

For The Term of His Natural Life

By MARCUS CLARKE

CHAPTER V.

In the prison of the 'tween-decks reigned a darkness pregnant with murmurs. The sentry at the entrance to the hatchway was supposed to "prevent the prisoners from making a noise," but he put a very liberal interpretation upon the clause, and so long the prisoners refrained from shouting, yelling and fighting he did not disturb them.

To one coming in from the upper air, the place would have seemed in pitchy darkness; but the convict eye, accustomed to the sinister twilight, was enabled to discern surrounding objects with tolerable distinctness. The prison was about fifty feet long and fifty feet wide, and ran the full height of the 'tween-decks. The barricade was loop-holed here and there, and the planks were in some places wide enough to admit a musket barrel. On the aft side, next the soldiers' berths, was a trap door, like the stove-hole of a furnace. At first sight this appeared to be contrived for the humane purpose of ventilation, but a second glance dispelled this weak conclusion. The opening was just large enough to admit the muzzle of a small howitzer, secured on the deck below. In case of a mutiny, the soldiers could sweep the prison from end to end with grapeshot. Such fresh air as there was, filtered through the loop-holes, and came, in somewhat larger quantity, through a wind-sail passed into the prison from the hatchway. But the wind-sail being necessarily at one end only of the place, the air it brought was pretty well absorbed by the twenty or thirty lucky fellows near it, and the other hundred and fifty did not come so well off. The scuttles were open, but as the row of bunks had been built against them, the air they brought was the peculiar property of such men as occupied the berths into which they penetrated. These berths were twenty-eight in number, each containing six men. They ran in a double tier round three sides of the prison, twenty at each side, and eight affixed to that portion of the forward barricade opposite the door. Each berth was presumed to be five feet six inches square, but the necessities of stowage had deprived them of six inches, and even under that pressure twelve men were compelled to sleep on deck.

When Frere had come down, an hour before, the prisoners were all snugly between their blankets. They were not so now; though, at the first clink of the bolts, they would be back again in their old positions, to all appearances sound asleep. Groups of men, in all imaginable attitudes, were lying, standing, sitting or pacing up and down.

"Old men, young men and boys, stalwart burglars and highway robbers, slept side by side with wizened pickpockets or cunning-featured card sneaks. The forger occupied the same berth with the body snatcher. The man of education learned strange secrets of house breakers' craft, and the vulgar ruffian took lessons of self-control from the keener intellect of the professional swindler. The fraudulent clerk and the flash "crackman" interchanged experiences. The smuggler's stories of lucky adventures and successful runs were capped by the footpad's reminiscences of foggy nights and stolen watches. The poacher, grimly thinking of his sick wife and orphaned children, would start as the night-house ruffian clapped him on the shoulder and bid him to take good heart and "be a man." The shop boy, whose love of fine company and high living had brought him to this pass, had shakened off the first shame that was on him, and listened eagerly to the narratives of successful vice that fell so glibly from the lips of his older companions. To be transported seemed no such uncommon fate. The old fellows laughed, and wagged their gray heads with all the glee of past experience, and listening youth longed for the time when it might do likewise. Society was the common foe, and magistrates, jailers and parsons were the natural prey of all noteworthy mankind. Only fools were honest, only cowards kissed the rod, and failed to meditate revenge on that world of respectability which had wronged them. Each newcomer was one more recruit to the ranks of ruffianism, and not a man penned in that reeking den of infamy but became a sworn hater of law, order and "freemen." What he might have been before mattered not. He was now a prisoner, and he lost his self-respect, and became what his jailers took him to be—a wild beast to be locked under bolts and bars, lest he should break out and tear them. The conversation ran upon the sudden departure of the four. What could they want with them at that hour?

"I tell you there's something up on deck," says one to the group nearest him. "Don't you hear all that rumbling and rolling?"

"What did they lower boats for? I heard the dip of the oars."

"Ain't a cove to get no sleep?" cried a gruff voice. "My blood, if I have to turn out, I'll knock some of your empty heads together."

It seemed that the speaker was a man of mark, for the noise ceased instantly. "Wot's the matter?" roared the silence of the riot, jumping from his berth and scattering the Crow and his companions right and left.

Just then there came a groan from the man in the opposite bunk.

"Well, I'm blessed!" said the giant. "Here's a pretty go! All the blessed chickens ha' got the croup! Sentry, here's a man sick."

But the prudent sentry answered never a word, until the ship's bell warned him of the approach of the relief guard; and then honest old Pine, coming with anxious face to inquire after his charge, received the intelligence that there was another prisoner sick. He had the door unlocked, and the man outside in an instant. One look at the flushed, anxious face was enough.

