**Newgate Gaol – Anonymous**

Strong and stony as the prison seems to passers-by, it looks much stonier and stronger to the men who enter it. The multiplicity of heavy walls, of iron gates and doorways; of huge locks, of bolts, spikes and bars of every imaginable shape and size, make of the place a very nightmare dungeon. I followed the gruff under- warden, through some dark and chilly vaulted passages, now turning to the right, now to the left. We crossed a large hall, in the centre of which is a glass room for the use of prisoners when they are giving instructions to their lawyers […].

Still following; I was led into another large recess or chamber, on one side of which was a huge boiler with a furnace glowing under it, and on another side a large stone bath. On the third wall there were a couple of round towels on a roller, with a wooden bench beneath them.

"Stop," cried the warden, "take your clothes off." I hesitated. "Take off your clothes, do you hear?" My clothes were soon laid on the bench, and a hot bath filled, and I went in. The officer had then his opportunity of taking up my garments one by one, searching their pockets and their linings, feeling them about and holding them against the light. My boots appeared to be especially suspicious. After he had put his hands into them, he thumped them violently on the stone floor; but there rolled nothing out.

Having bathed, I was led down another passage, at the end of which were two gratings of iron bars, closely woven over with wire-work, distant about two feet from each other. Unlocking both he pushed me through, and started me up two or three steps into a square court-yard, where there was a man walking to and fro very violently. After shouting "One in!" he locked the two gratings, and retreated rapidly in the direction of his dinner. Another warden with a bunch of keys came from a gloomy building that formed one side of the court. "Go up," he said to the pedestrian; who disappeared up a staircase instantly.

"Where from?" the jailor asked me, and "What are you here for?" Being replied to on these points, he said shortly, “Come this way.” He led up the dark stone staircase to a corridor with cells on one side, having iron doors to them a foot or more in thickness. One of these cells was to be mine. Venturing as I went in to ask "Whether I might be allowed to walk in the yard when I pleased?” he answered sharply, “You'll just please to walk where and when you're told." He slammed the door, bolted it, locked and padlocked it.

The cell was about eight feet by four, lighted by a Ioophole above eye-level. It contained, besides an iron bedstead with a straw mattress and two coarse rugs upon it, an uncomfortable stool and a slanting reading-desk fastened to the wall, on which were a Bible, a prayer-book, and hymn-book. Alone for the first time since my apprehension, I stretched myself upon the bed; and, with my hands over my eyes endeavoured to collect my thoughts.

I was soon aroused by the undoing of bolts and bars below, while a stentorian\* voice shouted from the yard, "All — down!" I heard the cell doors being opened in the corridor; and, in due turn mine was flung open, and the jailor looked in. The impression my body had left upon the rugs enraged him dreadfully. "What," he cried, almost in a scream, "you've been a lying on that 'ere bed, have you! You just let me catch you on it again till night, that's all!"

"Oh," I said soothingly, "I didn't know. Now that I do know, I will not lie down again."

"If I find you on it again I'll have you up before the governor or stop your supper. That's all. Go down."

\* **stentorian** – loud, powerful, booming (describing a voice)