

TO ALL THE DEAR ONES OUTSIDE.

By John Boyle O'Reilly.

From *The Life of John Boyle O'Reilly*, 1891, by James Jeffrey Roche.

While he (O'Reilly) lay, awaiting sentence, in Arbor Hill Prison, Dublin, in 1866, he wrote as follows concerning the first of those cruelties inflicted on his boyish fellow-rebel, in a letter (worth quoting at length) which he had smuggled out of prison, and addressed:

TO ALL THE DEAR ONES OUTSIDE.

Not a word yet—not even a hint of what my doom is to be; but whatever it may be I'm perfectly content. God's will be done. It has done me good to be in prison; there is more to be learned in a solitary cell than any other place in the world—a true knowledge of one's self. I send you a note I got from Tom Chambers. Poor fellow, he's the truest-hearted Irishman I ever met. What a wanton cruelty it was to brand him with the letter D, and be doomed a felon for life. Just imagine the torture of stabbing a man over the heart with an awl, and forming a D two inches long and half an inch thick, and then rubbing in Indian ink. He was ordered that for deserting. His brother was nearly mad, and no wonder. McCarthy has been sentenced in Mountjoy to fourteen days on bread and water and solitary confinement for some breach of the prison rules. I know this for a fact. Here in this prison every one is very kind to me, from chief warden down to the lowest. Tom calls his brother the 'mad b,' so that if our letters were found they would not know who was meant. But lately we are not very cautious—let them find them if they like—they cannot give us any more. Harrington, of the Sixty-first, and I will receive our sentence on the same day. He's an old soldier was taken for desertion...

They told those poor cowardly hounds who *did* inform, that Chambers and I were going to give evidence against them—so as to

frighten them into giving evidence against us. This has been done by officers and gentlemen! Well, even if we never see home or friends again, we are ten thousand times happier than any such hounds can ever be. When we go to our prisons and all suspense is over, we will be quite happy. Never fret for me, whatever I get. Please God, in a few years I will be released and even if prevented from coming to Ireland will be happy yet. And if not, God's holy will be done. Pray for me and for us all. It would grieve you to hear the poor fellows here talking. At night they knock on the wall as a signal to each other to pray together for their country's freedom. Men, who a few months ago were careless, thoughtless soldiers, are now changed into true, firm patriots, however humble. They never speak on any other subject, and all are perfectly happy to suffer for old Ireland.