The Convict Ship.

By W. Clark Russell.

Written for the Morning Call.

CHAPTER XIX—[CONTINUED].

He led me through the saloon on to the main deck, and on through the gate in the after barricade where the sentry stood. I followed him without alarm, though I wondered with all my might why he should bring me into this convicts' inclosure. Did he mean to send me below to live among the felons, or to be locked up in their bulkheaded prison? Not very likely. But what did he mean to do?

There was not a convict to be seen within the barricades. The sunset was rich and thunderous and the air full of red light; the wind had freshened and blew very cold. The watch on deck were shortening sail and the three royals and mizzen topgallantsail, and some fore and aft canvas were slatting and jumping overhead, with a few seamen hoarsely bawling at the clewlines, and some hands sprawling aloft. The first mate was now in charge, and he stood on the poop looking up, watching the fellows climbing. This man I had seen aboard the ship in the East India docks. Tom knew him and had shaken hands with him. The captain was walking with the two military officers, and sentries crossed and recrossed the poop-break, and round about the little booly-hatch, close against the cuddy front, were two or three soldiers and a few women and children.

"Pass the word for Barney Aaron," said the doctor to the sentry at the door of the main hatch.

The soldier did so, and after a minute or two the prize-fighter with irons on his legs and a chain triced up to his waist, came through the door attended by a convict warder or "captain." He was a fierce and brutal-looking creature when you saw him close. His face was pitted with smallpox, and embellished besides with the scars of many bloody conflicts in the ring. He wore an extraordinary expression; it was not a grin; it was not a smirk; it was a fixed, crafty leer of knowingness.

"Aaron, look at this young man and tell me who he is," said the doctor.

The prize-fighter, resting his elbows in the palms of his immense hands, leaned his ugly face forward and stared at me; he contracted his brows while he looked at me, as though he hunted through his memory. At last he exclaimed: "I devver saw the young gentlebud before."

"He says he knows you," said the doctor. "By sight," I exclaimed.

"That's not improbable," said the prize-fighter, with a glance at the sentry and a complacent look round, and holding up his head. "I be a public bad. Wherever my dabe's bedtioned it's dode."

"Look at this young man," said the doctor, "where have you met him?"

"Debber saw hib in all my life. S'elp be as true as by 'air's growing," returned the prize-fighter.

"He says he saw you at Newgate."

"I was there," answered the prize-fighter, pursing up his leathery under lip.

"Observe him well and try to recollect if he was a prisoner?"

"Dot in by tibe," said the prize-fighter.

This insinuation, after what I had said, enraged me. "You know I never was a prisoner, sir," I cried. "You are acting inhumanly in trying to confirm your hopes, but not your suspicions, that I was one." I was on a visit to the jail for my entertainment. My companion and I were conducted to the prisoners' visiting-room. There I saw Mr. Barney Aaron in conversation with a stout, dark lady, gayly attired, and I looked at him with attention because he was pointed out to me as the greatest prize-fighter of the age, and that is why I mentioned his name when you asked me whether I knew any of the convicts on board."

A savage glow of pleasure brightened the prize-fighter's eye as he listened; my audacious address, my reference to the brute's fame, acted upon his spirits like a can of drink. The sentry eyed me askant, the warder with a satisfaction which his flat, ruffianly face could not conceal.

"You saw be talking to my wife," said Barney Aaron; "a stout, splendid woban, adsobby dressed, as you put it, sir. The circumstance is all correct."

"You can go below," said the doctor.

I received a fierce, exulting, congratulatory glance from the Jew as he turned about in his shackles to re-enter the door. He might have meant to applaud me for my fearless speech, or, which is more likely, he might have meant to wish me luck in the scheme which had brought me into conflict with the surgeon, and which he would naturally hope and believe was criminal.

The doctor now told me to pass on to the quarterdeck, and I thought he meant to take me below and lock me up again. Instead of which he left me standing outside the barricade and went on to the poop, where he joined Captain Sutherland and his military companions, all of whom had been gazing at us from over the brass rail while we talked with Mr. Barney Aaron. I could not understand the meaning or this doctor's purposeless questions and behavior, but I daresay I was right when I supposed he intended to let everybody see and understand that he was first in the ship.

Always in the days of the convict ship the unhappy criminals were dispatched across the sea in charge of a naval medical officer appointed by the admiralty and called the surgeon-superintendent. The ship was virtually placed in his hands to do what he pleased with, and though I don't suppose he was empowered to interfere in the navigation of the vessel, he was undoubtedly privileged to order the master to call into such ports on the way as he (the surgeon) might choose to name; thereby retarding the voyage of the ship, and perhaps imperiling her, as was the case with a certain convict ship which was nearly lost through the surgeon ordering that she should make Simons Bay under conditions of seasons and weather which the captain declared dangerous. Hence there was usually a strong feeling between the surgeon-superintendent and the captain and mates. I suspected something of that sort here, and believed Dr. Russell-Ellice had given himself a great deal of unnecessary trouble to prove me this, that and the other, merely that the captain and mates should see what a very clever fellow he was, how very much in earnest also in his resolution to strut to the very topmost inches of his little dignity and his brief authority.

