

THE CORDS TIGHTEN

erated as the natural delusion of a madman. If I remonstrated at his keeping me there, if I made the faintest hint of resistance, there was, no doubt, a strait-jacket on the premises which they could rely on to bring me to terms.

And as for a chance of escape: I went to the window and tried to open it. The sash rose a scant six inches, and there was checked by a cunningly contrived lock. There was a guard outside my door. He was tramping up and down the corridor quite frankly, like a sentry on a beat.

Even supposing myself safely over the wall and on the highway, what chance had an absolutely penniless man, who knew neither who he was nor where he was, nor the name of one friend in all the world, what chance had he to remain more than a single night at liberty?

The sun was getting low when a faint clatter of dishes and a knock at the door announced supper. It was brought to me on a tray, daintily served, and was an appetizing repast.

"Well," thought I, "the doctor gave me one good piece of advice, anyway. I'll eat and I'll sleep; I'll keep my health and I'll do the best I can with my spirits."

For just a flicker there passed through my mind the notion that it was somewhat curious that the meal should show no traces of my recent fall to