the dark wave."

## SAVED AND PREACHING THE GOSPEL

Upon a warm July day, starting to walk out from Bismarck, N. D., to what I took to be the state's prison, but which proved to be a large water reservoir, being overcome by the heat I fell, and crawling to a shade I lay down with my Bible under my head. After a time I saw some distance away some persons driving in an open hack and signaled to them till they saw me and came to me. They drove me to the home of the warden of the prison where I was kindly received by the warden's wife and made comfortable. Late that night I held service in the prison corridors. This was in 1885, and in 1901 I was leading a meeting in a mission in Portland, Oregon, and asked all who had something special for which to praise the Lord to speak. A brother arose and said:

"I want to thank the Lord tonight for the privilege of hearing 'Mother' Wheaton preach outside of prison walls. I have heard her in many a prison. Years ago, one night at 9 o'clock, when all the prisoners had been locked in their cells, the officers unlocked the doors to let this sister sing some hymns and hold services in the corridors. One hymn that especially touched my heart was 'Throw out the life line.' I was an opium fiend, a morphine fiend, a whisky fiend, and an all around bad man, and was ready to despair. But God touched my heart and saved me and called me to the ministry. At this time I was with my other sins a deserter from the United States army. When my time expired I went and gave myself up and was sentenced to five years more in prison. But God had mercy on me and in seven months I was pardoned out. Since that time I have lived an honest life, and for eight years have preached the gospel."

This man was married to a Christian woman and has done much to rescue men from the pit from which he had been taken, and is still preaching.

## **IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT**

One Sunday I sang perhaps thirty hymns and preached seven times to prisoners in solitary confinement, where I dare not see them or clasp their hands as I do in other prisons. There are hundreds there, and as I sang in all the prison wards or corridors many different hymns, the dear souls cheered and responded with their clear voices as best they could to show their sincere appreciation of my efforts to brighten their lonely prison life. Each was "some mother's boy." Reader, is there not a sympathetic chord in your heart for these poor unfortunates?

## **CRAPE ON THE DOOR**

I once felt impressed to go to a certain prison and hold services. Arriving at the place early in the morning, I thought I would go to the prison first before I would telephone for a cousin who often helped me in the singing. When I arrived at the prison, the chaplain said, "Mother Wheaton, the Lord sent you to help me. To-day I have a funeral service of a prisoner, something we have never had at this prison." I did not telephone then for my cousin, as the services were arranged. I worked all day in the prison, holding services with both men and women prisoners, visited the hospital, and went to the city jail at 5 p. m. and held services, and then went to my relative's home and was greatly shocked to find crape hanging on the door. I found my cousin cold in death. Relatives asked me, "Who told you?" I said, "God impressed me to come at this time." And I went with them to the grave of my dear cousin, and kneeling beside the open grave, I promised to faithfully do God's holy will, and meet the departed one in Heaven.

## **IN A POLICE STATION**

In 1903, while I was in San Francisco, I was impressed to go to the police station about nine o'clock one night. I found, on arriving, an ambulance bringing in prisoners, among them a woman who was arrested for drunkenness. I talked and prayed with her. Hearing a noise like one in distress, I walked on through the corridors and I found a young soldier who was badly wounded in one eye and the head. He was standing alone in his cell in great pain. The bandage had been torn off, and the blood was running down his face, though his wounds had evidently been dressed by a physician before coming there. He was crying from the pain, and was under the influence of drink. I wiped the blood off his face, and put the bandage on his eye again. Then I knelt in prayer with him. I left the city on an early train, and never saw him again, but I believe God heard and answered my prayer for his salvation.