CHAPTER XX.

SHE CONVERSES WITH HER COUSIN.

Presently I stepped leisurely into the recess under the poop where the soldiers and the women were. One was the pretty young woman who had given me a smile when I came on board the ship at Woolwich. She viewed me with her pretty, soft, dark eyes with a wistful admiration, but I could not observe that she remembered me. The three or four soldiers without belts, their jackets unbuttoned, lounged against the bulkhead, smoking their pipes. I was now used to being stared at, and gave them no heed. While I thus stood waiting for what was next to happen, Will came along from his berth forward. When he saw me he seemed to pause as though not knowing what to do. With the most pronounced air I could contrive, I averted my face and looked into the saloon through the window, and when I glanced again my cousin was out of sight. I was very much in earnest that he should not get in trouble through me; nay, I desired that for a long time yet he and I should keep as wide apart as the two ends of the ship; he was boyish and imprudent, and might at any time say or do something that would lead to the disclosure of my sex, and, for all I knew, to the revelation of my motive in hiding in this ship.

The soldiers talked of the convicts and I pricked up my ears, thirsty for all information of the gloomy, hidden quarters where Tom lived. One asked if the people were kept in irons throughout the voyage. Another answered no; he believed the irons were taken off after the ship was out of the Bay of Biscay.

"I couldn't help laughing," said one of the soldiers. "I was on sentry below and heard a chap say to some others, 'I don't mind praying, but cussed if I'm going to pray for the Governor of Tasmania! I'll pray for rain if it's wanted, but not for a bloomin' governor.' 'Who asks ye?' says one of the convicts. 'It's to be a part of the prayers,' said the other. 'Me pray for the Governor of Tasmania!' and here he swore and used such language that I had to caution him."

"I wouldn't pray for ne'er a governor if I was a convick," said the pretty young woman with a toss of her head and a side glance at me. "It's a shame to make a joke of sacred things. Should a convick be made to pray for his jailer? Would the Lord listen to the prayer of a sailor who asks a blessing on the bo'sun who's just been flogging him?"

"There's some queer chaps downstairs," said one of the soldiers. "There's a fellow they call the smasher—a little gray-haired man with the kindest of faces and speaks as soft as pouring out milk; he's lagged for one of them awful crimes that ain't mentionable in the presence of females. There's a play actor—dunno what right he's got down there. They sails under false colors—dessay if he'd got his right name ye'd find him some one as had been tiptop at Drury Lane and the best of theayters. There's a quiet, pleasing-looking chap, lagged for scuttling." A woman asked what that was. "Sinking a ship by making holes in her."

"The villain!" cried the woman. "I hope they'll not give him a chance with his tricks here."

"I'm sorry for that chap somehow," said the soldier. "If I was a painter I'd like to draw his picture. I'll point him out some time or other and then you take notice, Jim, of his melancholy face. One picks up a lot on sentry."

"A bad lot," said another soldier, spitting.

I listened eagerly and longed passionately to ask questions, but durst not. Yet I might be sure that the soldier spoke of Tom and I loved the fellow for speaking of him kindly, and it was another proof that my sweetheart was in the ship.

A child came and stood in front of me and looked up into my face. It was a pretty little girl. I stooped and patted her cheek and kissed her, took her by the hands and jumped her into a little dance which kept her laughing. I knew which was the child's father by the pleased look one of the soldiers regarded me with. It was the man who had spoken kindly of Tom. When I found this out I kissed the child again and talked to her about the ship and the sea. I observed that my manners and speech controlled the listeners. They all knew I was a runaway stowaway, and though they could know no more they might suspect a great deal more; and yet they viewed me respectfully and treated with a sort of civil reference to me as though I was a gentleman listening.

The lights were burning very red, but gradually dimming in the west, and the sides of the seas slipped away from under the ship in hard dark-green slopes, laced with spray, and the froth of their heads was faintly colored by the sunset. The heel of the ship was sharp, and she broke through the billows in thunder. There was a mighty noise of whistling and raving aloft, and the strange shrill shrieking of the foaming and dissolving salt alongside made me wonder what that sound in the wind was.

An apprentice came off the poop and struck a bell, suspended this side of the quarterdeck barricade. A minute or two later a convict passed through the door of the main hatch and placed himself beside the sentry; a second and then a third emerged until a a considerable number of men had assembled. They formed in a close-packed column which stretched about half way to the convicts' gallery; the soldier with whose child I played seeing me looking at the convicts, exclaimed: "They're getting their supper. Them's the messmen. As the fellows receive their cocoa or whate'er it be, from the galley, they carries it below, one by one."

I imagined that Tom might be among that set of convicts and made a movement with the idea of walking some distance forward where I should be able to see; but I stopped myself on reflecting that the doctor was probably at the poop-rail overhead looking on.

