

Levi Pennington

People

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Pennington to Carrie Henderson, April 10, 1948

Levi T. Pennington

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April 10, 1948.

Mrs. Carrie S. M. Henderson,
1150 West Twelfth Street,
Albany, Oregon.

Dear Friend:--

We have thought of you a great deal since our visit to Albany day before yesterday. We hope that the sale of your home there has gone through satisfactorily, as of course it has if the title has no flaws in it and the title insurance has been issued. And we earnestly hope that the arrangement you have made to live with your son may be in every way satisfactory. And if for any reason it should be found unsatisfactory through your son's sale of the auto camp or for any other reason, the money obtained from the sale of the house will enable you to make some other arrangements. We have for a long time felt that it was not safe for you to live all by yourself. You might fall and break a hip or meet with some other accident -- we are glad that you are not to be living entirely alone.

I was disturbed, I confess, at your hopeless attitude toward the dry cause. It seemed to me that you felt that there is no possibility of our ever bringing about better conditions with regard to the use of liquor. I cannot share that feeling at all. Indeed it seems to me that if there ever was a time when efforts to better conditions were needed it is now; and, that efforts now give promise of bringing results, perhaps much sooner than most of us dare to hope. Things have been going from bad to worse for a long time. The war added greatly to our problems, and increased greatly the consumption of liquor and tobacco. But I believe that the tide is already turning, and that we cannot afford to relax our efforts to destroy the beverage liquor business.

That things are beginning to change for the better in this matter are indicated in a number of ways.

For one thing, more and more territory in the United States is going dry. In many parts of the country, county after county is voting liquor out. The dry forces are winning in far more local elections on this matter than the wets.

Even in states where liquor is legally sold almost everywhere, in many cases by the state authority itself, the per capita consumption of liquor is decreasing. In Oregon the per capita sale of hard liquor through the state liquor stores increased every year since the Knox Law went into effect, from \$4.00 per capita per year to more than \$37.00; but last year there was a falling off in this per capita sale, for the first time.

And more and more public spirited and far seeing men, even though they are not as dry as you and I have always been, are becoming concerned over the situation, and are beginning to feel that something must be done to stop our regress toward becoming a nation of drunkards.

Indeed the whole situation is very much like it was before we had national prohibition before, even to the alarm of the liquor interests, who are warning themselves and each other that we are headed for prohibition again. Some day that result will come, if all the dry forces continue to press the fight against liquor; and when we get it again, we shall not go to sleep, as we did before, and let the wets repeal national prohibition by a campaign of falsehood and defiance against the federal constitution and laws, coupled with the lethargy of the dry forces. Once we get it again, we'll keep it against all the forces that the wets can muster.

All of which leads me to hope that you will let your savings account remain as you had planned, to be used, unless you need it before your life on earth ends, in the cause for which you devoted your life and energies for so many years. In that way you can go on living long after your body has been laid away.

I had not made definite plans as to how I would invest the money in the dry cause, for of course I want you to have all you need for comfort all the rest of your life. The money from the sale of your home will be all you will need for a good while, and I hope you will put it into a bank and have it whenever you need it, for your comfort from year to year, and for use if you should ever need to make a change from the place where you are going now to live with your son. Something might happen to him, an auto accident or something of the sort, so that that life with him would no longer be possible. But I had done a lot of thinking about the use of whatever might be left for the dry cause after your departure.

For one thing, I hoped to use a part of it through the American Business Men's Research Foundation. This is an organization of temperance business men -- I have known some of them personally -- who make and disseminate the results of researches of all sorts in regard to the liquor business. Their cartoons and other publicity against the traffic in alcohol is most effective, and is reaching millions of people through the press, counteracting the results of much of the liquor advertising. I wanted to do some of the work that you were providing for through this organization.

Then there are some schools that I know that are training leaders in all sorts of Christian enterprises. I wanted to learn from some of these just what they would do if I could provide them with a certain gift for use in preparing leaders for the temperance cause. Through this sort of educational work I hoped that the means you were planning to provide might produce another John B. Gough or Frances E. Willard or John P. St. John or other great temperance leader.

But I need not go on. I hope that you will leave the savings account as it is at present. You will not need it for a long time, perhaps never. And it could be doing a great work after you are gone if you carry out your former plan, which I believe was a good one.

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With best wishes from both me and Rebecca, I am

Sincerely your friend,