

# For The Term of His Natural Life

By MARCUS CLARKE

## CHAPTER XXIII.—(Continued.)

The experienced convict disciplinarian did not rate the ability of John Rex highly enough. From the instant the convict had heard his sentence of life banishment, he had determined upon escaping, and had brought all the powers of his acute and unscrupulous intellect to the consideration of the best method of achieving his purpose. His pretended piety had accomplished the end he had assumed it for. He had won the confidence of Meekin; and into that worldly creature's ear he poured a strange and sad history. He was the son, he said, of a clergyman of the Church of England, whose real name, such was his reverence for the cloth, should never pass his lips. He was transported for a forgery which he did not commit. Sarah Purfoy was his wife. She, an innocent and trusting girl, had determined to follow her husband to his place of doom, and had hired herself as lady's maid to Mrs. Vickers. "My great sorrow is for the poor woman. She is in Sydney, I have heard, and my heart bleeds for her." Here Rex heaved a sigh that would have made his fortune on the boards.

"You might write to her."  
"You know the orders, sir—the commandant reads all the letters sent. Could I write to my poor Sarah what other eyes were to read?" and he watched the parson slyly.

"No, you could not," said Meekin, at last.

The next day Meekin, blushing with the consciousness that what he was about to do was wrong, said to his penit, "If you will promise to write nothing that the commandant might not see, Rex, I will send your letter to your wife."

"Heaven bless you, sir!" said Rex, and took two days to compose an epistle which should tell Sarah Purfoy how to act. The letter was a model of composition in one way. It stated everything clearly and succinctly. Not a detail that could assist was omitted, not a line that could embarrass was suffered to remain. John Rex's scheme of six months' deliberation was set down in the clearest possible manner. He brook his letter unsealed to Meekin. Meekin looked at it with an interest that was half suspicious. "Have I your word that there is nothing in this that might not be read by the commandant?"

John Rex was a bold man, but at the sight of the deadly thing fluttering open in the clergyman's hand his knees knocked together. Strong in his knowledge of human nature, however, he pursued his desperate plan. "Read it, sir," he said, turning away his face reproachfully. "You are a gentleman. I can trust you."

"No, Rex," said Meekin, walking loftily into the pitfall; "I do not read private letters." It was sealed, and John Rex felt as if somebody had withdrawn a match from a powder barrel.

In a month Mr. Meekin received a letter, beautifully written, from "Sarah Rex," stating briefly that she had heard of his goodness; that the inclosed letter was for her husband, and that, if it was against the rules to give it him, she begged it might be returned to her unread. Of course, Meekin gave it to Rex, who next morning handed to Meekin a most touching and pious production, begging him to read it. Meekin did so, and any suspicion he may have had were at once disarmed. He was ignorant of the fact that the pious letter contained a private one, intended for John Rex only, which letter John Rex thought so highly of that, having read it twice through most attentively, he ate it.

to urge his fellow-prisoner to abscond with him, John Rex gradually found himself attracted into something like friendliness by the sternness with which his overtures were repelled.

"Have you no friends whom you wish to see?" he asked, one evening, when Rufus Dawes had proved more than usually deaf to his arguments.

"No," said Dawes, gloomily. "My friends are all dead to me."

"What, all?" asked the other. "Most men have some one whom they wish to see."

"I have resolved. I stay here."

"And leave your innocence unproved!"

"How can I prove it?" cried Rufus Dawes, roughly impatient. "There are crimes committed which are never brought to light, and this is one of them."

"Well," said Rex, as if weary of the discussion, "have it your own way, then. You know best. The private detective game is hard work. I, myself, have gone on a wild goose chase before now. There's a mystery about a certain shipbuilder's son which took me four months to unravel, and then I lost the thread."

"A shipbuilder's son! Who was he?" John Rex paused in wonderment at the eager interest with which the question was put, and then hastened to take advantage of this new opening for conversation. "A queer story. A well-known character in my time—Sir Richard Devine. A miserly old curmudgeon, with a scape-grace son."

Rufus Dawes bit his lips to avoid showing his emotion. This was the second time that the name of his dead father had been spoken in his hearing. "I think I remember something of him," he said, with a voice that sounded strangely calm in his own ears.

"A curious story," said Rex, plunging into past memories. "Among other matters, I dabbled a little in the private inquiry line of business, and the old man came to me. He had a son who had gone abroad—a wild young dog, by all accounts—and he wanted particulars of him."

"Did he get them?"

