

# MY STRANGE IMPRISONMENT

W. E. BELLIVEAU\*

DO you know what it is to be a prisoner, to be locked in hour after hour, day and night, never seeing anyone or anything? I have been through this experience, and in telling about it I will be relating my strangest experience.

I am not sure of the exact date of my imprisonment because I was in a very weakened condition at the time. My first recollections date back to six months before my release when I became aware of the fact that I was not free to move as I desired; indeed, I was so confined that I was forced to double myself up in my all too cramped quarters. As I bemoaned this aspect, little did I realize that one day before I was released I would pray for as much room as I had at this time. My quarters—I cannot give an accurate description of them because all the time I was imprisoned I was kept in total darkness. However, by exploring with my hands I came to the conclusion that I must have been in a cave or some kind of recess designed for the purpose of keeping prisoners safely.

One of the peculiar things about my imprisonment is that I have no memory of seeing guards, fellow prisoners or anything else human. At first I enjoyed this solitude because it gave me ample time to do much thinking. In time, though, my mind became stagnant, and the desire to speak grew to the point of being an obsession. When I was almost insane from this lack of companionship, I hit upon what I thought was a very brilliant idea: I would speak to myself! Imagine my surprise and chagrin when I discovered that I was unable to speak. No matter how hard I tried, I found that I could utter absolutely no sound. I was seized with a sudden panic and immediately tried to beat my way out of my "cell". It was at this moment that I realized how well-constructed and ingeniously guarded my prison was. No amount of kicking made any impression on the walls, and the harder I kicked the less room I seemed to have. Did I say my mind had gone stagnant? If so, I was wrong, because it did not take me long to realize that so long as I continued my kicking my prison would remain in its shrunken condition. At various times until my release I tried kicking, but always with the same result—that terrible pressure that I had come to know and fear was applied.

\*Veteran, and undergraduate in Dalhousie University.

Perhaps the reader is wondering by now why I had been imprisoned and secondly, how I was being fed. Even to this day I do not know the answer to the first mystery and am not quite sure of the answer to the second. Although I have absolutely no memories of eating during the entire time of my incarceration, I am sure I must have eaten at some time because I was putting on weight continually. Perhaps some day I will know the answer to these two mysteries, but when I do know, it will be written as an entirely different and new story.

My release came about rather suddenly and is perhaps the strangest part of this tale. My first inkling that something unusual was happening was when I realized that my prison walls were closing in on me quite frequently for no apparent reason. Suddenly, for the first time, light entered my prison; I was unable to see anything, but I knew there was light entering in the same way that a partially blind man can tell the difference between night and day. I became panicky—was I going to be moved, tortured, or at long last, was I going to be released? In the midst of these thoughts a hand seized me and started pulling me towards the source of light. All reason disappeared and I started to fight, but it was useless; despite the fact that I had grown stronger during my imprisonment I was powerless in that seemingly terrible hand. In a short time I was hauled completely out of my prison home of so many months. Dimly I could hear voices, and then there was a sharp pain in my stomach, followed by a peculiar knotty feeling. Just as I was becoming accustomed to this odd sensation I was struck violently on the back and, miracle of miracles, I yelled! This was the first sound I had uttered since my imprisonment, and almost immediately following the yell I heard the words that ended my strangest experience: "Mrs. Belliveau, you are the mother of an eight pound baby boy!"