For The Term of His Natural Life

By MARCUS CLARKE

CHAPTER XIII.—(Continued.)

Sylvia flashed burning red at this indignity. "Frightened! If there had been anybody else here but women, you never would have taken the brig. Frightened! Let me pass, prisoner!"

As Mrs. Vickers descended the hatchway, the boat with Frere and the soldiers came within musket-range, and Lesly, according to orders, fired his musket over their heads, shouting to them to lay to. But Frere, boiling with rage at the manner in which the tables had been turned on him, had determined not to resign his lost authority without a struggle. Disregarding the summons, he came straight on, with his eyes fixed on the vessel. It was now nearly dark, and the figures on the deck were indistinguishable. The indignant lieutenant could but guess at the condition of affairs. Suddenly, from out of the darkness, a voice hailed him.

"Hold water! back water!" it cried, and was then seemingly choked in its owner's throat.

The voice was the property of Mr. Bates. Standing near the side, he had observed Rex and Fair bring up a great pig of iron, erst used as part of the ballast of the brig, and poise it on the rail. Their intention was but too evident; and honest Bates, like a faithful watchdog, barked to warn his master. Bloodthirsty Cheshire caught him by the throat, and Frere, unheeding, ran the boat alongside, under the very nose of the revengeful Rex. The mass of iron fell half in-board upon the now stayed boat, and gave her sternway, with a splintered plank.

"Villains!" cried Frere, "would you swamp us? What do they mean to do next?"

The answer came pat to the question. From the dark hull of the brig broke a flash and a report, and a musket ball cut the water beside them with a chirping noise. Between the black indistinct mass which represented the brig and the glimmering water was visible a white speck, which gradually neared them.

"Come alongside with ye," hailed a voice, "or it will be worse for ye!"

"They want to murder us," says Frere. "Give way, men!"

But the two soldiers, exchanging glances one with the other, pulled the boat's head round and made for the vessel. "It's no use, Mr. Frere," said the man nearest him. "We can do no good now, and they won't hurt us, I dare say."

"You are in league with them!" bursts out Frere, purple with indignation. "Do you mutiny?"

"Come, come, sir," returned the soldier, sulkily; "this ain't the time to bully; and as for mutiny, why, one man's about as good as another just now."

When they reached the brig they found that the jolly boat had been lowered and laid alongside. In her were eleven persons—Bates, with forehead gashed and hands bound; the stunned Grimes, Russen and Fair pulling; Lyon, Riley, Cheshire and Lesly with muskets, and John Rex in the stern sheets, with Bates' pistols in his trousers' belt and a loaded musket across his knees. The white object which had been seen by the men in the whaleboat was a large white shawl which wrapped Mrs. Vickers and Sylvia.

By the direction of Rex, the whaleboat was brought alongside the jolly boat, and Cheshire and Lesly boarded her. Lesly then gave his musket to Rex, and bound Frere's hands behind him in the same manner as had been done for Bates. Frere attempted to resist this indignity; but Cheshire, clapping his musket to his ear, swore he would blow out his brains if he uttered another syllable; and Frere, catching the malignant eye of John Rex, remembered how easily a twitch of the finger would pay off old scores, and was silent. "Step in here, sir, if you please," said Rex, with polite irony. "I am sorry to be compelled to tie you, but I must consult my own safety as well as your convenience." Frere scowled, and, stepping awkwardly into the jolly boat, fell. Pinioned as he was, he could not rise without assistance, and Russen pulled him roughly to his feet, with a coarse laugh. In his present frame of mind, that laugh galled him worse than his bonds.

Poor Mrs. Vickers, with a woman's quick instinct, saw this, and even amid her own trouble found leisure to console. "The wretches!" she said, under her breath, as Frere was flung down beside her, "to subject you to such indignity!" Sylvia said nothing and seemed to shrink from the lieutenant.

"Now, my lads," says Rex, who seemed to have endued the cast-off authority of Frere, "we give you your choice. Stay at Hell's Gates or come with us! I can't wait here all night. The wind is freshening, and we must make the bar. Which is it to be?"