"To a certain extent. I hunted him through Paris into Brussels, from Brussels to Antwerp, from Antwerp back to Paris. I lost him there. A miserable end to a long and expensive search. I got nothing but a portmanteau with a lot of letters from his mother. I sent the particulars to the shipbuilder, and by all accounts the news killed him, for he died not long after."

"And the son?"

"Came to the queerest end of all. The old man had left him his fortune—a large one, I believe—but he'd left Europe, it seems, for India, and was lost in the Hydaspes. Frere was his cousin."

"Ah!"

"It annoys me when I think of it," continued Rex. "With the resources I had, too! Oh, a miserable failure! The days and nights I've spent walking about looking for Richard Devine, and never catching a glimpse of him! The old man gave me his son's portrait, with full particulars of his early life, and I suppose I carried that ivory gimcrack in my breast pocket for nearly three months, pulling it out to refresh my memory every half-hour. If the young gentleman was anything like his picture, I could have sworn to him if I'd met him in Timbuctoo."

"Do you think you'd know him again?" asked Rufus Dawes, in a low voice, turning away his head.

There may have been something in the attitude in which the speaker had put himself that awakened memory, or perhaps the subdued eagerness of the tone, contrasting so strangely with the comparative inconsequence of the theme, had caused John Rex's brain to perform one of those feats of automatic synthesis at which we afterward wonder. The profligate son—the likeness to the portrait—the mystery of Dawes' life! These were the links of a galvanic chain. He closed the circuit, and a vivid flash revealed to him—the Man.

Warder Troke coming up, put his hand on Rex's shoulder. "Dawes," he said, "you're wanted at the yard;" and then, seeing his mistake, added, with a grin, "Curse you two; you're so much alike one can't tell 't'other from which."

Rufus Dawes walked off moodily; but John Rex's evil face turned pale, and a strange hope made his heart leap.

"Troke's right, we are alike. I'll not press him to escape any more."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

The Pretty Mary—as ugly and evil-smelling a tub as ever pitched under a southerly burster—had been lying on and off Cape Surville for nearly three weeks. Captain Blunt was getting wearied. He made strenuous efforts to find the oyster beds of which he was ostensibly in search, but no success attended his efforts. In vain did he take boat, and pull into every cove and nook between the Hoppolyte Reef and Scouten Island. In vain did he run Pretty Mary as near to the rugged cliffs as he dared to take her, and make perpetual expeditions to the shore. In vain did he—in his eagerness for the interests of Mrs. Purfoy—clamber up the rocks, and spend hours in solitary soundings in Blackman's Bay. He never found an oyster. "If I don't find something in three or four days more," said he to his mate, "I shall go back again. It's too dangerous cruising here."

man at Signal Hill saw the arms of the semaphore at the settlement make three motions thus:

The semaphore was furnished with three revolving arms, fixed one above the other. The upper one denoted units, and had six motions, indicating one to six. The middle one denoted tens, ten to sixty. The lower one marked hundreds, from one hundred to six hundred.

The lower and upper arms whirled out. That meant three hundred and six. A ball ran up to the top of the post. That meant one thousand.

Number 1306, or, being interpreted, "Prisoners Absconded."

"There's a bolt," said Jones, the signalman.

The semaphore signaled again—"Number 1411."

"With arms!" Jones said, translating as he read. "Come here, Harry! here's a go!"

But Harry did not reply, and, looking down, the watchman saw a dark figure suddenly fill the doorway. The boasted semaphore had failed this time, at all events. The "bolters" had arrived as soon as the signal!

The man sprang at his carbine, but the intruder had already possessed himself of it. "It's no use making a fuss, Jones! There are eight of us. Oblige me by attending to your signals."

Jones knew the voice. It was that of John Rex. "Reply, can't you?" said Rex, coolly. "Captain Burgess is in a hurry. The arms of the semaphore at the settlement were, in fact, gesticulating with comical vehemence."

Jones took the strings in his hands, and, with his signal book open before him, was about to acknowledge the message, when Rex stopped him. "Send this message," he said. "Not seen! Signal sent to Eaglehawk!"

Jones paused irresolutely. He was himself a convict, and dreaded the inevitable cat that he knew would follow this false message. "If they find me out—" he said. Rex cocked the carbine with so decided a meaning in his black eyes that Jones banished his hesitation at once and began to signal eagerly. There came up a clinking of metal and a murmur from below. "What's keeping yer, Dandy?"

