

For The Term of His Natural Life

By MARCUS CLARKE

CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)

By and by, having eaten of this miraculous provender, the poor creature began to understand what had taken place. The coal workings were abandoned; the new commandant had probably other work for his boasts of burden to execute, and an absconder would be safe here for a few hours at least. But he must not stay. For him there was no rest. If he thought to escape, it behooved him to commence his journey at once. Here was provision for his needs. The food before him represented the rations of six men. Was it not possible to cross the desert that lay between him and freedom on such fare? The very supposition made his heart beat faster. It surely was possible. Twenty miles a day was very easy walking. Taking a piece of stick from the ground, he made the calculation in the sand. Eighteen days, and twenty miles a day—three hundred and sixty miles. More than enough to take him to freedom. It could be done! With prudence, it could be done! He must be careful and abstemious.

Having come to this resolution, the next thing was to disencumber himself of his iron. This was more easily done than he expected. He found in the shed an iron gad, and with that and a stone he drove out the rivets.

Before dawn the next morning he had traveled ten miles, and by husbanding his food he succeeded, by the night of the fourth day, in accomplishing forty more. Foot-sore and weary, he lay in a thicket, and felt at last that he was beyond pursuit. The next day he advanced more slowly. The path terminated in a glade, and at the bottom of this glade was something that fluttered. Rufus Dawes pressed forward, and stumbled over a corpse!

He recognized the number imprinted on the coarse cloth at that which designated the younger of the two men who had escaped with Gabbett. He was standing on the place where a murder had been committed! A murder!—and what else? Thank God, the food he carried was not yet exhausted! He turned and fled, looking back fearfully as he went.

Crashing through scrub and brake, torn, bleeding and wild with terror, he reached a spur of the range, and looked around him. He raised his eyes, and right against him, like a long dull sword, lay the narrow steel-blue reach of the harbor from which he had escaped. One darker speck moved on the dark water. It was the Osprey making for the Gates. It seemed that he could throw a stone upon her deck. A faint cry of rage escaped him. During the last three days in the bush he must have retraced his steps, and returned upon his own track to the settlement! More than half his allotted time had passed, and he was not yet thirty miles from his prison.

For four days he wandered aimlessly through the bush. At last, on the twelfth day from his departure from the Coal Head, he found himself at the foot of Mount Direction, at the head of the peninsula which makes the western side of the harbor. His terrible wandering had led him to make a complete circuit of the settlement, and the next night brought him round the shores of Birches Inlet to the landing place opposite Sarah Island. His stock of provisions had been exhausted for two days, and he was savage with hunger. He no longer thought of suicide. His dominant idea was now to get food. He would do as many others had done before him—give himself up to be flogged and fed. When he reached the landing place, however, the guard house was empty. He looked across at the island prison, and saw no sign of life. The settlement was deserted!

The shock of this discovery almost deprived him of reason. For days, that had seemed centuries, he had kept life in his jaded and lacerated body solely by the strength of his fierce determination to reach the settlement; and now that he had reached it, after a journey of unparalleled horror, he found it deserted. He struck himself to see if he was not dreaming. He refused to believe his eyesight. He shouted, screamed and waved his tattered garments in the air.

At last the dreadful truth forced itself upon him. He retired a few paces, and then, with a horrible cry of furious despair, stumbled forward toward the edge of the little reef that fringed the shore. Just as he was about to fling himself for the second time into the dark water, his eyes, sweeping in a last long look around the bay, caught sight of a strange appearance on the left horn of the sea beach. A thin blue streak, uprising from behind the western arm of the little inlet, hung in the still air. It was the smoke of a fire.

The dying wretch felt inspired with new hope. God had sent him a direct sign from heaven. The tiny column of bluish vapor seemed to him as glorious as the pillar of fire that led the Israelites. There were yet human beings near him! And turning his face from the hungry sea, he tottered, with the last effort of his failing strength, toward the blessed token of their presence.

CHAPTER XIII.

Frere had gone on a brief fishing expedition. At last a peremptory signal warned him. It was the sound of a musket fired on board the brig. Mr. Bates was getting impatient, and with a scowl Frere drew up his lines, and ordered the two soldiers to pull for the vessel.

