

Levi Pennington

People

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## Levi Pennington Writing to His Sisters Lorena & Hannah, September 16, 1946

Levi T. Pennington

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September 16, 1946.

Dear Sisters:--

Yesterday was a pretty lazy day, in which I did not feel like a very useful animal. It had rained nearly all day the day before, and if I had done a useful thing it was just getting cans sorted out in the basement, getting the right tops for the right cans in places where they could be properly and promptly located, and that sort of thing.

Yesterday afternoon I felt so nearly worthless and out of ambition that in some moments of idleness, while I was waiting for Rebecca to get the toast ready for our evening meal, I wrote the following doggerel, which you do not need to read; you might feed it to the dog, if you have one, for that is all that doggerel is really good for.

RETIRED.

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The lazy days go drifting by.  
I do just what I please.  
How often in the past have I  
Had dreams of days like these.  
No office calling me at eight,  
No schedule to observe,  
No fear of getting there too late,  
No time table to serve.

I can go fishing if I like,  
Play golf or take a ride,  
Go for a quiet, gentle "hike",  
My wishes my sole guide.  
I can go boating on the lake,  
Go swimming in the river,  
An air-plane journey I can take,  
Ride horseback for my liver.

A thousand things I've longed to do  
Are waiting to be done,  
A thousand pleasures old and new  
That ought to be such fun,  
New books to read, new sights to see,  
New pleasures to enjoy,  
A thousand things have called to me  
Since I was just a boy.

And do I travel, do I fish,  
Play golf, or read, or swim?  
Do I do anything I wish?  
I just have not the vim.  
With naught that I must do, I should  
Be with ambition fired  
To do a thousand things. -- I would  
But I am just too tired.

I'm living a retired life;  
From duty I am freed;



Here living with my loving wife  
 Supplied is every need.  
 For work or play or distant scenes  
 I do not feel inspired.  
 I'm learning what "retired" means;  
 It simply means "re-tired."

Well, at about that point Rebecca called me to supper, and there I had sufficient ambition, you may be sure. (My doctor told me that if I'd eat less and drink more it would be better for me.)

Of course I was not quite as near out of a job when I wrote that stuff as the rhymes themselves would seem to indicate. I knew that there were wagonloads of debris in the yard that simply must be cleared up, with the cedar shingles supposedly going into the basement for kindling, and the composition stuff being got ready for the trip to the dump yard. I knew that the prunes at the garden ought to be picked, probably six or eight bushels of them. And I knew part of what was ahead today.

The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA in the papers) was going to do big things in the way of raising many millions of relief funds by a campaign that was to go clear across the country and into every town and village in America. Well, that great campaign fizzled, flopped, petered out, died a-bornin', and nothing was going to be done in Newberg, though our committee that put on the campaign last March had disbanded to get out of the way of this bigger campaign and "let somebody run that can run." But the announcement that so far as the UNRRA were concerned in Newberg, the starving folks could just starve did not set well with me, and so today I presented the matter to the Ministerial Association at its first meeting of the new pastoral year, and it was unanimously decided to put on such a campaign among the churches -- it must be there or it would conflict with the Community Chest which is being put on this year for the first time -- and I was named on the committee to carry on the campaign. They wanted to name me chairman of the committee, but I asked them to let the committee name its own chairman, and they did. With President Gulley, Superintendent of Schools Armstrong, the president of the ministerial association and the others that are on the committee, I'll allow you three guesses as to who will be chairman. That's right, your guess is the same as mine.

And on the way home from that meeting, to write the preliminary publicity for the Graphis and get out the letters telling the committee of their appointment and making plain the situation to them and calling a meeting here at our home for Thursday evening, I was asked to become captain for the northeast section of the city for this Community Chest drive. At first I thought I must decline it, but thinking it over more fully, I think I'll take it. I want to do that much for the city and the causes this Community Chest represents, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Red Cross, Anti-cancer, Salvation Army, Children's Farm Home, etc. Hope I can get the right sort of help to aid in making the solicitation.

#### Well, that's as far as I got last night, and now it is Tuesday morning, and I am up before daylight, to get the



letters into the postoffice that I wrote to the members of this committee on European Relief, to get the newspaper article to the Graphic, and to get ready for the coming of our pastor, who is going to help pick these prunes this forenoon. And he'll do most of the picking, too, for my stooper-over is not as good as it was even in the days when "picking trash" gave me a headache -- and if you girls don't remember, Bill would, I am sure.

We expect to start to the cottage at the coast -----

We expect to invest in a gas furnace -----

We expect to sell our place at Rex -----

We expect to make another trip to Michigan -----

We expect to see some of our nearest and dearest relatives in Oregon -----

Those hyphens represent "time when", and as you see, they leave the matter in a somewhat indefinite form.

With love from both of us to all of you,

Affectionately your brother,

Lorena and Hannah  
Hiler and Baird  
Ionia and Hastings,  
Michigan, U. S. A.