## **BURNED IN HIS CELL**

I went into one of our western cities to hold services at the jail. On the way from the depot I stopped at a store, where a young clerk told me of a horrible crime that had been committed in the jail. That the prisoners had been trying to make their escape, and one young prisoner had revealed the plot to the jailer, and thus saved his life. The prison wall had been "worked" in a cunning manner, and the prisoners were about to escape, when this poor boy informed the jailer of what was being done. The other three prisoners were so enraged that they threw coal oil over the boy, set fire to his clothing, and he was burned alive in the cell. I was grieved at hearing this, and felt that I could see them punished severely. They were in an underground prison for safe-keeping until the wall could be repaired. The officers were afraid to let me go in, but I told them I was not afraid, and went down the stairs ahead of the officers. I saw only one dim candle burning, and called for a light. A lamp was brought, and I went boldly into the presence of those criminals. I sat down and thought of the awfulness of it all. So, as I wept, I sang "Some Mother's Boy," and they cried like their hearts were breaking. I went over to them, where they were sitting together on an old bunk, and we cried together. They were humble and convicted, and it was love that did it all—God's love which showed them that though their sins were as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, though red like crimson they shall be as wool. God heard prayer for them and I trust they were forgiven.

## **THE INNOCENT IN BONDS**

In a certain state prison the officer called my attention to a man and said, "That man is innocent of the crime he was sentenced for." "Then why do you keep him here?" I asked. "Because he serves for his friend, willingly allowing the guilt to be placed upon himself rather than see this friend who was really guilty suffer." On leaving the prison I came upon this man with an officer on the train, and had the pleasure of talking to the man and hearing his story. I referred him to Psalms 15:1, 2, 4. "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not." He was being taken to another court for trial.

## **CONFESSED HER GUILT**

A woman in a prison was convicted of sin under my preaching, and sent for me to come to her cell, where she gave me such an account of her crimes that I was shocked, and yet was powerless to liberate an innocent man that she said was in – state's prison for a crime she committed. She asked me to go and tell him for her that she was the guilty one, and try to have him freed, but wanted the matter kept secret. Now that she was under conviction of her sins, she could not rest. I went to the state prison she named, found the man, and told him her story. His agony was pitiful to behold. He said, "O how I loved my wife and baby. I am an innocent man. How can I live my sentence out in this way? Nothing to live for." Such bitterness as he held toward that wicked woman, for her crime and duplicity! I left him in an agony of grief. And yet there are so many who are serving as unjustly for others' crimes! This woman had killed the wife thinking she herself would then get the husband.

## UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH

Going into the presence of two condemned men on our national holiday, the chaplain remarked, "I wish you could reach these men's hearts. You have often helped others in this prison who were under death sentence." I prayed in silence for wisdom, and as I walked into their presence, I said, "I have come to sing to you and have a little visit with you, but if you prefer to be alone, I will go away." They said they would be glad to have me stay. I sang several songs, and before I had spoken of religion, I was made glad to see tears in their eyes, and then we knelt in prayer, and I prayed God to pardon their sins and make them pure in His sight.

I do not believe in capital punishment. Lord hasten the day when the crime of putting men to death legally shall be done away with. It does not stop crime. I thank God that one noble warden gave up his honorable position and salary, rather than take the lives of any more men. I wish God would raise up men all over our land who in like manner would be brave enough to refuse to sacrifice human lives because the law licenses them to do so. When I see wicked men so anxious to see poor, helpless men executed, I think of that authoritative utterance, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Jesus said, "He that hateth his brother is a murderer." There is a day of reckoning coming.

## THE RELIGION MOTHER HAD

Many times prisoners have said to me when speaking to them, "That's the kind of religion mother had. You remind me of my own dear old mother;" and many, even statesmen, and the attendants in the capitol, and in the President's mansion, have said to me with uncovered heads, and tears in their eyes, "That is the kind of religion mother had. I wish I was as good as she was." I find the crying need to-day in all stations of life; from the palace to the dungeon, is real, genuine, heartfelt, common-sense salvation, not to be cranks and fanatics, not to be one-sided or half-way professors of religion; but to have the Holy Ghost in our hearts and lives, and a burning desire to help every one into the Kingdom of Heaven. Being "all things to all men" that we might win some wandering souls to Christ.

O the joy of knowing that you are doing just what God wants you to do—winning souls for His Kingdom, from all walks of life; often in houses of ill-fame souls are truly saved and reformed. Often in saloons men and women are impressed by the straightforward message of love brought them. You say, "No use to try." O thou of little faith, wherefore did'st thou doubt? I have much encouragement among the criminal classes, for they are despised and rejected by earthly friends.