"Who's that moaning in there?" he asked.

It was the man who had tried to call for the sentry an hour back, and Pine had him out also, conviction beginning to wonder a little.

"Take 'em both aft to the hospital,"

he said; "and, Jenkins, if there are any more men taken sick, let them pass the word for me at once. I shall be on deck."

The guards stared in each other's faces with some alarm, but said nothing, thinking more of the burning ship, which now flamed furiously across the placid water, than of peril nearer home; but as Pine went up the hatchway he met Blunt.

"We've got the fever aboard! Head like a fire-ball, and tongue like a strip of leather. Don't I know it?" and Pine grinned, mournfully. "I've got him moved into the hospital. Hospital! As dark as a wolf's mouth. I've seen dog-kennels I liked better."

Blunt nodded toward the volume of lurid smoke that rolled up out of the glow. "Suppose there is a shipload there? I can't refuse to take 'em in."

"No," says Pine, gloomily. "I suppose you can't. If they come, I must stow 'em somewhere. We'll have to run for the Cape, with the first breeze, if they do come; that is all I can see for it." And he turned away to watch the burning vessel.

In the meanwhile the two boats made straight for the red column that uprose like a gigantic torch over the silent sea. The pull was a long and a weary one. Once fairly away from the protecting sides of the vessel that had borne them thus far on their dismal journey, the adventurers seemed to have come into a new atmosphere. The immensity of the ocean over which they slowly moved revealed itself for the first time.

The great sky uprose from this silent sea without a cloud. The stars hung low in its expanse, burning in a violet mist of lower ether. The heavens were emptied of sound, and each dip of the oars was re-echoed in space by a succession of subtle harmonies. As the blades struck the dark water, it flashed fire, and the tracks of the boats resembled two sea snakes writhing with silent undulations through a lake of quicksilver. At last the foremost boat came to a sudden pause. Best gave a cheery shout and passed her, steering straight into the broad track of crimson that already reeked on the sea ahead.

"What is it?" he cried.

But he heard only a smothered growl from Frere. It was, in fact, nothing of consequence—only a prisoner "giving in."

"What's the matter with you?" says Frere. "Oh, you, is it?—Daves! Of course, Daves. I never expected anything better from such a skulking hound. Come, this sort of nonsense won't do with me. It isn't as nice as lolling about the hatchways, I dare say, but you'll have to go on, my fine fellow."

"He seems sick, sir," said a compassionate bow.

"Sick! Not he. Shaming. Come, give way, now! Put your backs into it!" And the convict, having picked up his oar, the boat shot forward again. But, for all Mr. Frere's urging, he could not recover the way he had lost, and Best was the first to run in under the black cloud that hung over the crimsoned water.

"Keep well," he said. "If there are many fellows yet aboard, they'll swamp us; and I think there must be, as we haven't met the boats," and then raising his voice, as the exhausted crew lay on their oars, he hailed the burning ship. She was a huge, clumsily built vessel, with great breadth of beam, and a lofty deck. Strangely enough, though they had so lately seen the fire, she was already a wreck, and appeared to be completely deserted. The chief hold of the fire was amidships, and the lower deck was one mass of flame. The fire roared like a cataract, and huge volumes of flame-flecked smoke poured up out of the hold, and rolled away in a low-lying black cloud over the sea.

As Frere's boat pulled slowly round her stern, he hailed the deck again and again. Still there was no answer; and though the flood of light that dyed the water blood-red struck out every rope and spar distinct and clear, his straining eyes could see no living soul aboard. As they came nearer, they could distinguish the gilded letters of her name.

"What is it, men?" cried Frere, his voice almost drowned amidst the roar of the flames. "Can you see?"

Rufus Dawes, impelled, it would seem, by some strong impulse of curiosity, stood erect, and shaded his eyes with his hand.

"The Hydaspes!"

Frere gasped. The Hydaspes! The ship in which his cousin Richard Devine had sailed! The ship for which those in England might now look in vain! The Hydaspes, which—Something he had heard during the speculations as to this missing cousin flashed across him.

"Back water, men! Round with her! Pull for your lives. The Hydaspes! I know her. She is bound for Calcutta, and she has five tons of powder aboard!"

There was no need for more words. The single sentence explained the whole mystery of her desertion. The crew had taken to the boats on the first alarm, and had left their death-fraught vessel to her fate. They were miles off by this time.

The boats tore through the water. Eager as the men had been to come, they were more eager to depart. For ten minutes or more not a word was spoken. With straining arms and laboring chests, the rowers tugged at the oars, their eyes fixed on the lurid mass they were leaving. Frere and Best, with their faces turned back to the terror they fled from, urged the men to greater efforts. Already the flames had lapped the flag; already the outlines of the stern-carvings were blurred by the fire. Another moment and all would be over. Ah! it had come at last!