The Osprey yet sat motionless on the water, and her bare masts gave no sign

of making sail. To the soldiers, pulling with their backs to her, the musket-shot seemed the most ordinary occurrence in the world. Suddenly, however, they noticed a change of expression in the sullen face of their commander. Frere, sitting in the stern-sheets, with his face to the Osprey, had observed a peculiar appearance on her decks. The bulwarks were every now and then topped by strange figures, who disappeared as suddenly as they came, and a faint murmur of voices floated across the intervening sea. Presently the report of another musket-shot echoed among the hills, and something dark fell from the side of the vessel into the water. Frere, with mingled alarm and indignation, sprang to his feet, and, shading his eyes with his hand, looked toward the brig. The soldiers, resting on their oars, imitated his gesture, and the whole-boat, thus thrown out of trim, rocked from side to side dangerously. A moment's anxious pause, and then another musket-shot, followed by a woman's shrill scream, explained all. The prisoners had seized the brig! "Give way!" cried Frere, pale with rage and apprehension, and the soldiers, realizing at once the full terror of their position, forced the heavy whole-boat through the water as fast as the one miserable pair of oars could take her.

Mr. Bates, affected by the insidious influence of the hour, and lulled into a sense of false security, had gone below to tell his little playmate that she would soon be on her way to the Hobart Town of which she had heard so much, and, taking advantage of his absence, the soldier not on guard went to the forecastle to hear the prisoners singing. He found the ten together, in high good humor. While he listened James Lesly, William Cheshire, William Russen, John Fair and James Barker slipped to the hatchway and got upon deck. Barker reached the aft-hatchway as the soldier who was on guard turned to complete his walk, and passing his arm round his neck, pulled him down before he could utter a cry. In the confusion of the moment the man loosed his grasp of the musket and grappled with his unseen antagonist, and Fair, snatching up the weapon, swore to blow out his brains if he raised a finger. Seeing the sentry thus secured, Cheshire leaped down the after-hatchway and passed up the muskets from the arm-tracks to Lesly and Russen. There were three muskets in addition to the one taken from the sentry, and Barker, leaving his prisoner in charge of Fair, seized one of them and ran to the companion-ladder. Russen, left unarmed by this maneuver, appeared to know his own duty. He came back to the forecastle, and passing behind the listening soldier, touched the trigger on the shoulder. This was the appointed signal, and John Rex, suddenly terminating his song with a laugh, presented his fist in the face of the gaping Grimes.

"No noise!" he cried; "the brig's ours." "Come on, lads!" said Rex, "and pass the prisoner down here. We've got her time, I'll go ball!" In obedience to this order, the now gagged sentry was flung down the fore-hatchway, and the hatch secured. "Stand on the hatchway, Porter," cries Rex again; "and if those fellows come up knock 'em down with a handspike. Lesly and Russen, forward to the companion-ladder! Lyon, keep a lookout for the boat, and if she comes too near, fire!"

As he spoke the report of the first musket rang out. Barker had apparently fired up the companion-hatchway. When Mr. Bates had gone below, he found Sylvia curled up on the cushions of the stateroom, reading. "Well, missy?" he said, "we'll soon be on our way to papa."

Sylvia answered by asking a question altogether foreign to the subject. "Mr. Bates," said she, pushing the hair out of her blue eyes, "what's a coracle?" "A coracle," C-o-r-a-c-l-e, said she, spelling it slowly. "I want to know." The bewildered Bates shook his head. "Never heard of one, missy," said he, bending over the book. "What does it say?"

"The Ancient Britons," said Sylvia, reading gravely, "were little better than barbarians. They painted their bodies with wood—that's blue stuff, you know, Mr. Bates—and seated in their light coracles of skin stretched upon slender wooden frames, must have presented a wild and savage appearance."

"Well," said Bates, "I think it's a carriage, missy. A sort of pheasant, as they call it."

Sylvia, hardly satisfied, returned to the book. It was a little, mean-looking volume—a "Child's History of England"—and after perusing it a while with knitted brows, she burst into a childish laugh.

