

It was in these dark and loathesome places that the tyrant, Louis XI., imprisoned those whom he was desirous of destroying by protracted sufferings. Here, in dungeons, the bottoms of which were covered with sharp cones, that their feet might have no resting place nor their bodies any repose, were placed the Princes of Armagnac, who were taken out twice a week and scourged in the presence of the Governor of the Bastille. The eldest of the Princes went mad under this treatment, and the younger was released by the death of Louis. "It was from the petition of the Princes, published in 1483, that these dreadful truths were obtained, and could not have been believed or imagined with a less convincing proof."

The details of De Latude's escape from the Bastille in 1749 rival Monte Cristo's wonderful adventures at the Chateau D'If !

The early customs of the Bastille continued down to the last days of its existence. Long after the necessity of cruelty and persecution had ceased—if it ever was necessary—they were in vogue from force of habit in this horrible State prison.

* * * "Necessity, the tyrant's plea,
Excused his devilish deeds."

The occupation of the officials was mainly to interrogate and annoy the prisoners, to lay snares for them, and by the meanest artifices entrap them into confessions. They pretended to have proof of crime, would exhibit papers, but would not let their unhappy victims see them.

They were continually insulted in the grossest manner, caressed and menaced; every infliction was put upon the poor unfortunate creatures, until the once proud spirit became cowed and weak, and ready to snatch at any chance to say or do that which might be the means of gaining its dear liberty. "This torment went on from day to day, frequently ending in insanity or death."