

the livelong night, wailed to the moon and only vanished when grey dawn disturbed them. Dark stories gathered above the empty War Prison, like crows around a corpse. Rumour hinted of secret graves and murders unrecorded and unguessed; the crypts gave up human bones to the searchers; unholy inscriptions and curses against a forgetful God stared out upon dark walls at the light of torches; signs of infamy, of evil, and of all the passion, agony and heartbreak of vanished thousands appeared; hoarded horrors came to light; a spirit of misery untold still haunted the mouldering limbo. Yet as time passed, the forces of Nature worked within these barred gates and toiled by day and night to sweeten and purify, to obliterate and cleanse. The west wind and the rain, the frost and the mist, the sunlight and the storm all laboured here. Torrents washed and hurricanes howled into every hole and alley; up-springing seeds and swelling mosses softened the old sentry-ways upon the ramparts; green things broke the cruel contours of the walls; rusting and shattered iron at a thousand windows grew red and dripped streaks of warm colour upon the weathered granite.

Now the War Prison has vanished, and its story is told. In the vast archives of human torment the narrative fills but a brief paragraph; and therein all that pitiful history, to the last secret tear and the last act of malice, to the last noble self-denial and unanswered prayer, is recorded, to endure for time.

Mr. Beer read his letter aloud after supper in the servants' hall.

"A very understanding man was Thomas Putt, though cunning an' tricky as a fox, as I always told him," declared Kekewich, from his seat beside the fire.

"An' larned to write since he went to America, seemingly," said Dinah Beer. "There was nought that chap couldn't reach when he gave his intellects to it."

"He starts off with some general good wishes for all the company at Fox Tor Farin an' his Uncle Bradridge, if we should chance to meet with him," began Beer. "Then he goes on upon affairs in general in these words."

Richard read from Putt's letter:—

"'An' I be glad I didn't marry Mason's sister to Chaggyford, for to be plain, there's better here, an' a man of sense can have his pick of very fine maidens. But I ban't going to rush at 'em.