"All right. Get those irons off, and then we'll talk, boys. I'm putting salt on old Burgess' tail." The rough jest was received with a roar, and Jones, looking momentarily down from his window on the staging, saw, in the waning light, a group of men freeing themselves from their irons with a hammer taken from the guard house; while two, already freed, were casting buckets of water on the beacon woodpile. The sentry was lying bound at a little distance.

"Now," said the leader of this surprise party, "signal to Woody Island." Jones perforce obeyed. "Say, 'An escape at the mines! Watch One-tree Point! Send on to Eaglehawk!' Quick, now."

Jones, comprehending the force of this maneuver, which would have the effect of distracting attention from the Neck, executed the order with a grin. "You're a knowing one, Dandy Jack," said he.

John Rex acknowledged the compliment by uncocking the carbine. "Hold out your hands! Jemmy Vetch! Come up, and tie our friend Jones. Gabbett, have you got the axes?" "There's only one," said Gabbett. "Then bring that, and any tucker you can lay your hands on. Have you tied him? On we go, then." And in the space of five minutes from the time when unsuspecting Harry had been silently clutched by two forms, who rushed upon him out of the shadow of the huts, the Signal Hill station was deserted.

At the settlement Burgess was foaming. Nine men to seize the Long Bay boat, and get half an hour's start of the alarm signal was an unprecedented achievement! What could Warder Troke have been about? Warder Troke, however, found eight hours afterward, disarmed, gagged and bound in the scrub, had been guilty of no negligence. How could he tell, that at a certain signal from Dandy Jack, the nine men he had taken to Stewart's Bay would "rush" him; and, before he could draw a pistol, truss him like a chicken? The worst of the gang, Rufus Dawes, had volunteered for the hated duties of pile driving, and Troke had felt himself secure. How could he possibly guess that there was a plot in which Rufus Dawes, of all men, had refused to join?

Constables, mounted and on foot, were dispatched to scour the bush round the settlement. Burgess, confident, from the reply of the Signal Hill semaphore, that the alarm had been given at Eaglehawk isthmus, promised himself the recapture of the gang before many hours; and giving orders to keep the communications going, retired to dinner. His convict servant had barely removed the soup when the result of John Rex's ingenuity became manifest. The semaphore at Signal Hill had stopped working.

"Perhaps the fools can't see," said Burgess. "Fire the beacon—and saddle my horse." The beacon was fired. All right at Mount Arthur, Mount Communication, and the coal mines. To the westward, the line was clear. But at Signal Hill was no answering light. Burgess stamped with rage. "Get me my boat's crew ready; and tell the mines to signal to Woody Island." As he stood on the jetty, a breathless messenger brought the reply. "A boat's crew to One-tree Point! Five men sent from Eaglehawk in obedience to orders!" Burgess understood it at once. The fellows had decoyed the Eaglehawk guard. "Give way, men!" And the boat shooting into the darkness, made for Long Bay. "I won't be far behind 'em," said the commandant, "at any rate."

(To be continued.)

A debt is adored by payment.

# Cour of Europe

A person starting from New York City on a tour of Europe has much to anticipate and considerable to regret. It is in the great eastern metropolis that true American life in its fullness is attractively and strikingly depicted. The buildings, the environment, are not particularly picturesque, but the rush of business, the crowds of people suggest a restless perpetual activity that will not be met with anywhere in the old countries. The people are well-dressed and good-looking, and it will



STARTING ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.

Interest the tourist to recall, when he reaches the other side of the ocean, that all of them wear hats, and pretty ones, except perhaps an occasional beggar, or a foreigner with a shawl upon her head, who is selling crocheted laces from a basket. Another fact to be remembered is that our American policemen walk one by one, while in Italy they will be found always marching about in twos. The skyscrapers are of course a distinctive feature. There is not anything like them in Europe, one group covering the most valuable ten-acre lot in the world.

The initial prospect of the steamer that is to give the tourist his first run from home is not particularly attractive. The great ship does not look enticing in the docks. The sailors make a great task of cleaning it up after coaling, and everything is in confusion over the handling of freight and baggage. The place is noisy, too, and the staterooms are close and musty, redolent of odors of the wharf. The best friend to make at starting is the deck steward, who is always pleased to advise the inexperienced traveler where he will most enjoy sitting on deck during the voyage. This is the more important, because one's first choice of a place will hold throughout the trip at sea.

The great hour comes when the steamer leaves its wharf, and the tourist realizes that he is off for Europe. The crowds on the docks below wave their hats, handkerchiefs and parasols in adieu, and the big ship moves slowly away from American shores. In many instances the tourist is fulfilling the cherished dream of years, and, although it involves partings and heartaches and personal separations, it means a strong and striking beginning of entirely new things. But anxiety, nervousness and impatience gradually wear off, and all eyes turn from the

## MINUTE MEASUREMENTS.

Apparatus that Measures One-Seventy-Millionth of an Inch.