"Ain't bad discipline taking it all round," said the soldier, speaking to all who chose to listen, though I seemed to find his remarks intended for my amusement and enlightenment. "It's mostly settled aboard the hulks before the parties come aboard. So I'm told. The convicts they think proper to trust are made petty officers of. There's first and second captains, captains of divisions, captains of wards. Then some of them are made cooks of, t'others barbers and every mess has its head. With this sort of arrangement they keeps each other in order."

"Do any privileges go along with these appointments," asked one of the sailors.

"The privilege of being appointed."

I listened but asked no questions; I dared not exhibit interest, I could not forget that these soldiers formed a portion of the convicts' guard.

"I notice," said one of the soldiers, "that they put them there malefactors to all sorts of ship's work. They were helping the sailors wash the deck down this morning; they work hard as though eddicated under the mizzen of life out there. A sight of difference there was 'twixt the sailors' scrubbing and their'n."

I was watching the convicts while I listened to the soldier's talk, when some one inside of the cuddy called out "Marlowe." I forgot my feigned name and did not respond. The voice again called, on which with a start I looked through the cuddy door and saw the steward.

"I reckoned as much!" said he with a laugh. "'Taint every purser's name as fits like old boots. Step this way."

I entered. Just then the doctor came down the companion steps at the end of the cuddy and entered an after-cabin on the port side. He stayed a moment as though to observe me but did not speak. A young man, whom I supposed to be an under steward, was lighting the cabin lamps, but there still lived a wild flush of western light and you saw plainly by it.

The steward began by informing me that I had no business on the ship, and that by stowing myself away on board a convict ship I risked the chance of being made a felon, of receiving six dozens at the gangway, of being hanged at the yardarm. In thus reassuring me he gave himself the airs of the captain of the ship. He then added: "However, I likes your looks, as I told you before, and I've put in a good word for you with Captain Sutherland, who, I may tell you, don't think any the worse of a youngster like you for squaring up as he's heard you've done to the doctor. The doctor himself owned to the captain," said he, lowering his voice and looking aft toward the surgeon's cabin, "that he got rather more from you than he knew what to do with." He then abruptly inquired if I possessed any clothes besides those I wore. I answered that I did not.

"Got any money?"

"How much ought I to want?"

"How much ha' ye got?" said he.

"All I shall need on my arrival," said I.

He looked puzzled, eyed me all over, then approaching me by a step he exclaimed with an earnest, confidential face, "Jokin' apart, young man, who are you and what is your object in cutting this here caper?" Finding I did not reply he continued, "You're to have all the money you want when you arrive. And you haven't money enough to pay your passage to get what's awaiting for you!" He paused. "Well, now, see here; you've got no business aboard and you stood to be whipped and you stood to be hanged for hiding in a Government transport. You've got to be fed and, gent or no gent, you must work.

"I am willing and anxious to work."

"The captain's handed you over to me. There plenty of hands forrard; most of them about as sarviceable at a pinch as you'd be likely to prove. We're short of a man aft, and you'll do for the post. Can you wait at table?"

"I'll try."

"Well, you may rise to it. We'll see. You'll be wanted to carry the dirty dishes forrard for the cook's mate to wash, to help bring the dishes along from the galley and to hang about here while the officers are eating ready to run to the galley on errands."

"I'll do all that willingly," said I.

He then told me that the second steward slung his hammock next door to the pantry in the steerage, but that as there were two or three empty cabins down there I was welcome to use a bunk in the one in which I had been locked up. "As for a bed," said he, "you'd better ask the sailmaker to give you a piece of old canvas and the butcher to give you a bundle of straw; you'll get all the mattress you'll want out of that. If I can meet with a stray blanket you shall have it. That pilot jacket, though a good coat, ain't quite up to the knocker for table work. Pity you haven't got a little loose cash upon you. I've got a spare jacket which," said he, taking a view of my shoulders, "would fit you for breadth to a hair. But not to button across. Why, I never see such a chest on a young fellow. And now you can turn to," said he, "the table's to be got ready for dinner and you can help."

I requested him to lend me some soap and a towel. He grinned and asked me if there was any perfumery he could oblige me with. "But you're right," said he, "you're in want of a wash-down." He left me and presently returned with a piece of marine soap and a coarse towel; he then told me where I should find a bucket and recommended me to draw some water at the head pump on the forecastle, and to be careful not to spill any on the deck as I brought it along if I did not want to be sworn at by the officer of the watch.

I took a bucket from a rack near the mainmast and went along the gangway, as I term the alley betwixt the barricade and the bulwarks. My heart was almost light; the work I was to be put to was just such as I should have chosen out of the whole group of the duties of the big ship. It was work that would keep me away from the forecastle hands; it would not put more upon me than my strength was equal to. Best of all, I was to occupy a cabin alone, which was an extraordinary piece of good fortune.

