

**A LIFE SENTENCE; OR,
DUTY IN DEALING
WITH CRIME**

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A Life Sentence; Or, Duty in Dealing with Crime by W. Watson Burgess

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By

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TO THE
WIFE AND CHILDREN OF THE WRITER,
DEVOTEES OF INSPIRING STORY,
AND TO THAT
GREAT ARMY OF PATIENT WORKERS
WITH
HIGH AIMS AND INSURMOUNTABLE ENVIRONMENT,
THIS VOLUME
IS LOVINGLY INSCRIBED.

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PREFACE

LEGAL tribunals, and citizens in common, are prone to deal zealously with crime as a monster evil menacing the very life of free institutions, and, hence, operation of law is sometimes at variance with justice, highest duty, and the rights of man.

While there is an undercurrent of sentiment in these pages akin to religious belief, with, perhaps, an optimistic trend that may not be wholly in accord with the popular, dominant view, still it is not sought to foist upon the reader any particular phase of religion, much less to condone any form of actual crime.

We cannot differentiate or separate the human family for purposes of government, or the suppression of crime. It is the aggregate, the conglomerate whole with which there is to deal. If this story may in the least tend to mitigate unjust discrimination, and to any extent lessen the pangs and penalties levied upon innocent and excusable victims of alleged crime, or awaken deeper conscientiousness and higher aims in life than many now possess, the author will feel richly rewarded for his effort.



A LIFE SENTENCE

OR

Duty in Dealing with Crime

CHAPTER I

“MAMMA, why don't 'oo tum away from 'is nassy old place? Why don't 'oo tum home? Do tum home, mamma!”

It was a golden-haired little girl thus pleading to her mamma while on her first visit to the weird old State's Prison, within the confines of a dingy, badly smelling cell, at Carson City, Nevada, along in the closing years of the nineteenth century.

“Mabel, my darling child, Mamma must now live here always — never go home again. The big judge in the courthouse has said I must stay here as long as I live. But my precious darling must come every day to see mamma, and stay a long, long time each day she comes. Mamma will be so lonely now, and she will think so much about her baby darling.”

Thus the mother was replying to the earnest pleading of her little girl whom she was fondly embracing, feverishly kissing her again and again, when for the first time in her great distress of mind she completely broke down and wept as she had never wept before. Raving in