Dr. P. E. Shaw, of the University College, Nottingham, England, after five years' labor, has completed an apparatus making it possible to measure one-seventy-millionth part of an inch, says the New York Post. Consul Mahlin writes that the invention consists of a very fine micrometer screw and a series of six levers acting in conjunction with it which must be suspended by rubber bands from a specially made frame and inclosed in a box. The frame is placed in a vault under the university and surrounded with every safeguard against friction and vibration, "but even then," says Dr. Shaw, "it is impossible to carry out experiments to be successful while there is traffic in the streets. Every factory, too, where motive power is employed must be closed, even if it is some distance away." Even a draft is said to be fatal to the successful measurement of such minute quantities as one-seventy-millionth part of an inch. Dust must also be kept from the vault, and it is said that even the buzzing of an ordinary fly has made it necessary to suspend experiments till the insect had been disposed of.

The apparatus, it is claimed, could be made specially serviceable in measuring engineering gauges. It is broadly asserted that all scientists recognize that Dr. Shaw has succeeded in surpassing every other form of measurement on gauges in delicacy and accuracy.

jagged skyline of New York and look toward Europe.

The steamer passes beneath Barthold's statue of Liberty, the copper bronze of which shines brightly in the sunlight, and then skirts Governor's Island, with its old military museum. This was put into practical use seven years ago, when war stared us in the face. Within ten days the tourist may look upon the coast lines of our Spanish enemies of that recent, though now rarely thought of hour. The enormous steamship puts out to sea, a proud Titan of the deep. It is a far cry from Robert Fulton's steamboat of 1807, wherein he made a Hudson river trip of 110 miles in twenty-four hours, to the amazement of every one who heard of the exploit. It is reassuring to consider that specialization of ocean industry has minimized the perils of sea travel, especially with the improvement of submarine signals and perfection of wireless telegraphy. To-day it is less hazardous to cross the Atlantic in an up-to-date steamship than it is to cross the American continent by rail.

The usual seasickness, a sharp lookout for icebergs, the routine of the three great events on shipboard, breakfast, luncheon and dinner, guessing on the day's run—all these lead up finally to the first sight of new land off St. Michael's, of the Azores. Gray masses of rock seem to rise out of the sea, but as the haze lifts the indefinite mass resolves itself into outlines of villages, fruitful lands, marked out by hedges, windmills, solitary houses, gray cliffs. All about are little fishing boats manned by Portuguese fishermen from the islands. Puente Delgada is the most noticeable of the towns, being Spanish in appearance, and its old houses of stone and colored plaster have taken on exquisitely mellowed tints.

The next land is Cadiz, "the white city of Spain," which rises out of the



ARRIVAL AT GIBRALTAR.

sea like an edifice of dreamland. At first it is like a low-lying cloud, gradually pierced by towers and domes, and then the entire beautiful prospect. Not far from this city is Palos, whence Columbus sailed for the unknown west, and Huelva, where the great statue to the discoverer of America stands. Behind them, further inland, are the snow-topped Sierras.

The tourist looks back towards his native land with the feeling that it is very far away, indeed. He has crossed the broad Atlantic, and just ahead are the straits of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, giving a nearer glimpse of the actual castles in Spain.

There are said to be many other uses for it; for instance, that it will act as a most delicate coherer for wireless telegraphy and will promote the study of nature and possibly of the movements of the molecules of matter.

Dr. Shaw is still improving his apparatus in the hope of measuring quantities still more minute. The general principle of the method is electric touch. This explanation is given: "If two surfaces, clean and polished, come in contact the current can at once be made to pass through them and excite a telephone or other sensitive recorder. Previously, it has been impossible to measure the sparking gap of an electric current of less than thirty-eight volts, but with Dr. Shaw's apparatus a sparking gap of half a volt can be measured. If physicists desire to understand and explain nature's happenings it is imperative that there should be exact measurements of very small lengths, and of extremely minute articles. Seeing that nature deals in such small quantities it is useless to attempt to unravel her secrets without the finest instruments."

## Information Wanted.

Nell—I've got a new way to tell a person's age.  
Belle—Is that so. Will you tell any one's age?  
Nell—Yes.  
Belle—Tell me yours, then?—Catholic Standard and Times.  
What man has done woman thinks she is qualified to improve upon.