I might give many more instances, but this is probably sufficient. Let no one think for a moment that these poor unfortunates have no tender feeling, no remorse because of sin. They see their shame and feel the separation from home and loved ones. There must be places to confine criminals and protect the lives and property of other people, but we must remember that behind all the guilt there are precious souls that live through all eternity.

Sin is treacherous, the human heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; perhaps under unfavorable conditions the heart of the most moral man or woman may generate the evil of the human nature and cause it to show its corruption in crime. All that saves some people now from the felon's cell, or gambler's hell, is that they hold the propensity of their corrupt hearts in with bit and bridle. And thousands tread the earth in freedom, who, if justice could find them out and fasten their guilt upon them, would be in the prison stripes and iron cells. So be not so ready to cry "Crucify him!" "Stone her!" until you can look into your own heart and see that it is pure and clean.

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Thank God! that I have lived to see the time  
When the great truth begins at last to find  
An utterance from the deep heart of mankind,  
Earnest and clear, that all Revenge is Crime!  
That man is holier than a creed—that all  
Restraint upon him must consult his good,  
Hope's sunshine linger on his prison wall,  
And Love look in upon his solitude.  
The beautiful lesson which our Saviour taught  
Through long, dark centuries its way hath wrought  
Into the common mind and popular thought;  
And words, to which by Galilee's lake shore,  
The humble fishers listened with hushed oar,  
Have found an echo in the general heart,  
And of the public faith become a living part.

\* \* \* \* \*

No more the ghastly sacrifices smoke  
Through the green arches of the Druid's oak;  
And ye of milder faith, with your high claim  
Of prophet-utterance in the Holiest name,  
Will ye become the Druids of *our* time!  
Set up your scaffold-altars in our land,  
And, consecrators of Law's darkest crime,  
Urge to its loathsome work the hangman's hand?  
Beware—lest human nature, roused at last,  
From its peeled shoulder your encumbrance cast,  
And, sick to loathing of your cry for blood,  
Rank ye with those who led their victims round  
The Celt's red altar and the Indian's mound,  
Abhorred of Earth and Heaven—a pagan brotherhood!

—*John Greenleaf Whittier.*

## **CHAPTER IX.**

### **Conversion of Desperate Prisoners Prevents a Terrible Mutiny**

During the fall of 1888, I was deeply impressed that I should visit the state prison at Waupun, Wis. Following the guidance of the Spirit, I reached the place, after a long journey, on the evening of November third. A dear Christian girl was with me. It was a lovely moonlight night and as we came to the prison, the yard was plainly visible through the heavy iron grating. My companion called my attention to its beauty but my heart was heavy and I could only reply, "Sister, pray! O do pray! There is something awfully wrong here—some danger pending—something terrible!"

The officers of the prison welcomed me heartily and the chaplain said: "I am glad you have come and shall be pleased to have you take the service tomorrow morning." (It was Saturday.) His wife entertained us during our stay and after taking us to their own rooms he said: "There's a man here who is a terror to both the officers and prisoners. All are afraid of him. Neither kindness or punishment seems to affect him. I wish you could do something to help him." My reply was: "I cannot do anything, but God can." And earnestly did I look to God for help.

The next morning a heavy burden still rested upon my heart and I prayed God to go before me to that prison chapel and lead the meeting Himself and give me the right message. Nor did I plead in vain, for many souls were that day deeply convicted of sin and some were blessedly saved as was clearly manifested a little later.

After the sermon my friend and myself sang a hymn and this was greatly used by the Spirit in connection with the sermon in reaching the very depths of hearts. It was the custom to hold an after meeting for thirty minutes, but those who wished to remain were expected to secure cards or tickets, granting permission, on the previous day. That Sunday the chaplain said: "All who wish to remain to this service can do so without a card, as these ladies are here."

A hardened looking criminal (whom I afterward learned to be the one to whom the chaplain had referred the night before) arose to retire with a few others. I went to him at once and took him by the hand and urged him to stay, but he said: "No, they don't want me here. This meeting is for good people and I am too bad to stay." But I pleaded: "No, you stay—we want you to stay. I want you to stay." And then he said: "Well, I'll stay for your sake," and sat down. The meeting progressed under the power of the Lord and many arose to say that they had been very wicked but were sorry; and if God could and would forgive them they would lead a different life and be good men. Some told how their dear old mothers were good and had prayed for them and that they wanted us to pray for them and they would serve the Lord.

