

AN OLD MAN

A CONVICT

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Makes a Unique and Remarkable Appeal to Governor for a Pardon.

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Wetumpka, Ala., April 28th, 1901.
To His Excellency, Gov. W. J. Samford:

Dear Governor:—Bear in mind that this is an old man writing to you this time. An old Virginian, 68 years of age, praying for a PAROLE. And why is it? Because I, James Foster, the old man, have been indurance long enough; have suffered sufficiently for the crime I am charged with—I'm guilty of course, I plead guilty to grand larceny to Judge Bilbroe at the court house in Centre, Cherokee county, Ala., about the last of July 1898. I told Judge Bilbroe, that I went into Dr. Slack's stable at midnight and exchanged horses with him. I left mine and took his. And we, the Judge and I agreed that it was a mean act; an act unbecoming a gentleman of the first water. An act that merited a stringent punishment. Therefore he squarred himself, and gave me ten years.

After pronouncing the sentence, give vent to the following consolatory words, or its substance.

Judge Bilbroe: "It grives me, Tuster, to send you, an old man to the penitentiary for so long a time, never-the less, under the surrounding circumstances, I'm compelled to do it. Go now and be a good boy, and it may be the Governor will take a part of it off."

Now Governor, I love Judge Bilbroe some for his soothing words. They have braced me up; engendered a spirit of emulation. The hight of my ambition, from the first day I landed here on August 5th, 1898, until now, have to do my whole duty and at the proper time, put to test the supposition so charitably promulgated in my favor by his honor, the Judge. So far so good. Now we will see. When Warden Perkins took his departure, a few weeks ago, for his native hills in north Alabama, he gave me his hand and said "good bye Tuster, you've been an excellent prisoner, a good man."

All the officers have been exceedingly kind to me, and with one accord say, "Tuster has been a good prisoner."

Now is there any reward in store for a good prisoner in the Alabama State prison? If not there should be! What is the PAROLE law for Governor if not to meet such cases as mine. A good prisoner without substantial friends or money? Oh, that you were "Our Bob" for about half an hour; My liberty would be sure.

Its a parole I want, Governor. A parole with the conditions that I leave the state within 24 hours, never to return, else the parole to be forfeited with loss of short time on the 10 years I am now trying to do. Wouldn't it be to the best interest of the state, to have all ex-convicts to leave it? If so then, you should parole me at once; 'twould conform with your oath; you are sworn, if I understand it, to the best interests of the state. Law should be satisfied in my case. I've been here long enough, something over two years and eight months, equivalent to about twenty-five years to a man of 25 or 30 years of age. One year at my time of life is as much to me as ten or 12 would be to a young man.

If you should parole me, Governor, there would be no one to kick. Dr. Slack would not, because he has his own horse, the one I took, and also mine, the one I left in his stable at the time I took his, (took sounds more pleasant to the ear than stole) so you see he's a horse on me, and should not kick. And he may keep it with my best wishes.

I don't live in Cherokee county and do not expect to go back there. Never, Never. You may say, "Tuster, how came you in such a difficulty? Well, I can give no good excuse. I'm not an angel. The flesh is weak. It was a bit of degeneracy that might parallel with similar acts that many well bred men have fallen into; and in many instances where executive clemency was extended, pulled themselves up and became great and serviceable men. King David, with all his advantages through life, with the spirit of Jehovah continually upon him, committed the capital crime of adultery, and followed it with a cold blooded murder long before jack pots and moonshine whiskey was ever invented, and, Jehovah, after inflicting a light punishment, pardoned him, and he became afterwards a great and good man, from whose sublime writings thousands of sermons are preached annually. Christ pardoned the woman caught in the act of capital crime of adultery. "Go and sin no more," John 8-11. Be God-like, Governor, Say to poor old decrepit, repentant Tuster, "Go and sin no more."

Who knows but what, with a sweet parole in my grasp, I may emulate some of the best of king David's life. I've made a good prisoner, and by the everlasting jupiter, I'll make a good citizen! Please write Governor and tell me what you will do.