A dull rumbling sound; the burning ship parted asunder; a pillar of fire, flecked with black masses that were beams and planks, rose up out of the ocean; there was a terrific crash, as though sea and sky were coming together; and then a mighty mountain of water rose, advanced, caught, and passed them, and they were alone—defeated, stunned and breathless, in a sudden horror of thickest darkness, and a silence like that of the tomb. The splashing of the

falling fragments awoke them from their stupor, and then the blue light of the Malabar struck out a bright pathway across the sea, and they knew that they were safe.

On board the Malabar two men paced the deck, waiting for the dawn. It came at last. The sky lightened, the mist melted away, and then a long, low, far-off streak of pale yellow light floated on the eastern horizon. By and by the water sparkled, and the sea changed color, turning from black to yellow, and from yellow to lucid green. The man at the mainmast hailed the deck. The boats were in sight, and as they came toward the ship, the bright water flashing from the laboring oars, a crowd of spectators hanging over the bulwarks cheered and waved their hats.

"Not a soul!" cried Blunt. "No one but themselves. Well, I'm glad they're safe anyway."

The boats drew alongside, and in a few seconds Frere was upon deck.

"No use," cried Frere, shivering. "We only just had time to get away. The nearest thing in the world, sir. They must have taken to the boats."

"Then they can't be far off," cried Blunt, sweeping the horizon with his glass. "They must have pulled all the way, for there hasn't been enough wind to fill a hollow tooth with."

"Perhaps they pulled in the wrong direction," said Frere. "They had a good four hours' start of us, you know."

Then Best came up and told the story to a crowd of eager listeners. The sailors having hoisted and secured the boats were hurried off to the forecabin, and the four convicts were taken in charge and locked below again.

"You had better go and turn in, Frere," said Pine, gruffly. "It's no use whistling for a wind here all day."

Pine took a couple of turns up and down the deck, and then, catching Blunt's eye, stopped in front of Vickers.

"You may think it a hard thing to say, Captain Vickers, but it's just as well if we don't find these poor fellows. We have quite enough on our hands as it is. The fever has broken out."

Vickers raised his brows. He had no experience of such things; and though the intelligence was startling, the crowded condition of the prison rendered it easy to be understood, and he apprehended no danger to himself.

"It is only in the prison, as yet," says Pine, with a grim emphasis on the word; "but there is no saying how long it may stop there. I have got three men down as it is."

"Well, sir, all authority in the matter is in your hands. Any suggestions you make I will, of course, do my best to carry out."

"Thank ye. I must have more room in the hospital, to begin with. The soldiers must lie a little closer. And you had better keep your wife and the little girl as much on deck as possible."

Vickers turned pale at the mention of his child. "Do you think there is any danger?"

"There is, of course, danger to all of us; but with care, we may escape it. There's that maid, too. Tell her to keep to herself a little more. She has a trick of roaming about the ship I don't like. Infection is easily spread, and children always sicken sooner than grown-up people."

Blunt, hitherto silently listening, put in a word for the defense of the absent woman. "She is right enough, Pine," said he. "What's the matter with her?"

"Yes, she's all right, I've no doubt. She's less likely to take it than any of us. You can see her vitality in her face—as many lives as a cat. But she'd bring infection quicker than anybody."

"I'll—I'll go at once," cried poor Vickers, turning round.

(To be continued.)

CHANCE FOR LION HUNTERS.

Cougars Multiplying Too Rapidly in Yellowstone National Park.

Mountain lions have increased so rapidly in Yellowstone Park of late that they threaten the extinction of deer, elk and other wild animals that live in this great government game preserve. So numerous have the cougars become that the government, through President Roosevelt's recommendation, has given John and Homer Goff, celebrated guides and hunters at Meeker, Col., a contract to clear the lions out of Yellowstone Park. John Goff is the guide who won fame taking President Roosevelt to his successful cougar-hunting trip to Colorado.

The work of hunting lions in Yellowstone Park will, it is estimated, take several seasons, and in the meantime there is a demand for lion hunters in Colorado, Wyoming and other cattle states, where stockmen are suffering great losses from these predatory animals. Cougars are said to be on the increase in the Rocky Mountains.

Owing to the enormous number of mountain lions in Yellowstone Park the government will not have to pay a large bounty to the Goff brothers. The hunters will receive a bounty of \$5 on each mountain lion they kill, in addition to a salary of \$75 a month each for their work. Most of the work will be done between the spring and fall, for the winters are very severe in Yellowstone Park, the climatic conditions being almost arctic, owing to the moisture generated by many geysers. The Goff brothers have the largest and finest pack of cougar hounds in the world.