"We'll go with you!" says the man who had pulled stroke in the whaleboat. Upon which utterance the convicts burst into joyous cries, and the pair were received with much hand shaking.

Then Rex, with Lyon and Riley as a guard, got into the whaleboat, and having loosed the two prisoners from their bonds, ordered them to take the places of Russen and Fair. The whaleboat was manned by the seven mutineers, Rex steering, Fair, Russen and the two recruits pulling, the other four standing up, with their muskets leveled at the jolly boat. Their long slavery had begotten such a dread of authority in these men that they feared it even when it was bound and menaced by four muskets. "Keep your distance!" shouted Cheshire, as Frere and Bates, in obedience to orders, began to pull the jolly boat toward the shore; and in this fashion was the dismal little party conveyed to the mainland.

It was night when they reached it, but the clear sky began to thrill with a late moon as yet unarisen, and the waves, breaking gently upon the beach, glimmered with a radiance born of their own motion. Frere and Bates jumping ashore, helped out Mrs. Vickers, Sylvia and the wounded Grimes. This being done under the muzzles of the muskets, Rex commanded that Bates and Frere should push the jolly boat as far as they could from the shore, and Riley catching her by a boat hook as she came toward them, she was taken in tow.

"Now, boys," says Cheshire, with a savage delight, "three cheers for old England and liberty!"

Upon which a great shout went up, echoed by the grim hills which had witnessed so many miseries.

CHAPTER XIV.

There is no need to dwell upon the mental agonies of that miserable night. Frere had a tinder box in his pocket, and made a fire with some dry leaves and sticks. Grimes fell asleep, and the two men sitting at their fire, discussed the chances of escape.

A discussion had arisen among the mutineers as to the propriety of at once making sail; but Barker, who had been one of the pilot boat crew, and knew the dangers of the bar, vowed that he would not undertake to steer the brig through the Gates until morning; and so the boats being secured astern, a strict watch was set, lest the helpless Bates should attempt to rescue the vessel. During the evening a feeling of pity for the unfortunate party on the mainland took possession of them. It was quite possible that the Osprey might be recaptured, in which case five useless murders would have been committed. John Rex, seeing how matters were going, made haste to take to himself the credit of mercy. He ruled, and had always ruled, his ruffians.

"I propose," said he, "that we divide the provisions. There are five of them and ten of us. Then nobody can blame us."

This reasoning was admitted and acted upon. There were in the harness cask about fifty pounds of salt meat, and a third of this quantity, together with half a small sack of flour, some tea and sugar mixed together in a bag, and an iron kettle and pannikin, were placed in the whaleboat. Cheshire, stumbling over a goat that had been taken on board from Philip Island, caught the creature by the leg and threw it into the sea, bidding Rex take that with him also. Rex dragged the poor beast into the boat, and with this miscellaneous cargo pushed off to the shore. The poor goat, shivering, began to bleat piteously, and the men laughed. To a stranger it would have appeared that the boat contained a happy party of fishermen, or coast settlers, returning with the proceeds of a day's marketing.

Laying off as the water shallowed, Rex called to Bates to come for the cargo, and three men with muskets standing up as before, ready to resist any attempt at capture, the provisions, goat and all, were carried ashore. "There!" says Rex, "you can't say we've used you badly, for we've divided the provisions." The sight of this almost unexpected succor revived the courage of the five, and they felt grateful. After the horrible anxiety they had endured all that night, they were prepared to look with kindly eyes upon the men who had come to their assistance.

"Men," said Bates, with something like a sob in his voice, "I didn't expect this. You are good fellows, for there ain't much tucker aboard, I know."

"Yes," affirmed Frere, "you're good fellows."

Rex burst into a savage laugh. "Shut your mouth, you tyrant," said he, forgetting his dandyism in the recollection of his former suffering. "It ain't for your benefit. You may thank the lady and child for it."

Julia Vickers hastened to propitiate the arbiter of her daughter's fate. "We are obliged to you," she said, with a touch of quiet dignity resembling her husband's; "and if I ever get back safely I will take care that your kindness shall be known."

