

**LOST AND FOUND; OR LIGHT IN
THE PRISON. A NARRATIVE,
WITH ORIGINAL LETTERS, OF A
CONVICT, CONDEMNED FOR
FORGERY**

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Lost and Found; Or Light in the Prison. A Narrative, with Original Letters, of a Convict,
Condemned for Forgery by Benjamin Bensley

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BENJAMIN BENSLEY

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EDITED BY

BENJAMIN BENSLEY.

"And a light shined in the Prison."—Acts xii. 7.

"Oh, in thy prison's darkest hour,
Thy light is from above:
God can relieve—for He is Power,
He will—for He is Love.

Snow.

LONDON:

W. WELLS GARDNER, 7, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1859.

210. m. 76.

TO
ANTHONY ASHLEY-COOPER,

Earl of Shaftesbury,

WHOSE "CHARACTERISTICS" ARE EMINENTLY CHRISTIAN,

AND

THE LUSTRE OF WHOSE CORONET

HAS BRIGHTENED THE DARK PLACES OF HUMAN MISERY,

These pages are dedicated,

AS A HUMBLE TRIBUTE OF RESPECT,

BY

HIS LORDSHIP'S UNKNOWN AND OBEIENT SERVANT,

THE EDITOR.

ERRATUM.

**P. 23, 18 lines from bottom, for "common jurisprudence," read
"criminal jurisprudence."**

P R E F A C E.

THE Editor feels that he has the justification—were any wanted—of the tacit consent of the writer of the following Letters to place them before the world. In the originals, twice at least, is the subject touched upon. On one occasion the Convict distinctly prohibits his friend (my father) from permitting any steps then to be taken towards this object. It had been discussed between two friends, one a highly gifted man and of considerable influence. The Convict, alarmed, wrote that “it would be the height of imprudence, and tend rather to disgrace than honour the cause it was intended to serve.” But he adds at last, “If anything of this kind should ever happen, *it must be the Lord’s doing*, and then it will appear marvellous in men’s eyes!”

Discussions were renewed, and my father had prepared some memoirs (now lost), and the two friends of the Convict again consulted him about it. His immediate reply was to check them: "It is not my wish to be brought forward to the notice of the world *till a higher Hand pluck me from my privacy*. I trust to continue a humble follower of CHRIST, searching for others of the same hope." The Editor considers that the lapse of half a century since the Convict's death has cancelled the obligation of silence, and brought the matter within what he terms "the LORD's doing."

By turning to page 160, the reader will see that it has been discovered that the son (called D.) yet lives. Not one word in the following pages is calculated or ought to wound or even displease him. He was an old playmate of the Editor; it would much grieve him to disturb his feelings:—this it has been attempted to avoid by the total absence of the Convict's name, and the adoption of initials as to the other actors in this eventful narrative.

It is believed that hardly ten people are now living who knew the writer of the following

letters. But should this little book fall into the hands of any who recognise him, the Editor would thankfully receive any other letters or particulars which he could weave into a second edition, should it be called for.

The Editor had prepared the copy for the printer years ago; he had dealt with some matters perhaps in too narrow a spirit, and too much amplified other parts. On submitting his materials to one more judicious, if not more practised, than himself, his friend at once saw objections to parts, and suggested considerable alterations, which commended themselves to the Editor as great improvements. Happy in receiving such assistance, it appeared but an honourable discharge of duty to avow his obligations. In this matter he has been overruled: but it was at his friend's earnest request,—a request to which the Editor reluctantly acceded, that he has not publicly recorded the name of one of whose assistance he was proud to avail himself, and by which his book has been greatly benefited.

“E'en while I write,” a passage from the *Saturday Review*, of December 18, 1858, so ap-

appropriately presents itself, as declaring the rule which should influence the biographer, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of inserting it: "To reserve the whole canvas for the one central figure, to prevent the tastes of the writer from interfering in any degree with the structure of the work, to suffer no proselytism of any kind to distort the relative prominence of the events in which the subject of the biography is concerned, or of the views he entertained, require a degree of self-denial which men of ability are not often brought to practise." Perhaps, had the Editor followed his own course, although laying no claim to be a "man of ability," he might have fallen into that against which the writer in the Review so properly cautions us. But, with an able adviser at his elbow, he trusts the views so well enunciated above have guided his pen. The central figure occupies the canvas, and no proselytism—strong as were the temptations—has been permitted to interfere. Indeed it is no unimportant feature in this remarkable case that the Convict was rescued by the instrumentality of friends, hardly two of whom held the same religious opinions. So that we