

This convict had held his face into the iron cage so long that the narrow bars had imprinted their pattern upon his cheeks. His white breath streamed into the cold corridor as he put the question.

"Quit yer noise," growled the warder, who was, however, not unkindly disposed towards this particular prisoner. "If I have to report you, there'll be no outside for you to-night. Git away from that door. I'll knock when you're wanted."

The lifer across the way could be heard grovelling about his cell.

"The clock has stopped," whispered 430. "I swear it struck eleven an hour ago."

"It's near the half hour," said the warder. "Now don't speak to me again."

He resumed his march, and the prisoner's face, framed by the iron and wood, continued to stare into the gas-lit corridor, his eyes peering from side to side, and all his faculties painfully alert. He heard his neighbour gently tapping upon the divisional wall, trying to arrest his attention. He heard all the throbbing, moaning, restless voices of the great establishment which had wearied his ears with their awful monotony for so long. He smelt the depressing and distinctive prison odours, which had come very near to the stifling of his intellect. He felt the greasy stones grinding him in so closely, and saw the thick light stabbing through his wicket, and the hieroglyphics cut into the walls by former tenants of that cell, some of whom had left it as he would leave, some of whom had exchanged it for the nameless graveyard among the stone pits. He shuddered at the thought of that dismal yard, where the poor prisoners seemed to be still held in bond,