So, with cheers and waving of handkerchiefs, the boat departed.

A council of war was held, with Mr. Frere at the head of it, and the possessions of the little party were thrown into common stock.

It was found, upon a review of their possessions that they had among them three pocket-knives, a ball of string, three pipes and a fig of tobacco, a portion of fishing line, with hooks, and a big jackknife. But they saw with dismay that there was nothing which could be used axwise among the party. Mrs. Vickers had her shawl, and Bates a pea jacket, but Frere and Grimes were without extra clothing.

Having made these arrangements, the kettle, filled with water from the spring, was slung from three green sticks over the fire, and a pannikin of weak tea, together with a biscuit, served out to each of the party, save Grimes, who declared himself unable to eat. Breakfast over, Bates made a damper, which was cooked in the ashes, and then another council was held as to future habitation.

It was clearly evident that they could not sleep in the open air. It was the middle of summer, and though no annoyance from rain was apprehended, the heat in the middle of the day was most oppressive. At a little distance from the beach was a sandy rise, that led up to the face of the cliff, and on the eastern side of this rise grew a forest of young trees. Frere proposed to cut down these trees and make a sort of hut with them. It was soon discovered, however, that the pocket knives were insufficient for this purpose, but by dint of notching the young saplings, and then breaking them down, they succeeded, in a couple of hours, in collecting wood enough to roof over a space between the hollow rock which contained the provisions and another rock, in shape like a hammer, which jutted out within five yards of it. Mrs. Vickers and Sylvia were to have this hut as a sleeping place, and Frere and Bates, lying at the mouth of the larder, would at once act as a guard to it and them. Grimes was to make for himself another hut where the fire had been lighted on the previous night.

When they got back to dinner, inspirited by this resolution, they found poor Mrs. Vickers in great alarm. Grimes, who, by reason of the dent in his skull, had been left behind, was walking about the sea beach, talking mysteriously, and shaking his fist at an imaginary foe. On going up to him they discovered that the blow had affected his brain, for he was delirious. Frere endeavored to soothe him, without effect, and at last, by Bates' advice, the poor fellow was rolled in the sea. The cold bath quelled his violence, and being laid beneath the shade of a rock hard by, he fell into a condition of great muscular exhaustion, and slept.

The condition of the unfortunate Grimes soon gave cause for the greatest uneasiness. From maundering foolishly, he had taken to absolute violence, and had to be watched by Frere. After much muttering and groaning, the poor fellow at last dropped off to sleep, and Frere, having assisted Bates to his sleeping place in front of the rock, and laid him down on a heap of green brushwood, prepared to snatch a few hours' slumber. Wearied by excitement and the labors of the day, he slept heavily, but toward morning was awakened by a strange noise.

Grimes, whose delirium had apparently increased, had succeeded in forcing his way through the rude fence of brushwood, and had thrown himself upon Bates with the ferocity of insanity. Growling to himself, he had seized the unfortunate pilot by the throat, and the pair were struggling together. Bates, weakened by the sickness that had followed upon his wound in the head, was quite unable to cope with his desperate assailant, but, calling feebly upon Frere for help, he made shift to lay hold upon the jackknife of which we have before spoken. Frere, starting to his feet, rushed to the assistance of the pilot, but was too late. Grimes, enraged by the sight of the knife, tore it from Bates' grasp, and, before Frere could catch his arm, plunged it twice into the unfortunate man's breast.

"I'm a dead man!" cried Bates, faintly.

The sight of the blood, together with the exclamation of his victim, recalled Grimes to consciousness. He looked in bewilderment at the bloody weapon, and then flinging it from him, rushed away toward the sea, into which he plunged headlong.

Frere hurried to the side of Bates, and, lifting him up, strove to stanch the blood that flowed from his chest. It would seem that he had been resting himself on his left elbow, and that Grimes, snatching the knife from his right hand, had stabbed him twice in the right breast. He was pale and senseless, and Frere feared that the wound was mortal. Tearing off his neck handkerchief, he endeavored to bandage the wound, but found that the strip of silk was insufficient for the purpose. The noise had roused Mrs. Vickers, who, stifling her terror, made haste to tear off a portion of her dress, and with this a bandage of sufficient width was made. Sylvia brought some water from the spring, and Mrs. Vickers bathing Bates' head with this, he revived a little.