For some reason the mountain lion prefers the flesh of a colt to that of any other animal, and cougars have become the terror of horse raisers in the Rocky Mountain states. It is estimated that as a result of the ravages of mountain lions in the last year not fifty colts are left alive on the ranges between Phoenix and Prescott.—San Francisco Bulletin.

A Reflection Amplified.

"All the world's a stage," quoted the melancholy man.

"Yes," answered Stormington Barnes, "and the average lifetime isn't long enough to provide a good rehearsal, let alone a first-class performance."—Washington Star.

One German woman in about every twenty-seven works in a factory.

HOMELESS—HOW THE Czar SUPPRESSES REBELLION IN RUSSIA.



This picture illustrates one of the many terrible scenes that are now taking place in the Baltic provinces, where troops are suppressing the rebellion and crushing out the very suspicion of it by wholesale farm-burning. This particular farm, which is not far from Riga, was visited by troops, who found bullets and rifles there. They burned the rifles and then set fire to the farm; they also arrested the occupants, leaving the mother of the family to weep over the destruction.

Popular Science.

St. Petersburg is now considered to be the unhealthiest capital in Europe.

Disappearing paper is a French novelty. Ordinary paper is first steeped in sulphuric acid, diluted according to the intended durability, and is then dried and glazed, the acid being partially neutralized by ammonia vapor. The material is adapted for temporary use. Sooner or later it falls to pieces, however, and it is recommended to those whose correspondents forget to burn their letters.

Medical thermometers are expected to be accurate, as much depends upon them. Since the beginning of verification recently at a French laboratory, 440 of these instruments have been tested, and 69 per cent have failed to satisfy the required conditions of accuracy, their errors exceeding the admissible 0.15 degree. French patients, therefore, appear to have been mostly watched with faulty thermometers.

Growing in the spray of the great Victoria Falls in South Africa, a new gladiolus has been discovered, and named the "Maid of the Mist." Four bulbs of this plant, sent to England, have been induced to sprout and bloom by virtue of constant spraying in a hot-house. There the interesting discovery was made that the petals of the flower are so arranged as to form a penthouse to protect the stamens and pistils from the unceasing downpour to which they would otherwise be subjected in the native haunts of the plant.

In strong contrast with the uncertainty about the population of China is the exactness of the figures given for the population of Japan in the Japanese Blue Book for 1905, which has been printed in English by the Japanese government. The population of the islands constituting Japan proper is 47,812,702, and that of the island of Formosa 3,069,235. Japan comprises 100 main islands and nearly 5000 small islands, making the name "Island Empire" peculiarly appropriate. The total area of these islands is about 161,000 square miles. It is noted that there is a close approximation to equality in the division of the population between the two sexes.

Dr. C. A. White of the Smithsonian Institution points out that the theory of Doctor de Vries of Amsterdam, according to which new species of plants come into existence, not by a long process of natural selection, as Darwin supposed, but through sudden mutations, the cause of which remains unknown, applies equally well to new species of animals. The giant dinosaurs, for instance, whose remains, as found in our Western "bad lands," excite so much amazement, appear by paleontological evidence to have sprung suddenly into being and as suddenly to have disappeared. All the other animal types also seem to have been well characterized when they first made their appearance. The theory of the origin of species by mutation, when applied either to the plant or animal kingdom, does away with the demand made by the natural selection theory for indefinitely long periods of time, during which existing races were brought gradually to their present condition.

MAKES \$400 PER DAY.

George Ade, Former Reporter, Now Money King of Literature.

George Ade's income from his plays and books is now \$150,000 a year. This is the annual interest at 6 per cent on \$2,500,000. George Ade in all probability will be the first literary man in the history of the world to earn \$1,000,000 from his writings; that is, the first man to receive this amount during his life

time. The royalties of Dickens, Thackeray and Scott have amounted to vast fortunes, but their earning capacity greatly outlasted their terms of life.

When Kipling's income in the height of his popularity reached the sum of \$50,000 a year, the world was astounded. He was the first of the prodigious literary earners, and he made a dent on the pages of books that will last as long as the English language. It is safe to say that Kipling's income is not one-fourth that of Ade's to-day. Kipling's splendid novel, the greatest novel of the 19th century, The Light That Failed, was practically a failure as a play, though it was very shabbily dramatized. It is doubtful if altogether the earnings of this book will amount to that of The College Widow when the latter's career as a play alone is done.

