A PRISON CHAPLAIN ON DARTMOOR

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A prison chaplain on Dartmoor by Clifford Rickards

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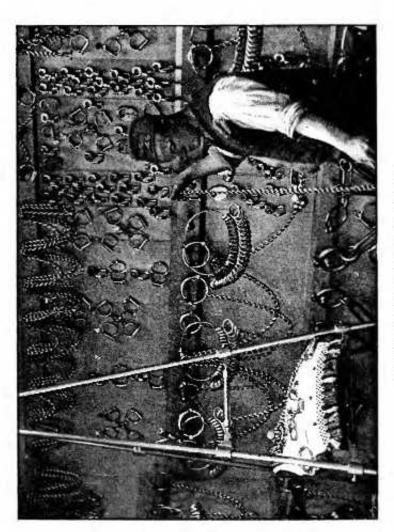
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CLIFFORD RICKARDS

A PRISON CHAPLAIN ON DARTMOOR



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THE CHAIN ROOM, DARFROOR PRISON

A PRISON CHAPLAIN ON DARTMOOR

Univ. of California

THE REV. CLIFFORD RICKARDS, B.A.

WITH FRONTISPIECE.

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PREFACE.

In writing the following reminiscences of my twenty-five years' experiences in the Prison on Dartmoor I have had two objects in view: first, to interest my readers and excite their sympathy for a class of men who, although they are criminals, are not without their good points, as some of them have recently shown by their conduct in the late war. I was talking lately to an officer who was engaged in much of the heaviest fighting, and he told me that he had two ex-convicts in his company who were conspicuous by their bravery and readiness to volunteer for any dangerous duty. My second object is my own pleasure in recalling and transcribing the various incidents which, although now ancient history, are still vivid and interesting to me, as I hope the reading of them may be They are all at least true, and if to others. there are no revelations of secrets hidden behind prison walls it is simply because no such secrets exist, or if they do they are unknown to me.

For twenty-five years, day by day, and often all day long, I was in and out of the prison, in closest contact with warders and prisoners, and only on two or three occasions did I witness anything that called for interference. Sometimes the tact and good temper of the warders under most trying and provocative circumstances was surprising; but let the men speak for themselves in the following pages.

A very learned lawyer, on leaving the Law Courts, used to say, "That poor wretch who has just been sentenced might have been a better man than I if he had had my opportunities;" or, as our great poet writes, "If we all had our deserts, who would escape the whipping?"

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