

a pillow cut in stone. They have been cleaned out and white-washed, but the stench is still overpowering; imagine what it was when inhabited by people who were never let out, who had no mattresses, and had to wear their clothes night and day! And, if so much cheating goes on about the food in the hospitals, which are open to every visitor, how may we imagine these people were fed!

"There was one cell still worse than the others. A little winding staircase led up to it. Even with the door wide open you could not see the person at your elbow. Of course I had heard and read all about the prisons, as you will read this; but, standing there, it came upon me as it had never done before, as a new sense, what it would be to have that door shut upon one. Even when it was open, the darkness seemed to weigh like a year of midnight on my chest, and to crush the breath out. I don't think I should have courage to try to keep alive there; I should lie down on that plank bed and never move any more. A man was kept sixteen years in that hole! In that moment the last spark of pity I had felt for the Bourbons died out of me, and I could have clapped my hands for joy to think that it was over. In other countries a single abuse may arise, like that which Chas. Reade has founded his novel, *Never too late to mend*; but this was the system upheld by the Government, and known in all its details to Bomba at least, and made use of not against criminals, but against noble-minded men—against many even stupidly innocent, who had not an idea of being patriots, but in whose dusty bookshelves might have been found some book with a forbidden name or word in its pages, which had probably never been opened by its present owner. There is a good reason for never finding a library in the house of a Neapolitan.

"But these are not the worst prisons. They are dry: there are others by the sea which drip night and day; and a gentleman who was with us had been informed by one of the released prisoners of a torture invented by his jailor—to dash on him, through an opening at the top, cold water at any time, night or day. He could not avoid it in any part of his cell, and

never went to sleep without expecting it. It became a haunting terror to him, and he had to remain shivering in his wet clothes until they dried upon him. It was a way of extorting money from the friends of a prisoner, to torture him unless bribed not to do so. There were names and dates inscribed on the rock—one of a Spanish nobleman 200 years ago. Some told of very long imprisonments; it seemed as if the very rocks were impregnated with sighs and tears, and groans, and as if they weighed and crushed one's heart with misery.

"But there is more to tell, very horrible and mysterious. In the middle of this large cave there was a great round hole, with a low parapet wall enclosing it; and, looking down into it, we saw another hole cut in the rock, like that in which we stood—larger because of not being filled with the cells, and very deep—lighted by a slanting shaft to the opening of the upper one. They told us that this was the place in which they used to put a number of prisoners, whom they wanted to get rid of, together, and shoot them from above. There was an iron grate in the side of the upper hall which led down by a staircase cut in the rock to the under one—a wide staircase, the ends of the steps sharp, but in the middle worn into one continuous slope. Even if the story of the shooting is an exaggeration, it must have taken *thousands* of feet to wear the steps like this; and certainly those feet had not carried people there for their own pleasure. There is *another* gate at the bottom, and more cells opening upon the stairs. It is true that all around the sides of this cave, about the height of a man's head and chest, the walls are marked with round holes, which Captain — said he could not imagine having been made by anything but a bullet. Supposing that this was used not for political prisoners, but in cases of military revolt, yet what a system to put men into a wild beast's hole and shoot them down, instead of having an open execution after a fair trial! The best colour one can put upon it is horrible.

"I took the children: it will not be my fault if they do not grow up haters of tyranny and dark dealing. I did not allow them, however, to go into the cells, lest they should be poison-