"Don't die, Mr. Bates—oh, don't die!" said Sylvia, standing, piteously, near, but afraid to touch him. "Don't leave mamma and me alone in this dreadful place!"

Poor Bates, of course, said nothing, but Frere frowned heavily, and Mrs. Vickers said reprovingly, "Sylvia!" just as if they had been in the old house on distant Sarah Island.

In the afternoon Frere went away to drag together some wood for the fire, and when he returned he found the pilot near his end. As the sun sank Bates rallied, but the two watchers knew that it was but the final flicker of the expiring candle. "He's going!" said Frere, at length, under his breath, as though fearful of awaking his half-slumbering soul. Mrs. Vickers, her eyes streaming with silent tears, lifted the honest head and moistened the parched lips with her soaked handkerchief. A tremor shook the once stalwart limbs, and the dying man opened his eyes. For an instant he seemed bewildered, and then, looking from one to the other, intelligence returned to his glance, and it was evident that he remembered all. His gaze rested upon the pale face of the affrighted Sylvia, and then turned to Frere. There could be no mistaking the mute appeal of those eloquent eyes.

"Yes, I'll take care of her," said Frere.

Bates smiled, and then observing that the blood from his wound had stained the white shawl of Mrs. Vickers, he made an effort to move his head. It was not fitting that a lady's shawl should be stained with the blood of a poor fellow like himself. The fashionable fribble, with quick instinct, understood the gesture, and gently drew the head back upon her bosom. In the presence of death the woman was womanly. For a moment all was silent, and they thought he had gone; but all at once he opened his eyes, and looked round for the sea. (To be continued.)

THE OLD-TIME SUGAR CAMP.

In the Good Old Days When Everything Was Done by Hand.

Most everybody knows about the modern method of maple sugar making, writes E. A. Bushnell in the Cincinnati Post. The story I would tell deals with the good old days when everything was done by hand. The season begins about March 1 and lasts from four to six weeks.

When I tended camp, in the old days, a big black kettle was swung to the "hanging pole" out in the open. The sap was brought from the trees to the kettle in pails hung one on each end of the "sap yoke" resting on the neck and shoulders of a man. During a "big run" it was kept filled and boiling all day and night. In spite of smarting eyes from the wood smoke and scorching heat, the fire must be tended every few minutes and the scum, pieces of bark, dead leaves, cinders and twigs skimmed from the surface of the boiling sap.

I can see the blue smoke curling from the tops of the brown leafless trees in the old camp, and smell the sweet odor of the steam from boiling sap through the open door of the sugar house. The air is frosty and invigorating. Down in the hollows on the north side of the hill, little patches of cold white snow are hiding beneath matted dead leaves, behind tree trunks and old moss-covered logs.

Ice clings to the banks of the sluggish brook, and I hear the trill of wood

IN THE OLD SUGAR CAMP.

birds, and the monotonous throbbing of a partridge's wings up where the hemlocks stand thick and gloomy. On the southern slopes the first warm breath of spring has melted the snow. It stands in clear crystal pools where the grass is green, and reflects back the sky and tall trees as you look down in it.

The sweet, cold, sparkling sap from the maple trees on the hillside tinkles drop by drop into the buckets, and redbreasted robins call to their mates among the branches.

A frightened woodchuck scurries into his hole at the sound of merry song and laughter, and barking of dogs from the camp in the valley. A flock of hungry "cawing" crows "flap" lazily over a frozen and honeycombed wheat field on their way to the rookery in the old mysterious tamarack swamp.

The air grows chilly as the sun goes down and dark shadows creep through the woods. The little barnlike-looking sugar house, which to the superstitious was a rendezvous for ghosts throughout the cold, bleak winter, now resounds with cheery voices, and is aglow with light and welcome.