It was the first dog watch; all the convicts were in their prison quarters; a number of sailors were smoking, idling and talking in the neighborhood of the galleys; the wind swept keen and hard athwart the forecastle and the sentry was the only figure that paced that deck. Some rough chaff saluted me as I passed the sailors. One asked me if I was going a-milking, another advised me to chuck the bucket overboard and watch it tow. Just as I was stepping up the forecastle ladder, Will, with a pipe in his mouth, put his head out of his berth. He instantly saw me, and called out with the manner of a young fellow exercising some little authority:

"Where are you taking that bucket to?"

"On to the forecastle for water, sir," I answered.

"Do you know anything about rigging a head pump?" he exclaimed. "Not you," he cried, laughing with a fine assumption of half jocose, half pitying good nature. "Here, I'll show you what to do."

He followed me up the ladder. Upon the forecastle the wind was blowing with a great roaring noise. The sentry leaned against it, and his heavily coated figure swayed like a scarecrow in a breezy field as he swung on his gripping feet to the plunge and toss of the bow. The surge, rent by the shearing cutwater, rose in a boiling mass of whiteness to within reach of the rail when the ship pitched. The driven fabric swept the sea from her weather-bow in smoke, and at every stately curtesy a vast sheet of foam washed many fathoms ahead. The sea ridged dark and hard. The ship heeled sharply over under great breasts of canvas, and from the forecastle you saw the froth race past her on either hand, and lift astern like a snow-covered path.

"This was my chance and the first chance, Marian," said Will. "How are you getting on?"

"Well."

"We'll seem to loiter a bit over this pump. What are they going to do with you?"

I told him.

"What! Cuddy bottle-washer? And the steward's the cad of the ship. There are many cads among us, but he's head of the clan here."

"I'm perfectly satisfied, Will. I wish I could see Tom. I want to see him with my own eyes."

"Hold the bucket so," said he, "and I'll pump. Oh, never mind the sentry. No notice is taken of soldiers at this end of the ship. I could hug you for your pluck, I could. After all this time of the blind hole under here to talk to the captain and doctor as I heard you! Where do you sleep?"

All this while he was pretending to work the brake of the pump as though something was wrong with it. I answered.

"Come, that's good," said he, "a cabin to yourself! They couldn't have given you more had they charged you 60 guineas."

"I have no mattress and nothing to sleep on but the bunk boards," said I.

"And no bedclothes, of course?" said he.

"The steward has promised me the loan of a blanket if he can find one."

"Leave me to see what I can do," he exclaimed.

"Run no risks, Will, for both our sakes."

"Do you want your money, Marian?"

"No, I was searched. If I produced money now they'd guess I have a friend on board. Will, there's one thing you must contrive. Let me have pencil and paper—not now; wait for a better chance; there will be plenty. I must write to him."

"How are you going to give him a letter?"

"I'll find a way, Will."

"Marian, there's no man under these stars which are beginning to shine who's worth what you're doing for Tom. How cold the wind blows! And aren't they driving the old bucket just? I know what it will be—eight bells and Balls' infernal pipe, and an hour's roosting up among those boughs there to reef and stow. You don't want all that water to wash in."

He emptied two-thirds of the bucket, put the strap into my hand and we went down the forecastle ladder. The steward, who was helping the other man to lay the cloth, asked what had kept me so long.

"The pump's stiff," said I, "and it blows hard on the fo'c'sle."

"Hard in your nerve!" he exclaimed. "Look lively now. There must be no skulking. If you don't bear a hand here I'll send you forward to the bo'sun and the land of ropes'-ends and kicks."

The under steward laughed heartily. I went briskly to my cabin and washed my face and hands as well as I could in the dark. I found nothing in the steward's language to anger me, nothing in my situation to cause me an instant's regret. The truth is, I was extraordinarily encouraged and supported by the sense of my sex, by the thought that I need but avow myself to become an object of romantic interest, and so be at all events humanely treated. Indeed I fought myself laughing when I put my hand into the paper bag that to feel for the parcel of my wearing apparel. What, I thought to myself, would the steward think if I were to dress myself in those clothes and enter the cuddy?

CHAPTER XXI.

SHE ENTERS UPON HER DUTIES.

I did but little on this, the first day of my entering upon my strange new duties. The steward distrusted my sea legs, and he and his mate fetched the dishes from the galley. I hung about the fore end of the cuddy, put the dirty plates in the basket, collected the knives and forks, went errands to the pantry and the like. The picture of the cuddy was bright and heartly. Two large illuminated globes, in silver holders, swung under the ceiling; the light of them flashed in the mirrors and rippled with the movements of the ship in the polished woodwork. The captain sat at the head of the table, the doctor on his right. Captain Barrett and Lieutenant Chimmo sat together on the other side. One or two times Captain Barrett screwed the glass into his eye and looked at me, but his gaze expressed no more than surprise to find me at work as a cuddy servant; the others took not the least notice of me.