I noticed that many of the men as they arose glanced furtively at the man to whom I have referred and that he sat looking at each one as he spoke and evidently had great influence over the other prisoners. At last he arose and said, "Men, don't be afraid of me. If there is any good in this religion you are talking about, go ahead and get it. I'll stand by you and nobody shall say before me, 'There's your praying man' or 'There's your hypocrite.' I can't be good—I'm too far gone—but I'll stand by the men who are going to do right." All were evidently deeply impressed by his words. As he sat down I went to him and taking him by the hand, I said, "God loves you and He wants to save you and to help you to live for a better world than this." Again he insisted, "I'm too far gone! It's too late for me to try to do right! There's no hope for me," but still I pleaded with him to return unto the Lord—that there was still mercy and pardon for even him—and that he would yield to the Holy Spirit's pleading and become a Christian. He was evidently very deeply convicted of sin and soon arose and with deep feeling he said, "Men, you know what I have been—watch me from today and see what I will be;" and as he sat down, the prisoners cheered.

Fearful as to what the outcome might be and somewhat doubting his sincerity, the chaplain quickly closed the service and ordered the men to their cells. They obediently left the chapel, but truly God had wondrously wrought that day in the hearts of many of the most noted and hardened criminals. In the afternoon we went, in company with the chaplain, from cell to cell singing, talking, and praying with the men. The chaplain took me to the cell of the man who had given so much trouble—a man who had taken several lives, and there he gave his heart to God and was converted.

## PLAN OF THE MUTINY

After all the prisoners had been locked in the cells and the officers had gone to their homes or rooms, only a few guards remaining on duty, he sent for the warden to come to his cell and requested to be taken out into the prison yard. At first the warden refused to do so because of his being known to be such a dangerous character. Still he insisted, saying that he had something to show him. The warden, who had been an army officer and was a very brave man, was only partially convinced but finally consented saying: "I'm not afraid of you—one wrong move and you're a dead man. I have had enough trouble with you. I will take you into the yard, but beware!"

Well armed, he marched the man into the yard. There the prisoner led him to the extreme end, and taking away some dry leaves and boards he said to the warden, "Look in." The warden did so and, O, what a sight met his eyes! There, in a hole, were knives, guns, and other weapons! Staggering back he exclaimed, "My —, where did you get those things?" "It don't matter where I got them," replied the prisoner, "but take me back to my cell and then take away these weapons. I intended to liberate the prison tomorrow morning and would have done so if that woman had not come and preached here today. I am a changed man now."

How he got those weapons was a mystery, but he had been long years planning an escape, and had chosen some of the most daring of his fellow prisoners (both those inside and others who had gone out) to aid him! Whether he could have succeeded or not, doubtless many lives either of officers or prisoners or of both would have been lost had the attempt been made. But God wrought so mightily that instead of lives being lost precious souls were saved. Several were converted that day who are still living noble Christian lives. Others may be,—I leave that with God. I do not know whether the leader is still living or not, but have heard that he was dead. At any rate he served his long sentence and claimed to be still a Christian when he left the prison.

## HAVOC OF SIN

Among the many who were converted during that Sunday morning service in 1888, was a very amiable, intelligent, refined-appearing young man, still in his teens, who was serving under life sentence. He was a real "mother's boy," so young and so small that after his conversion I used to call him my little son. He belonged to one of the best families of the state. His father was a physician and a classmate and friend of the governor. For the sake of his broken-hearted parents, as well as his own, and being satisfied that he was really innocent of the crime of which he had been convicted, I began to pray earnestly for his release. But the case dragged on and though he was pardoned some years later, it was not until after his father died broken-hearted and the mother's health had failed under her weight of sorrow and an aunt had gone insane.

During his imprisonment I at one time visited his poor mother in her home. Oh! what havoc sin had wrought! What sorrow! For though I believe him entirely innocent of the crime for which he was condemned, his conviction was the result of his being led astray by evil influences and associates.

