

Levi Pennington

People

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Levi Pennington Writing to His Brother Parker, June 8, 1946

Levi T. Pennington

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June 8, 1946.

Dear Brother Parker:--

Your letter of the 1st. arrived yesterday, that is, we got it yesterday. It had come here, been forwarded to us at Woods, arrived there just after we left for home, and got back here yesterday afternoon.

That must have been a very interesting parade that you saw on the 50th. anniversary of the auto industry. Wish I could have seen it. The papers out here have made a good deal of it, showing pictures of ancient autos, pictures of the Hall of Fame members of the auto industry, and interesting write-ups of the business of transportation, from the first "gas buggies" to the present wealth of motor-driven vehicles, from Fords and smaller cars to super-tanks.

Portland had a very interesting parade yesterday, that was considerably marrèd by vandalism. The streets for some reason were not properly roped off, and instead of holding the crowds to the sidewalks as was intended (some elderly folks had brought their seats to the curb and hoped for a sight of the parade but were marooned by crowds that surged into the streets) the police were unable even to keep the streets open enough so that the parade could pass. At one time the whole line up was held up for a quarter of an hour while mounted police opened a way wide enough for the floats to pass. And the crowds, not only children and youths but adults, snatched from the floats all the flowers that could be reached -- those who were not toward the front of the line of march saw only the badly damaged floats, some of them denuded of flowers as high as a man could reach. I saw the Newberg Berrian float (which took second, by the way, in the floats from Oregon cities outside of Portland) and it was decidedly the worse for wear.

I'm supposing from your letter that you did not make that trip to Canada with Otis and Otis Knight, unless they postponed it and you are going to take it later. We got back Thursday evening from Woods, and I had not even wet a line for several days. My whole catch, seven legal trout, would not have measured four feet if laid end to end. Unless one just hits a new run of sea-run trout there in the river, the fishing is pretty poor in that immediate section at this time of year. When we go back in two or three weeks, we hope to get to some better fishing. Rebecca did not wet a fly on this trip, feeling decidedly below par when we went out there. She was feeling much more like herself when we came back.

Hannah wrote us that the Hilers and Bairds were expecting to go to a cottage for a real rest, starting day before yesterday. I do hope that nothing prevented them from making the trip. Guess they all need the rest all right.

Lorena Clevelnad's family certainly have been having a time. And Hannah, as you say, takes her full share of the load whenever her children or grandchildren have anything the matter with them. She wrote that they were all better, and I hope that they continue to be well enough so that she will

will be spared some of the worry that she has been having. And my guess is that Tom needs some rest about as much as the rest of the folks. Hope he gets it. Wish they could have got it out here this summer, and all summer.

Your weather there when you wrote, must have been something like ours has been some of the time, indeed a good share of the time for the past two weeks. But yesterday it was all right most of the day, and I got the garden all cultivated, not all quite as thoroughly as might have been desirable, and I'd have to hedge a bit on saying that all of it was cultivated. The row of Lima beans all rotted in the ground, and if we are to have any Limas we have to plant again. And there is a row of beets that were not up quite enough for cultivation. And the peas are too far along to give them cultivation without doing the vines more harm than the roots would get by the cultivation. We'll be eating peas off of the first planted rows in a few more days now.

Strawberries are on the market in quantities, and prices are still well up toward 30 cents for a box -- we used to get six boxes for a quarter, as I remember it. The rains have kept the berries coming on, and they are certainly fine. Gervas Carey has the greatest crop I think I ever saw on a small patch. But he knows more about growing things than most men would know about theology if they held all his degrees, B.B., M.A., B.D. and D.D.

Hope you got your income tax matters straightened up satisfactorily. Glad you got that Sumner Porter sale completed. Wish you had some other deals on, not only because they make you some money but because I know you want to be getting things done.

That editorial about adopting a tree or being adopted by one was written by Ben Hur Lampman, and he has been repeatedly quoted in Reader's Digest. But you are right in thinking that the sentence you marked is good enough for their "Picturesque Speech".

Heard the Commencement Concert of the college last night, and it certainly was different from that event under the consulship of Plancus. The Hulls used to put on a concert good enough for any Lyceum; and even later we had programs that any college in the country need not have been ashamed of. Last night's program was "something distinctly other", as some of our would-be intelligencia would say. In the first place, it was strictly a student program, and some of the students had not progressed very far. In the second place, there were four numbers on the program which were not given -- the supposed performers were absent for some reason not explained. In the third place, there were at least that many who would have improved the program if they had been absent. In the fourth place there was some fumbling on the things that were given -- one of the two chief piano performers was playing a piece from memory, and her memory failed her, she got lost, tried to go on, failed, and went back a ways and got a new start, and that time got over the hill. In the fifth place, there was some attempts to do something that was "over the head" of the performer. A girl tried a complicated trumpet solo, and could

not hit accurately all the notes she tried for, and one of the pianists tried for a piece that should have had a man's strong hand to do it ~~accurately~~ -- why will women try the heavy stuff just because they are not supposed to be able to do it? But the trumpeter finished with a grand finale, faintly blowing her front teeth out on the final note, and she got more vigorous applause than any other performer, and probably deserved it. (I could go into far more elaborate criticism, taking the matter of the program up one by one. But I don't think it would be too kind to give my actual impressions of the four vocal solos, two by men students and two by women. The work of the women was just too bad, and the work of the men much worse. If I knew of a son of Josiah Pennington who could not have sung better than either of them without ever having taken a lesson, I'd shoot him -- with a hypodermic syringe that would keep him quiet for a long time.)

While I was writing that paragraph our friend Cook arrived, unable to amuse himself at all since there was not a postal card in the mail he brought to me, which included your letter while still waiting for an appointment with that income tax adjuster. I love my country, but some of its millions of office holders give me a severe unpleasantness in the region of my cervical vertebrae.

We both enjoyed Howard Black's poem "Fishing." Many verses have been written on that same theme, but this poem is better than most of them. (I've tried a few myself, and I am sure this is better than any of mine.)

We expect Bertha May up from Portland this afternoon, to stay till tomorrow evening. She will hear my successor in the baccalaureate sermon, I suppose, and from now on till the 18th. the Penningtons will be pretty definitely tied up with commencement and yearly meeting. After that, just how soon thereafter is not certain, we hope to get back to the coast. We shall probably have some peas to can by that time, and maybe the cherries will be ready to put up. We're not going to have more than twenty quarts off of that tree at the garden, but there will be some, and the Royal Ann tree has quite a crop. We do not expect to put up any of the Governon Woods this year -- they are too mushy and "pusilanimous", as Rebecca says.

The curl leaf got our peach trees this year -- we had a man spray for us, but it was "too little and too late" or the rain too soon washed the spray all off. I picked the infested leaves off of the trees, and they are looking all right now, but the disease meant the loss of nearly all the peaches -- either that or the weather. At any rate there are only four peaches on the little Golden Jubilee, and not many more than half a dozen on the Elberta. The Early Crawford has more, but not many; and I do not know what the prospect is on the old trees on the Rex place.

And I do not know what the prune prospect is up there, either. The trees at the garden are loaded, as usual, especially the petites. And the nut trees down here show good promise -- I do not know about the ones at the Rex place.

But your letter was not the only one that our friend Cook

brought this morning, and I must get busy. I'm enclosing some
clippings from this morning's Oregonian that may interest you.

With love from both of us to the entire tribe, as you
see them (when you write to Lorena or Hannah you might let
them see these clippings if you like),

Affectionately your brother,

Mr. Parker O. Pennington,
Interlochen, Michigan.