There is a "big run" on and the tenders are "boiling down" all night. And supper is ready, and such a supper! Smoked ham, eggs cooked in boiling sap, potatoes roasted in ashes, and coffee sweetened with pure maple syrup.

Posthumous Honors on Suicides.

When the Japanese protectorate over Korea was declared recently many Koreans grumbled and some even went the length of committing suicide in order to mark their displeasure. According to the Korea Daily News, the emperor has conferred posthumous honors upon several of these suicides. One of the misguided men, who poisoned himself with opium, was a minor official of the educational department, but the emperor raised him to the rank of vice minister of education, and an official of that department was dispatched by the emperor to inscribe the title upon his coffin. Another man, a private in the army, who committed suicide at the same time and for the same reasons, has also had posthumous promotion conferred upon him.

Duty First.

Her Ladyship (who is giving a servants' ball, to butler)—We shall begin with a square dance, and I shall want you, Wilkins, to be my partner.

Wilkins—Certainly, m'lady; and afterwards I presoom we may dance with 'oom we like?—Punch.

Peanut Pick-Me-Up.

When you come in tired from a shopping trip, try a glass of milk, hot or cold, thickened with chopped peanuts.

Of course any workingman would rather work than be worked.

The Next Step.

"I don't want any government at all," said the anarchist.

"Suppose you succeeded in abolishing the government?"

"Then I could step in and start one of my own."—Washington Star.

His Curiosity Excited.

The subject under discussino at the corner grocery was the Panama canal.

"I've heard a good deal," remarked Mr. Wipedunks, "about this Culebra cut. Why in thunder don't some of the newspapers print it?"

Too Curious.

One well-known New York woman has discovered, like some others of her sex, that it does not pay to be too curious. One of the old family retainers is a Scotchman, named William, who does not believe in glossing over the truth for the sake of sparing his listener's feelings. The woman in question, although possessed of considerable charm of manner, is not a beauty and knows it. Her husband, recently deceased, was a remarkably handsome man, and his wife was one of his sincerest admirers. One day when she was looking at her husband's picture on the mantel in the sitting room, William was fussing around the grate, and in a moment of impulse she asked: "William, what do you think made such a handsome man as Colonel S. marry such a plain woman as me?" William looked from the portrait to the speaker, meditated a second, and answered: "Must have been heaven's will, ma'am."

Reconciled Science and Religion.

A clergyman is quoted in Everybody's Magazine as confounding an advanced young woman who was demonstrating to him that science had disproved religion with this little parable. "Madam," he said, "I once knew a member of your sex who perfectly reconciled science and religion. She is a prominent member of the Young Women's Christian Association and she was making an address to a large gathering of women, which was interrupted by a terrific thunder shower. She shared with many the awful fear of thunder and lightning, and, with the others, she trembled in silence for a few moments. When a blinding flash was swiftly followed by a frightful clap of thunder she struggled to her feet, and began to pray, 'Oh, Lord, take us under thy protecting wings, for thou knowest that feathers are non-conductors.'"

Pat's Effort to Keep Lent.

In an ordinary restaurant a waiter was surprised at being asked with Ireland's inimitable smile for "divilled whale." "Is it filleted shark that ye have, thin?" pursued the Irishman on being refused this delicacy. Again receiving a reply in the negative he tried once more. "Thin ye can bring me some roasted porpoise," he said. The waiter showed signs of becoming restive, and Paddy sank back in his seat and heaved a sigh of contentment. "I'll take some roast beef and vegetables," he said, cheerfully, "and sure ye'll not be for saying that I didn't ask ye for fish."—London Chronicle.

The Simple Truth.

"This," said the manufacturer proudly, "is our latest novelty."

"Very fair," remarked the visitor, "but you can't hold a candle to our goods."

"Indeed? Are you in this line of business?"

"No, I make gunpowder."—Philadelphia Press.

Timely.

"I see Bilkins is right up-to-date."

"In what way?"

"He's wearing a Longworth necktie and smoking an Alice Roosevelt cigar."—Milwaukee Sertinel.