Roughly speaking, 15 years ago, Ade was working for \$5 a week. To-day he



GEORGE ADE.

is earning over \$400 a day. There is only one other man in this country who could rival Ade as a literary financial success. This man refuses to compete. He is Finley Peter Dunne, who created Dooley, and, although his copy is worth a dollar a word he makes no attempt to produce it. Humor pays. Both of these men evolved in Chicago newspaper offices.

Mrs. Wharton, whose human insight and literary workmanship is incomparable, William Dean Howells, Gilbert Parker, Mrs. Humphry Ward and Mark Twain are all large earners in the world of books, but their combined annual income does not largely exceed that of Ade's alone. Robert Louis Stevenson, who, like Kipling, has not yet come into his own, did not receive \$150,000 in all his writing days. The united earnings of Copernicus, who discovered the shape of the earth and the movements of the stars; Harvey, who discovered the circulation of the blood, and Darwin, one of the pioneers of evolution, did not amount to Ade's annual income.

The Approved Type.

We were about to engage a new chauffeur.

"Two hundred a month, the salary you demand, is reasonable enough," he said; "but can you furnish a reference from your last employer?"

"Oul, monsieur; in one month," the applicant replied.

"In one month?" he objected. "But why not now?"

The fellow's explanation was voluble and ready.

"Heias, monsieur," he said, "my former employer is in the hospital, and it will be quite a month before he will be able to write again."

The Poor Bard.

She looked a little sadly around the poet's bleak, bare attic.

"A nice enough room," she said, "but how do you heat it?"

"Well, when it gets too cold," said he, "I light a match."

THE OLD WATER MILL.

Its Passing Brings Many a Sigh of Genuine Regret.

The on-rush of civilization has removed to a great extent one of the romantic and pleasant features of the pioneers—a theme for painters and poets from days remote. In these days of much haste and swift machinery, it perhaps would not fit in with the times to go to mill on horseback and await one's turn at the old water mill, but still it was not so bad, after all, to sit about in the mill yard half a day at a time and play marbles, pitch, quoits, or fish.

Those were the days when people were not in such a hurry as they are now—a time when hours were not worth just so much each, like eggs in a basket—and they were given a few extra years to make up for the time lost in going to mill and hunting the crows—a time when a backlog crackled in the wide-mouthed fire place and a man had an opportunity to get acquainted with his family.

The old water mill and the accompanying mill pond seem to have been a half-way point between savagery and our present civilization and a de-



THE OLD WATER MILL.

cidedly interesting epoch to those whose memory goes back that far. There were the delightful days of fishing in the leafy months, the dark pools below the dam, the little sand-bars and riffles, and the log projecting out over some particularly inviting spot, where big sunfish came up to a hooked cricket or grasshopper without hesitancy or suspicion—and there was always water in the creek. That was why there were always flowers and green grass along the shores, and why the boys could always find a place to wade and wade and wade until their ankles turned purple in the swirling waters. Then when winter came the scene changed. There was never a better place to skate than on an old mill pond, and the skaters did not have fancy clamp skates which one can put on and take off in two seconds. No, they were the old-style strap skates with a screw an inch long to be bored into the heel. The young man fortunate enough to get hold of two worn out files or a discarded saw blade was the hero of the community. He could make skates out of them with long, graceful turn-ups in front which were the envy of all the beholders. It was a small hardship to sit on a snowy log half an hour boring at a refractory heel, but the end justified the exertion.

In those days every little settlement had its own grist and sawmill combined. To be sure the mills did not grind very fast and the saws would not do for cutting mahogany veneering, but they answered the purposes of the times—the days of the candle dip, the tin lantern and the punctured hide sleeves, a step in advance of the period when breadstuffs were secured by pounding grain into meal. Sometimes two or three mills would be found on a little stream ten miles in length. One acted as a reservoir for another, and kept the valley moistened the whole season through, the little stream a live, running brook. Now, those streams are either a raging torrent or in turn as dry and parched as a brick pavement. This is one of the penalties of advancing civilization.

As land became more valuable, like the poor Indian, the old water mill had to move on westward. There was too much good land under water to suit the thrifty owner, and he substituted steam for water power, and the old mill which seemed to be a part of the landscape was no more. The settlement mill is a thing of the past with all its attendant pleasures and hardships. The old water mill was to our ancestors what the trolley car and the electric light is to us—a means to an end—and when something else was found to serve the purpose better they adopted it, but still we cannot part with the old mill of our youth without a sigh of regret.

Making Use of Opportunity.

"We Americans eat too much," said the scientist.

"Yes," said the ordinary citizen. "We see the cost of food going up so fast that we feel there is no time to lose."—Washington Star.