Captain Barrett had a loud laugh and a hearty manner of speaking; Lieutenant Chimmo was a very quiet man, stilted and affected, so stiff and snobbish as to satisfy me he was not a born gentleman. I wondered to find neither of the mates at the table, but I soon discovered it was the custom on board the Childe Harold for the mate of the watch to come below and eat after the captain was done, the other two mates joining him when possible so as to make a separate table.

The talk at the beginning was not very interesting. The convict guard, it seems, had come to the ship from Chatham, and neither Captain Barrett nor the lieutenant could say too much in abuse of that place. There was no society; dirt and drink formed the life of the town; Deptford, nay, even Sheerness was sweet and desirable compared to Chatham. The doctor ate and drank water with a little wine in it, and seemed to listen. The captain frequently lifted his eyes to the skylight, as though thinking more of the weather than of the officers' chatter. Presently Captain Barrett, leaning across the table, said to the doctor:

"Chimmo and I have been wondering whether you'd have any objection, after the fellow's irons are knocked off I mean, to Barney Aaron coming aft to give us a few lessons in sparring? I daresay, captain, your sailmaker could contrive to furnish out an arrangement of canvas and oakum for boxing-gloves."

"It would be impossible to imagine any objection stronger than mine to your suggestion," answered the doctor.

"There'd be always a sentry on hand, you know," said Lieutenant Chimmo.

"Let us change the subject," said the doctor severely.

Captain Barrett looked at the doctor with a slight sneer and said, "We'll not talk of bring Barney Aaron aft; we'll talk of Barney Aaron as he is. Pity so much talent should go wrong. Transport your felonious clergy, attorneys, farmers, medical men," he added, with a significant look at the doctor, "and the rest of the plentiful mobs; there'd always then be too many to spare. But to send such a prize-fighter as Barney Aaron out of this kingdom! to ship him into a country where there'll be nobody to appreciate him! by heaven, it's as bad as robbing the crown of England of a jewel!"

The captain observing that the doctor did not like this talk changed the subject by speaking of the fine progress the ship was making. At this moment I was sent to the pantry by the steward. When I returned I heard Lieutenant Chimmo say, "What would those chaps under hatches give for a taste of that curried fowl? Your cook's a neat hand, captain."

"The provisions served out to the convicts are infernally bad," said Captain Barrett.

"They are not good, but they may be eaten, as Charles XII said to the soldier who showed him some moldy pieces of bread," exclaimed the doctor.

"At such a table as this," said Lieutenant Chimmo, "a man can take a philosophic view of the tastes and appetites of people who are not present."

"Convicts are as well fed as sailors," said Captain Sutherland.

"I'd rather be a convict than a sailor," said Captain Barrett.

"One's t'other more often than not," observed Lieutenant Chimmo. "'Stonishing what a lot of rascals sail afore the mast."

"Take care that whisper don't get forward of the main-hatch sentry," said the captain, with a glance at the steward. "Jack's got a sensitive side to his nature."

"Doctor, what's to be the routine when decent weather sets in?" inquired Captain Barrett.

"Schools, Bible classes and frequent prayer-meetings, sir," answered the doctor.

"Don't educate them," said Lieutenant Chimmo. "They're very bad now; education'll make them worse."

"I'm with Chimmo," said Captain Barrett. "Doctor, I'll wager you what you will that the worst of your people are those who are most intelligent and best educated."

The doctor made no answer.

"I must state this as a fact," said Captain Sutherland with a side look at the doctor, as though distrusting his topic; "Mr. Bates, my chief officer, recognized one of the convicts. His name"—the doctor made a motion with his hand. "Well enough if I say," exclaimed the captain stammering, "that this same man is a person of excellent antecedents, was for years at sea and held several posts of trust, and finally wound up a flourishing career by investing his savings in a smart little bark for no other purpose than to scuttle her that he might pocket about triple the amount of his venture in insurance money."

I heard this and my heart turned hot as fire. I longed to walk up to Captain Sutherland, look him in the eyes and call him beast and liar. No one observed me, which was lucky. I was conscious that my face worked with agitation and that my cheeks were red with the blood which the captain's lie had driven into my head. At this point the steward bade me carry a basket of dirty dishes to the galley, and I stepped out with my burthen on to the quarterdeck.

The evening was black and the wind wet, and it swept athwart the bulwark rail with a shriek and the bite of forest. Over the lee rail the seas ran from the ship in pale, cloudy heaps. Occasionally the brine lashed the forecastle like a showering of small shot, and again and again you would feel the blow of a sea on the bow striking the ship before she could rise, and the white water of it was flashed back into the dark wind, though the hissing body came like a thunder squall an instant later, soaking the decks till the scuppers sobbed again.

I staggered along with the basket of crockery, and passing the sentry slipped and slided forward through the convicts' inclosure till I came to the ship's galley. A number of seamen were gathered under the lee of this place. The red fire of the stove illuminated the fat figure of the cook as he stood pointing a piece of paper to the flame of the lamp to light his pipe. Another fellow was busy at a kind of dresser. Against the closed weather door leaned the boatswain with folded arms and an inverted pipe betwixt his lips. It was a hot, snug, mellow interior to look in upon after the cheerless scene of the decks and the leaning and waving heights of dim canvas above.

