***The Bet***

IT WAS a dark auumn night. The old banker was waling up and down his study and remmbering how, fifteen years before, he had given a party one autmn evening. Thee had been many clever men there, and there had been interesting conversations.

1

2

Among other things they had talked of captal punishment. The majority of the guests amng whom were many journalists and intellectual men, disaproved of the death penalty. They considered that form of punishment out of date, immoral, and unsuitable for Christan States. In the opinion of some of them the death penalty ought to be replaed everywhere by imprisonment for life.

"I don't agree with you," said their host the banker. "I have not tred either the death penalty or imprisoment for life, but if one may judge a priori, the death pealty is more moral and more humane than impisonment for life.

3

Capital punihment kills a man at once, but lifelong imprisnment kills him slowly. Which executioner is the more huane, he who kills you in a few minues or he who drags the life out of you in the course don't agree with you of many years".

4

"Both are equally immoal," observed one of the guests, "for they both have the same object to take away life. The State is not God. It has not the rigt to take ay what it canot retore when it wa to."

5

6

Among the guests was a young lawer, a young man of five-and-twenty. When he was asked his opinion, he said: "The death sentence nd the life sentence are eqully immoral, but if I had to choose between the death penalty and imprisoment for life, I would certainly chse the second. To live anyhow is better tan not at all."

A lively discusion arose. The banker, who was youger and more nervous in those days, was sudenly carried away by excitement; he struck the table with his fist and shouted at the young man: "It's not true! I'll bet you two millions you wouln't stay in solitary confinement for five years." "If you mean that in earnest," said the young man, "I'll take the bet, but I could stay not five but fifteen years." "Fifteen? Doe!" cried the banker. "Gentlemen, I stake two millions!" "Agreed! You stke your million and I stake my freedm!" said the young man.

7

8

And this wild, senseless bet was carried out! The banker, spoilt and frivolous, with millions beyond his reckoning, was delighted at the bet.