Oh, that I could warn young men of the dangers of bad company, and that I could warn parents of the dangers of discouraging their children in waiting upon and serving God.

When this boy was quite young, he wanted to become a Christian and engage in work for souls, but his parents thought it would be a disgrace, as they were aristocratic, but alas! what snares had the enemy set for him, from which he might have entirely escaped, if they had encouraged him to be true to God.

I received many letters from him while he was in prison and quote from two of them. We have not heard from him for years but trust that if alive he is still living for God and Heaven.

*Waupun, Wis., July 7, 1895.*

Dear Mother, "In His Name":

Since my last letter to you several things of interest have transpired. My attorney went to see the governor and then came to see me. We went over some evidence, and at last I convinced them that I alone can untangle the skein of false evidence.

I located a Mrs. N. and she gave an affidavit which would have cleared me at my trial. She said she felt that she had been the cause of all my suffering, but that she went to LaCrosse at the time of my trial and was met at the train by a detective, who told her if she wanted to keep out of serious trouble to take the first train out of the city, and she did so. I expect to soon have another witness to corroborate her statement. Then if I can locate the sister of the deceased and get her evidence I will have a sure case against those who perjured themselves to send me here.

Yes, I have placed all my life in God's hands and have begun my work here; but, being a convict, I am much hindered. Therefore, in order to do a more abundant and faithful service, I desire my freedom. If I get it, I will try and enter the Moody Institute and take a course of training for the work. Mrs. K. is anxious to have me do so.

Our chaplain will preside over our Christian Endeavor Society. I recently sent out my report to be read at the Boston convention in session the 10th inst., and I ventured, in the light of all events, to place the following motto over our penitentiary: "Wisconsin Prison for Christ" for the coming year, and by the time of the next convention, I hope to be out to represent the Christian Endeavor boys.

Brother H. told me of a song you sing. "Some Mother's Child" is the song. Will say it is simply sublime and I ought to have it. Such songs turn the mind back

to home and to the memory of fond parents and loved ones. Such pieces are always very sacred to me.

God bless you and spare you for many years to come, that you may continue to be a Mother to the prisoners of earth. Write me when you can.

I am your loving little son, "In His Name,"

*Albert.*

*Waupun, Wis., Nov. 27, 1895.*

My Dear Mother:

Your excellent letter duly at hand. Both Brother Colgrove and I were surprised, for we had concluded that God in His infinite love and wisdom had carried you home.

I am at work here in the official building, in the office of our dear chaplain. Brother Colgrove is in the hospital across the hall from our office. I have talked with the chaplain about your coming, and he says to tell you to come and stay two weeks. He would like to have you spend two Sundays, and in the meantime we will no doubt, under the present warden, be able to secure the evenings during the week for a series of revival meetings.

Lovingly your son in the work,

*Albert.*

Guilt comes not, thundering on the wings of time,  
With vice-distorted feature and the leer of crime,  
But like enchanting vision from a pagan dream,  
Or softly echoed cadence of a whispering stream,  
She steals upon us gently, with ever-changing art,  
And usurps an empire—the waiting human heart!  
Her outward form is beauty, her voice with Passion tense,  
She only craves the privilege to gratify each sense;  
All apparent pleasures 'round her path are spread,  
But, alas! you seize the flower to find its fragrance fled;  
But still pursuing, row with bated breath,  
You clasp her to your bosom and—embrace a death!  
Then, conscience stricken, you the wreck survey,  
And with shuddering horror—humbly kneel to pray;  
While the pitying angels on their pinions bear  
The ever sacred burden of repentant prayer,  
And almighty love descending reasserts control,  
And mercy in the guise of grace has won a human *soul*.

—*A Prisoner.*

## **CHAPTER X.**

### **Remarkable Conversion and Experience of George H. Colgrove**

Among the others who were saved that fourth day of November, 1888, at Waupun, Wis., was the very remarkable case of Geo. H. Colgrove. Years afterwards the chaplain said of him, "I regard him as an ideal—one of whom you would expect this report: 'If ever there was a good Christian man on earth he is one.'" At one time he had three Bible classes in prison each week—one in English and two in German—and was the means of the accomplishment of much good in the conversion of prisoners.