"So they've found work for you, hey?" said the boatswain giving me a large nod. "Yet you'd better ha' stopped at home."

"Who's this?" said the cook.

"The youngster as I found rolled up in a spare t'gallan's'l," answered the boatswain. "They're going to keep him in the land o' knives and forks."

"And you'd rather be a waiter than a steward, Joey?" said the cook with a greasy chuckle. "I don't blame you. It's all night in with us idlers, and a warm blanket's better than a lee earing, ain't it, Mr. Balls? But what's brought the covey to ship in this here conkick barge?"

"What big 'ye got there?" said the fellow at the dresser.

"Dirty plates," said I.

This man, who was the cook's mate, who had but one eye, and whose cast of face was certainly more villainous than any of the felons I had watched taking their exercise that day, put his head out of the galley door and exclaimed, "For that there steward! Here's a gallows' lookout o' dishes. If that there perishin' Stiles could foul six plates 'stead o' wan he'd do't to spite me." He continued to grumble hideously, and I backed away from his ugly tongue and uglier face and walked toward the cuddy, but slowly, and holding on as I went, for the decks were steep and greasy, and the ship was taking the seas in quick angry jumps.

As I passed through the quarterdeck barricade my elbow was touched, and Will accosted me.

"I am going to bounce a mattress out of the steward for you, Marian," said he, "but as no more lies than can be helped must be told, follow me."

I accompanied him up the lee poop ladder. He led me a little way along the deck and then crossed it to where a man was standing under the shelter of one of the quarterboats.

"Here's this stowaway lad asked me to help him to a mattress, sir," he exclaimed. "They've given him a bunk in the steerage, but there's nothing in it to lie upon."

"He deserves the cat for hiding aboard us," answered the man, who was indeed Mr. Bates, the first mate. "What have they put him to, d'ye know, Johnstone?"

"He's cuddy bottle-washer, sir."

"What's brought you to sea, you young fool?"

"I want to get to Tasmania, sir."

"Why didn't you concern yourself in some riot, or turn Irish politician; they'd have clothed and bedded and fed, and sent you across handsomely, and perhaps have fitted you with a good berth ashore at the end; instead, you start as a sneak, and no doubt you'll come home as a sneak. Mattress-mattress—I've got nothing to do with that. Shift for yourself and be off."

I went on to the quarterdeck, wondering what on earth Will meant by taking me to the mate as though to provoke him to abuse me. Before I entered the cuddy my cousin was at my elbow; you will remember that it was very dark and nobody but the sentry was on the quarterdeck.

"It's all right," said he eagerly. "I'll manage it now. Wait a bit. You must have a bed to lie on, you know. Don't take to heart what the mate says. It's his duty to growl at you, but as a man he's sound to the heels."

They were still at table in the cuddy. It was dazzling to realize that the vessel was a prison-ship when you looked at this bright rich interior with its soft yellow lamps flashing under the skylights and the looking-glasses reduplicating the sparkling and hospitable furniture of the table. It was like passing from another state of life to enter this brightness and warmth from the wet and nipping blackness outside, with the grim sentry, a cloaked figure in the sentry, the barricades, the blackness and silence of the sentineled main-hatch.

The steward sent me to the pantry to wash glasses, and I went with his assistant, a fellow named Franz or Frank, a young German. I had not before known him for a German; I believe I had not heard him speak. He was a freckled, ginger-colored man, as expressionless of face as an oyster. But he was good-tempered and willing, and when we were in the pantry washing glasses he said that he hoped we should be friends. I answered it would not be my fault if we were not good friends. On this he shook hands with me and asked if I was ever in Germany. He wished to know why I had stowed myself away in this convict ship and if I had friends in Tasmania.

"I need not have hidden," said I; "my friends are well to do."

"Dot I can believe," said he, polishing a tumbler and closing one eye while he held it to the lamp. "You vhas a young gentleman—dot I hear in your voice. Maybe you vhas more of a gentleman dan some dot ve vait on. How do you like Mr. Stiles?" naming the steward.

"He is a funny man."

"How vhas he funny?" said he.

"He made you laugh heartily when he talked to me."

"Dot vhas to please him. For my part," he shrugged his shoulders. He then inquired if I had agreed for any wages, and expressed sorrow that we were not to share a berth. "I likes to make yon my chum—dot is der verdt—while ve vhas togedder."

Presently the steward called to us, and when I entered the cuddy I found Mr. Bates at table and the captain and officers gone. Mr. Bates was very quick with his dinner; he had charge of the deck; I believe he was not above ten minutes in dispatching his meal. He took no notice of me. When he was gone I helped the two stewards to strip the table, and while this was doing Will Johnstone put his head in at the cuddy door and called to the steward.

"There's some spare convicts' mattresses stowed away aft," said he, in the peremptory voice of the sea. "You're to let Marlowe have one, and throw in a couple of the convicts' blankets for his use. D'ye hear me, steward?"

