

**THE CROSS IN THE CELL:
CONVERSATIONS WITH A
PRISONER WHILE AWAITING HIS
EXECUTION, BY A MINISTER OF
THE GOSPEL**

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The Cross in the Cell: Conversations with a Prisoner While Awaiting His Execution, by a
Minister of the Gospel by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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*CONVERSATIONS WITH A PRISONER WHILE
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BY A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.



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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

No trace of fiction will be found in this book. The conversations were noted down soon after each interview, chiefly to aid in the next conversation.

A veil is entirely drawn over the parties and individuals related to the prisoner and his transgression.

The cordial assent of those most interested has been given to this endeavor to employ a painful history in doing good. Chiefly to make it sure that the delicacy which is due to them has been fully regarded, the book has been submitted in manuscript to the two excellent Christian friends referred to in these pages as having also been conversant with the prisoner. Their recollections, as well as their judgment, greatly confirm the writer in making this narration.

These visits were undertaken by special request of the acting Chaplain of the Jail, a stranger,— who added to his request that of the prisoner, with the concurrence of the Sheriff in charge. It was a case in which no one would seek, nor could he properly shun, responsibility.

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THE CROSS IN THE CELL.

CHAPTER I.

“WHEN first I came

Within his view, I fancied there was shame;
I judged, resentment; I mistook the air;
These fainter passions live not with despair,
Or but exist and die. Hope, fear, and love,
Joy, doubt, and hate, may other spirits move,
But touch not his, who every waking hour
Has one fixed dread, and always feels its power.
He takes his tasteless food; and, when 'tis done,
Counts up his meals now lessened by that one;
For expectation is on time intent,
Whether he brings us joy or punishment.”

CRABBE'S TALES.—*The Dream of the Condemned.*

BARS of iron ran along over the tops of the doors in the rows of cells, each bar thirty feet in length. By a single turn of the hand at the corner of each passage-way, all the cells in that row were fastened.

The turning back of one of these bars at the

gate-way was the preliminary act of admission to the neighborhood of the prisoner. The courteous turnkey asks you to wait a moment while he precedes you, and, stopping at the door of a cell, he inquires if the visitor may come in. The key is then applied to the grated door, a word of introduction is given, the visitor enters and looks for the first time upon a face which, with the first impression made by it, is never to fade away from his memory. The door is then locked from the outside, with the information that the prisoner will rap on the grating when the visitor wishes to retire.

The sensation of being locked in absorbs the thoughts for a few moments. A feeling somewhat like the approach of suffocation comes over you. What if one of those sudden turns of nervous apprehension, such as invalids in a congregation sometimes have under a sense of being hemmed in by a multitude, should seize you? Instant escape is impossible. And you are, for the time, the prisoner's prisoner; many improbable things may happen to him, and very suddenly. But these feelings, coming and