## HIS OWN STORY

The story of his life and conversion is given, as nearly as possible, in his own words, but as found in two different statements—some particulars being given in one that were not in the other—in order to make the account as complete as I can.

It is very difficult for one in prison, especially, to write of themselves without giving to strangers the impression of either vanity and conceit on the one hand or of craft and deception on the other. Therefore, it is with considerable hesitation that I write. Yet my greet indebtedness to "Mother" Wheaton, who was chosen of God as the agent through whom His wondrous work should be made manifest to the world in my salvation, as also of many others, has at last led me to make the following statement:

Just on the verge of manhood, at the age of nineteen, I obtained some *infidel literature* of the mild stamp, yet scholarly and persuasive withal, containing no harsh criticism of Christian people and principles. This aroused my interest and admiration and led to my obtaining more of a like nature, until under their combined influence my youthful mind was entirely surrendered to such doubts and disbelief as they advocated.

This was the pivotal point in my early life from which I started down the deceitful road that leads from peace, happiness and honor into the depths of sorrow, infamy and despair. Having thus imbibed the subtle poison of infidelity, I soon became blinded and indifferent to the rights of my fellowmen and to the enormity of violating divine law.

## BURGLARY AND MURDER

From this low plane of morality it was easy to enter the path of crime; and this I did, following the precarious calling of burglary for five years. This dark way ended in the midnight gloom of a murderer. Detection, arrest and conviction followed in rapid succession, soon bringing down upon me the crushing weight of a "life sentence." So that on a cold wintry night the officers of the law delivered me within the portals of a living tomb.

Four dark, hopeless, weary years succeeded. Yet the Lord in His great mercy had not forgotten me; and when all the world deserted me, then He in His loving kindness took me up and His favor was manifested through the instrumentality of "Mother" Wheaton.

During the early years of my incarceration no words could portray my intense and bitter hatred of Christianity and anything pertaining thereto. Feeling that I had sold my soul to the prince of darkness, it enraged me to be reminded of a better life, or a possible Heaven.

Burning with the fires of hatred and revenge toward those whom I knew had unjustly deceived and wronged me, my only desire was to escape from here even long enough to rush upon my enemies and hurl their souls into eternity, and then follow them immediately if need be. I continually planned and schemed for the accomplishment of this purpose, and had a plan of escape well defined and was making arrangements to put it into execution, when one bright and beautiful Sunday

morning it was announced that a lady preacher was going to hold services in the chapel that day.

Though I did not often attend church, yet on this occasion I swore some big round oaths that I would go up and hear the lady talk.

That was the morning of November 4, 1888. The beautiful sun that shines alike on mansion and cottage, palace and prison, shone as though a special degree of radiance had been granted to light a benighted soul on its way out of darkness into light. But I entered the chapel with cold indifference, drawn only by curiosity—at least so far as I knew; but results proved that God was leading. I awaited developments; *and they came*. Our prison chaplain introduced "Mother" Wheaton, whom I had never seen before, and announced the services as "entirely in her hands." She gave us a short, earnest, impressive address; then she and the sister who came with her sang "Meet me there."

During the singing I heard an accompanying strain, low and inexpressibly sweet, the like of which I had never heard nor imagined.

The two sounds harmonized, yet were distinct, but oh, how lovely! Words fail to convey the most distant idea of their soothing and attractive power.

The thought flashed through my mind, "That is delicious music to fall upon ears that have listened to the sound of murderous guns."

Suddenly and with all the vividness of continuous lightning dispelling dense darkness, revealing all surrounding objects distinctly, the awful depth and blackness of my iniquitous career blazed up before my mental view, like a clear and definite painting of each act in my wicked life—portrayed on canvas by a master hand and set in clearest rays of the noonday sun. And at the same time there was given an assurance of forgiveness, if accepted then.

Surprise, consternation and intense fear came with this revelation of myself to myself, as my depraved spiritual condition was, for the first time, fully realized. Also as distinctly and positively it was granted me to know that *my last opportunity* for divine favor was before me. Accept and be saved or reject and be *eternally lost!* Such was the alternative.

