

when I saw that, sir, I felt that something inside of me was about to burst.

"And then the whip came down across my back. The something inside of me twisted hard and then broke wide open, and went pouring all through me like melted iron. And then I said to the warden this: 'You've struck me with a whip in cold blood. You've tied me up hand and foot to whip me like a dog. Well, whip me then, till you fill your belly with it. You are a coward. You were born a coward. Cowards will lie and steal, and you are the same as a thief and liar. Whip me hard and long, you coward. Whip me till the last breath quits my body; if you leave me alive I will kill you for this.'

"His face got white. He asked me if I meant that, and I said, 'Yes, before God, I do.' Then he took the whip in both hands and came down with all his might.

"That was nearly two years ago," said the chairman. "You would not kill him now, would you?"

"Yes. I will kill him if I get a chance; and I feel it in me that the chance will come."

"Well, proceed."

"He kept on whipping me. I could feel the broken skin curl up on my back, and when my head got too heavy to hold it straight it hung down, and I saw the blood on my legs and dripping off my toes into a pool of it on the floor. Something was straining and twisting inside of me again. My back didn't hurt much, it was the thing twisting inside of me that hurt. I counted the lashes, and when I counted to twenty-eight the twisting got so hard that it choked me and blinded me....and when I woke up I was in the dungeon again, and the doctor

had my back all plastered up, and he was kneeling beside me, feeling my pulse."

"And you have been in the dungeon ever since?"

"Yes, sir; but I don't mind that."

"How long?"

"Twenty-three months."

"On bread and water?"

"Yes; but that was all I wanted."

"Have you reflected that so long as you harbor a determination to kill the warden you may be kept in the dungeon? You can't live much longer there, and if you die there you will never find the chance you want. If you say you will not kill the warden he may return you to the cells."

"But that would be a lie, sir; I would rather die in the dungeon than be a liar and sneak. If you send me to the cells I will kill him. But I will kill him without that. I will kill him, sir.... And he knows it."

Without concealment, but open, deliberate and implacable, thus in the wrecked frame of a man, so close that we could have touched it, stood Murder—not boastful, but relentless as death.

"Apart from weakness, is your health good?" asked the chairman.

"Oh, it's good enough," wearily answered the convict. "Sometimes the twisting comes on, but when I wake up after it I'm all right."

The prison surgeon, under the chairman's direction, put his ear to the convict's chest, and then went over and whispered to the chairman.

"I thought so," said that gentleman. "Now, take this man to the hospital. Put him to bed where the sun will shine on him, and give him the most nourishing food."

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The warden sat alone in the prison office with No. 14,208.