"Yes, I hear you, young gentleman," answered the steward. "But who sent me that bit of noose?"

Will, however, had backed a step and disappeared in the blackness.

"The order comes from Mr. Bates, I expect," said I. "I stepped on to the poop some time since to see if he'd let me have a mattress."

"Well, pink me if you was behind the door when check was served out," said the steward. "Did he offer to throw you overboard?"

"He asked me many questions. Mr. Bates seems one of the kindest-hearted of men."

The steward stared at me for a moment, muttered to himself, then with something of an agitated hand proceeded in his work of stripping the table. However, Will's ruse or "bounce," as he had called it, proved successful; Mr. Stiles of course supposed that the apprentice had come with direct instructions; and when he had cleared the table he took me into the steerage and opening a cabin door held up a lantern and bade me choose a mattress. A number of convicts' mattresses lay stowed here, every one with a little pillow attached to it, and every one was numbered as though as a provision for a larger assemblage of miscreants than had been shipped. Here also were two or three bales of spare blankets, to a corner of which I helped myself; and now, thanks to Will, I had a bed to lie on and clothes to cover me.

In my own berth, as I may call it, I said to the steward, pointing to the bundle in the upper bunk: "That can be left there. It will not be in the way."

"What is it?" said he. "Ho, it was brought aboard just afore we started, and the captain gave it to me thinking it might belong to some of the soldiers or their wives as'd presently be claiming it. It's a nerror," said he, looking at the parcel, "though the name of this vessel's wrote big enough for a monkey to read without glasses. Let it lie. It's out of the way here." Then looking around him he lost his temper. "Here's a pretty go," he cried. "To think of a Woolwich stowaway berthed in such a beautiful bedroom as this here. It's a-flying in the face of right, and it's a courting and caressing of wickedness to make any one as has done wrong so comfortable. If this gets wind, suffocate me if stowaways won't breed thick as fleas in a vessel's hold. But you'll have to work."

"I'll work and work well," said I, smiling, "and as you treat me so shall your reward be."

He held his lantern to my face and said "Where?"

"Hobart Town."

"There's no use a-dangling that sort of fly," said he; "I'm no one-eyed fish. When I rise it's to summat juicy, with ne'er a hook in its inside. Never you mind about Hobart Town, but turn to and get your supper."

I went to the pantry, where I found Frank. We supped off a dish that had come from the cabin table. Frank informed me that had the captain sent me to live before the mast I should never have beheld or tasted such a dish even in my dreams. "They starfs you," said he, "on pork dot vhas deadt of der measles, und beef dot vhas a horse until dey salt her down into casks." Again he endeavored to ascertain who I was and what I meant to do on my arrival in Hobart Town. He said if my connections were flourishing people he'd be very grateful if I'd put in a good word for him; he was not born to this sort of life; he had seen better days, wrote a good hand, and could correspond in three tongues. He had signed articles for the round voyage, but was ready to run from the ship if a chance offered.

I looked mysterious and smiled knowingly and said I guessed that when my friends heard my story they would be glad to do a kindness to any one who had proved a friend to me during the passage. He put oil into my cabin lamp and showed me how to trim it and assured me that any little conveniences which he possessed were at my service. I learned that my work ended at 9 o'clock. At 8:30 the materials for grog were placed upon the cabin table, and at two bells I was at liberty to go to bed.

"But you'll understand," said the steward, who gave me this information, "that if all 'ands is called you must turn out. 'It'll be for me to sing down the hatch 'all 'ands,' and you don't stop to dress, but rush up, for you're never to know what hawful things ain't on the heve of 'appening when that loud cry of 'all 'ands' rings through such a big ship as this, and if you don't turn out, then of course you'll be one of them parties as feel sorry for themselves next day."

When two bells were struck I went into the recess under the poop to take a look at the laboring ship and the dark night before going to bed. The canvas had been reefed at 8 o'clock; at that hour, and for some time after, I heard the wild hoarse notes of sailors singing out at the ropes, and the cannonading of heavy sails whose released halyards had abandoned the slack canvas to the thrashing gale. The ship was running along her course, climbing the high seas and whitening out the water till the seething waves gleamed like moonlight round about her. Captain Barrett and the doctor were playing at chess in the cuddy; the subaltern looked on with a paper cigar drooping at his mouth. All seemed dark and at rest down the hatch where the soldiers' quarters were. I thought to myself if this ship were to strike another and founder, what chance for their lives would the 230 men below have lying, for all I know, in their irons, so battened down that nothing short of an explosion could lift the hatch for them.

A figure approached and peered in my face; the cabin lamplight was upon him; it was Will.

"Is that you?" said he doubtfully.

On my replying he put his hand into his pocket, and gave me a little parcel. "Here's a pencil and paper for you, Marian," said he. "Be mighty careful in writing and don't mention my name. You can't be too cautious. The sentries' eyes are as keen as their bayonets. Have you a mattress?"