Although every nerve thrilled in rebellion against Christianity and a thousand obstacles seemed to intervene, rendering a change in my course of life impossible, yet I dared not refuse that stern, terrific ultimatum, "*Your last opportunity*," and before its mighty mandate my proud, headstrong, sin-burdened soul *surrendered unto Jesus of Nazareth*.

I wished to fly from the room, but could not. I felt frightened at the power which was mastering me, and thought in a confused way of the ridicule which would be heaped upon me, of my intended escape, and of revenge upon my foes. Ah! what? Revenge? No, no revenge now. No, no. That was all gone. The evil desire had thus suddenly been removed without my knowledge, and in its stead there reigned in my heart and in the depths of my soul a feeling of forgiveness and peace, both between them and myself and between myself and my God.

I said, "Surely the Lord has visited me this day; for I came in here a devil in human form, and now my dark sins are forgiven and I am free. Glory to God!"

The chaplain and warden were nearly thunderstruck to learn that the low, miserable, worthless wretch, the hopeless vagabond, Colgrove, had been brought to the foot of the cross; still they must have entertained but little hope of my remaining in the straight and narrow path that leadeth unto life. How could they? They had not heard that strange music which had floated in on my soul. They could not feel

the awakening which was permeating and ringing through the corridors of my heart, nor could they perceive the realizing sense of divine favor which was so clear to my own consciousness.

That very week it was impressed on my mind that I must at once commence the study of the Holy Scriptures for work in the cause of God and devote the remainder of my life to leading my fellowmen, and especially prisoners, into the light of Calvary. I said, "What will it all amount to—I a friendless prisoner, doomed for life?" An answering whisper came, "Friendless, with Jesus for your friend? Study the Word." So in blindness, with fear and trembling, doubts and misgivings, I took from my shelf in the prison cell the neglected, despised and dust-covered Bible and commenced studying the Word to the best of my ability, with none but God to direct or assist me except a hasty explanation now and then from the chaplain as he passed on his hurried rounds through the cell rooms.

I immediately destroyed the implements of destruction and escape which I had made during two years previous to my conversion. Instead of dirks and saws, my hands now grasped the Bible and the cross; and thanks be unto Jesus of Nazareth, they still retain their hold, and I believe with ever increasing strength.

The way thus far has been rendered more pleasant by the hand of the Lord than I then thought possible amid such dark surroundings. With an ever realizing sense of my unworthiness I have been kindly led in the way of life and am eleven years nearer my eternal Home; while in my soul there is the "peace of God which passeth all understanding" which is an additional evidence of the faithful care and guidance of Jehovah. During the last decade the motto of my life has been, as through future years it shall ever be (Isaiah 26:4): "Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

I know not whether earthly freedom will ever be mine, but I do know that, if it is His holy and righteous will, it will be given me; and I know that it matters little, for earthly joys must soon fade away, and down at the close of the earthly journey Jesus is waiting for me. And with my weak and faltering hand laid in His strong and mighty one I shall walk through the dark waters of the Jordan of death, and with Him kindly leading His rescued child we shall enter with joy and eternal thanksgiving the beautiful "city whose maker and builder is God."

The following extracts from letters written me at different times after his conversion will, I believe, interest the reader:

*Waupun, Wis., Sept. 5, 1891.*

Mrs. E. Wheaton:

Dear Christian Friend: No news received since you were here has afforded me so much pleasure as the announcement of your return.

It was through your earnest work that I was converted. When you came here before there was, I presume, no more sinful, hopeless, hardened, miserable wretch inside these walls than myself. When I entered the prison chapel that Sabbath morning, November 4, 1888, I for one came to observe, sneer and laugh. But while you were singing that glorious anthem, "Meet Me There," power from above opened my spiritual vision to see the horrible condition of my soul, and so enabled me to realize my great need of divine favor. I thank God and will bless His holy name forever that in His infinite wisdom and kindness He brought me inside these walls

and sent you, His chosen instrument, to lead my wandering sin-darkened soul into the path that leadeth unto life eternal.

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