

Levi Pennington

People

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Pennington to Lura Miles, April 17, 1948

Levi T. Pennington

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April 17, 1948.

Dear Friend:--

Your card of the 12th reached us yesterday, and it is good of you to keep us informed about your sister's condition, which we hope will show continual improvement. Hope she will not have any set backs, but will gain all the time.

We were saddened to learn of the death of Marjorie's step-father. I never had a step-father nor a step-mother, but my two girls have a step-mother, and I know how good she has been to them. Please convey our sympathy to Marjorie.

What cruelty there is in making a generalization and including all the people in a class as guilty of certain things because some in that class are guilty. Some Japanese are treacherous, therefore all Japanese are treacherous; some Germans are cruel, therefore all Germans are cruel; some wealthy people are selfish, therefore all wealthy people are selfish; some mothers-in-law are mean, therefore all mothers-in-law are mean; some step-mothers are cruel, therefore all step-mothers are cruel. And there is no end to it. Well, when folks want to put all mothers-in-law in a bad class, I like to think that one of Edgar Allen Poe's loveliest poems about "Mother" was in honor of his wife's mother -- his own mother died, as I recall it, before he really knew her. And when Abraham Lincoln said that all he amounted to in the world he owed to his mother, he was talking about his step-mother; his own mother had died when he was a little chap, and it was his step mother who had brought him up and done so much to make him the man he was.

The philosophers and logicians say that the commonest error of inductive reasoning is too ready a generalization, and that is much truer than some of the things philosophers and logicians say. There is almost no limit to the forms of this error. Some left-handed pitchers, Rube Waddell and others, were erratic, therefore all "south-paws" are erratic. There is a legend that Judas Iscariot had red hair, therefore all red-heads are likely to be traitors. For a number of administrations times were more prosperous under Republican than under Democratic presidents, so it was the G.O.P. that made the rain to fall and the crops to grow. (Then came Hoover's administration. Ouch!) We planted our potatoes in the dark of the moon last year and had a good crop, therefore potatoes (indeed all root crops) should be planted in the dark of the moon. Some negroes are lustful, therefore all negroes are lustful. Some bankers are hard-hearted, therefore all bankers are hard-hearted. (By the way, did you hear the story of the man who wanted to borrow a good big sum from a banker, who refused him; but the man begged so hard for it that the banker finally said, "Well, I like a bit of sport, and I tell you what I'll do. One of my eyes is a glass eye, made by the best maker of glass eyes in the world, and so good an imitation of the other that few can tell which is which. If you'll tell me which is the glass eye, I'll make the loan." The would-be borrower looked carefully and then said, "Your left eye is the glass eye." "You are right" said the banker, "and you get the loan. But I'd like to know

how you could tell that the left eye was the glass one." "Well," replied the other man, "I thought it looked a little more sympathetic than the other.")

Politics is beginning to warm up in Oregon. You know, I suspect, that we lost in one accident the three highest state officials some months ago, that is, the governor and the two men immediately in line for the governorship in such a case, so that the man who was fourth in line became governor. The former governor, the secretary of state and the president of the senate all started on a hunting trip for wild geese, and all were killed in the same plane crash, so that the speaker of the house became the governor. He is a man who has been attorney for night clubs and other organizations that are very wet and eager to become wetter, and his opponent for the Republican nomination is a man who has been a leader in many forms of social and religious service. I expect to go to McMinnville this noon to a luncheon for this rival candidate. Hope to take Emmett Gulley with me.

Well, I'd better stop this letter, and maybe I'd better not write so many -- I'd hate for the government to have to put on an extra mail coach just to handle my correspondence. But I still do have two or three more to write, in addition to half a dozen or more that are already waiting for the postman.

With love and best wishes from both of us to all of you,

Sincerely your friend,

Mrs. Lura C. Miles,
Pleasant Hill, Ohio.