"Yes."

"Why don't you go to bed?"

"I am off in a minute."

"This is no place for you. I wish you were at home in Stepney." He went on to the poop and I descended to my berth.

To be continued.

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SWEET SIXTEEN.

I know, fair girl, thy heart is bright,
And joy hath there unnumbered springs,
That ever give to life and light
The blissful sweets love's coming brings;
For now no threatening clouds are seen
In thy young summer's glowing sky,
And no dark shapes of sorrow lowering
Thine own and hope's inspiring eye,
While peace reigns in that heart of thine,
And heaven's pure beams about thee shine.

Thy songs have now a single theme—
Of childhood's wonderland of play,
Of scenes and hours that never seem
To lose their charm or fade away;
But rippling toward womanhood,
Upon thy heart will come a change
So marvelous, nor understood,
Yet fraught with pleasure rare and strange;
But love will bring this change to thee,
And all thy songs of love will be!

Then through thy life thy heart will sing
No doubtful strain born of thy dreams;
But precious love, unalloying,
That chief of joys and best of themes!
For love's no fancy of the eye:
Its birth and home is in the heart
Of gentleness and purity,
And free from all guile and art.
Such is, fair girl, that heart of mine—
For love a home—for love a shrine.

—Melbourne Times.

MADE ONE MISTAKE.

But It Made the Editor Think That Cyclones Were Ripe.

Chicago Tribune.

"Are you the editor of the Blizzard?"

The caller was a stranger with his hat on the back of his head and a broad smile on his face.

"I am sir," answered the man at the desk.

"Then it was you, I presume—ha! ha!—who wrote that notice of my daughter's wedding—ha! ha!—that was in the paper this morning?"

"Yes sir," said the editor, cordially, but with some misgivings. "It was all right, wasn't it?"

"Oh, yes! It was a good job. An excellent job! Ha! ha! It was all right—you don't mind shaking hands with me?"

"It was all right," said the smiling stranger, jerking him out of his chair in the excess of his handshaking zeal. "It was all right," he added, slamming him against the wall. "There wasn't anything wrong with it at all," continued the affable caller, grabbing the editor by the collar, pushing him backward over his chair, catching him by the heels, hauling him round the room, upsetting the furniture with him, and finishing by jamming him in the waste-basket. "There was nothing the matter with it, sir, except that my daughter wasn't married at all, sir! Good-morning!"

Stoves a Source of Danger.

New York Journal.

The hard-wood stoves, while in one way very comfortable, keeping a room at an even temperature all the time, are, in ignorant hands, a source of serious danger. If the drafts are not properly turned the carbonic acid and sulphurous fumes may pour into the room and in a sleeping-room may smother the sleepers before they are aware of their danger. Three per cent of carbonic acid gas in the air of a room is fatal to animal life and a large-sized base-burner will not take long to supply this percentage in a close room. Such stoves should always be carefully watched and never handled save by experienced persons.

A Lubricating Composition.

A new process has been patented for making a lubricating composition. This substance is designed for use with bearings, commutator brushes, projectile covers, etc., and is prepared by mixing plumbago in excess with wood or other vegetable fiber. The materials are mixed with water, and then molded under pressure. The special point of the composition is that the mold is arranged so that the water in escaping tends to set the fibers on end with regard to the bearing surface. After being molded the article is dried and impregnated with linseed oil, and the oil is finally hardened in by the application of heat.

How the Sultan Dines.

Vanity Fair.

The Sultan of Turkey dines in solemn state in a room overlooking the Bosphorus. He sits on a divan and uses neither table, plate, knife nor fork, but only a spoon and his fingers, with which implements he fishes out his food from a series of little saucepans. He generally has a large retinue in attendance, but he always eats and drinks alone, not even a few of his favorite wives breaking bread with him.

Pleasures of Village Life.

New York Press.

"I shouldn't think you would care to live in a village."

"Why not?"

"It must be so dull."

"Dull. Why, man, village life is full of interest. You know everybody's private affairs, every family's secrets, and there's some new scandal being developed every day."

MILITARY JAPAN.

The Changes in Methods Wrought by Time.

SOLDIERS CLAD IN MAIL.

Women as Warriors—The Samurai. The Army as It Is Organized To-Day.

Written for The Morning Call.

The Japanese soldier of seventy-five years ago was a very different looking individual from the Japanese soldier of to-day. Then he wore plate and chain-mail armor, carrying about on his person sufficient metal to set up a small junkshop. The armor itself was made of thin plates of iron or steel, of hardened hide, lacquered paper, brass and sharkskin. The helmet, which resembled in shape one of our waterproof hats, was of strong iron, thickly lined with buckskin, and in order to prevent it pressing too heavily on the brow, a thick handkerchief was usually tied about the head.

The general wore a tremendous false mustache, which was supposed to add ferocity to his appearance and instil terror in the hearts of his opponents. Accompanying his helmet, which was a different shape from that of the Samurai or retainer, was a visor of