

was gradually growing less, and he had wandered from good thoughts to thoughts of home, and to conjecture as to whether the time would ever come again when he should be free to roam at will through wood and meadow. Who can know, except the prisoner, how deep are his longings for liberty?

Ned was so absorbed in his own reflections, that he did not hear a voice which whispered his name softly—and more than once. At last his attention was arrested.

"Ned!"

Where *did* the sound come from? It was no gruff jailer's voice, certainly.

"Ah, thin, Ned, don't yer know yer friends when you hear them?"

He looked round, but could not see any one. The cell was small enough—no human being could, by any possibility, be hidden there. He looked up at the window: there was just light enough to distinguish a shadow, but no form could be seen, and again his own name was uttered in louder, but still cautious, tones. Clearly there was only one person who would have hazarded such an exploit, and that was Jack the Runner.

"For God's sake, Jack, what brought you there? You'd better be off quick, for if you're seen or heard, there'll be black work for us both."

"An' do ye think I be heedin' a trifle of danger, when there's a chance to set ye free? Look up, man, and we'll eate the peelers yet—here's a fine file," and he dropped it down noiselessly by a string through the window; "and here's a coil of rope, and you just work your way out, and there's thim will meet ye the night, at the risin' of the moon, and we'll clear off to Amerikey, an' the ould mother after ye. I can't stay, Ned, avic, for the hands scalded off me wid houndin' be the bars; but ye do my biddin', for that villain of an ould Coronel will have yez hanged dead at the 'Sizes, as sure as you're a living man."

Jack disappeared, as noiselessly as he came; and Ned sat still and thought. Here was a chance which certainly could never come again. In a few hours he might be free. At best, he could be but retaken; it would make his guilt greater, but what hope had he of an acquittal. He thought of the murderer's

doom—the doom which he felt almost certain would be his. It was true, Mr. O'Sullivan had promised to defend him; but what of that?—he knew he was already prejudged and precondemned in the minds of thousands. Had not the verdict at the inquest been against him, and would not that be, to many, sufficient proof of his crime? He thought of the condemned cell: he could well imagine its horrors. To see the sunset, and know each evening he was one day nearer his fearful death; to see the sunrise, and know that, after a few more such mornings, the morning would come which, for him, would have no earthly evening; when he would be dragged out into the glaring light of day, and stared by thousands who had come to see the murderer die. And then the death itself. Ned was a brave man: he would have faced any danger in the battle-field—any danger to save a human life—but this, this seemed too terrible; he had no nerve for this. He must, he must escape!—and the great, strong-limbed man, who could have mowed down his scores on the field of battle, buried his head in his hands, and sobbed aloud.

The tolling of a distant bell fell softly on his ear. Was it all a dream of horror? Was *that* the bell tolling to announce his death? Would the warders appear in a few moments to find him and lead him out? The memories of the past and present became confounded in his mind—as such memories will be when men have been long severed from their fellows in that most terrible of all punishments—solitary confinement. But with the sound of the bell, and the other thoughts, came words which sounded strangely familiar—strangely like a long forgotten melody, which a summer breath of air, a scent, a look, will sometimes recall.

"Hail Mary full of Grace."

And then—

"By His Passion and Cross."

He remembered it all now! When he was a little lad he used to go to the Nuns' School. One of the nuns had told him about it. She was a young, fair, bright girl, and he paused in his thoughts to recall her features. She had been to the Holy Land, and had visited all the holy places, and when the boys were good, she used to tell them stories of Jerusa-