"Why, my dear Mr. Bates!" she cried, waving the history above her head in triumph, "what a pair of geese we are! A carriage! Oh, you silly man! It's a boat!"

"Is it?" said Mr. Bates, in admiration of the intelligence of his companion. "Who'd ha' thought that now?" and he was about to laugh also, when, raising his eyes, he saw in the open doorway the figure of James Barker, with a musket in his hand.

"Hallo! What's this? What do you do here, sir?"

"Sorry to disturb yer," says the convict, with a grin, "but you must come along with me, Mr. Bates."

Bates, at once comprehending that some terrible misfortune had occurred, did not lose his presence of mind. One

of the cushions of the couch was under his right hand, and snatching it up, he flung it across the little cabin full in the face of the escaped prisoner. The soft mass struck the man with force sufficient to blind him for an instant. The musket exploded harmlessly in the air; and, ere the astonished Barker could recover his footing, Bates had hurried him out of the cabin, and, crying "Mutiny!" locked the cabin-door on the inside. The noise brought out Mrs. Vickers from her berth, and the poor little student of English history ran into her arms.

"It's a mutiny, ma'am," said Bates. "Go back to your cabin and lock the door. Those bloody villains have risen on us! Maybe it ain't so bad as it looks; I've got my pistols with me, and Mr. Frere'll hear the shot anyway. Mutiny! On deck there!" he cried at the full pitch of his voice, and his brow grew damp with dismay when a mocking laugh from above was the only response. Thrusting the woman and child into the state berth, the bewildered pilot cocked a pistol, and snatching a cutlass from the arm-stand fixed to the butt of the mast which penetrated the cabin, he burst open the door with his foot, and rushed to the companion-ladder. Barker had retreated to the deck, and for an instant he thought the way was clear, but Lesly and Russen thrust him back with the muzzles of the loaded muskets. He struck at Russen with the cutlass, missed him, and, seeing the hopelessness of the attack, was fain to retreat.

In the meanwhile, Grimes and the other soldier had loosed themselves from their bonds, and encouraged by the firing which seemed to them a sign that all was not yet lost, made shift to force up the fore-hatch. Porter, whose courage was none of the fiercest, and who had been for years given over to that terror of discipline which servitude induces, made but a feeble attempt at resistance, and forcing the handspike from him, the sentry, Jones, rushed aft to help the pilot. As Jones reached the waist, Cheshire, a cold-blooded, blue-eyed man, shot him dead. Grimes fell over the corpse, and Cheshire clubbing the musket coolly battered his head as he lay, and then seizing the body of the unfortunate Jones in his arms, tossed it into the sea. "Porter, you lubber!" he cried, exhausted with the effort to lift the body, "come and bear a hand with this other one!" Porter advanced aghast; but just then another occurrence claimed the villain's attention, and poor Grimes' life was spared for that time.

Rex, inwardly raging at this unexpected resistance on the part of the pilot, flung himself on the skylight, and tore it up bodily. As he did so, Barker, who had reloaded his musket, fired down into the cabin. The ball passed through the stateroom door, and splintering the wood, buried itself close to the golden curls of poor little Sylvia. It was their hair-breadth escape which drew from the agonized mother that shriek which, pealing through the open stern windows, had roused the soldiers in the boat.

Rex, who by the virtue of his dandyism, yet possessed some abhorrence of needless crime, imagined that the cry was one of pain, and that Barker's bullet had taken deadly effect. "You've killed the child, you villain!" he cried.

"What's the odds?" asked Barker, sulkily. "She must die anyway, sooner or later." Rex put his head down the skylight, and called on Bates to surrender; but Bates only drew his other pistol. "Would you commit murder?" he asked, looking round with desperation in his glance.

"No, no," cried some of the men, willing to blink the death of poor Jones. "It's no use making things worse than they are. Bid him come up and we'll do him no harm."

"Come up, Mr. Bates," says Rex, "and I give you my word you shan't be injured."

"Will you set the major's lady and child ashore, then?" asked Bates, sturdily facing the scowling brows above him.

"Yes."

Bates, hoping against hope for the return of the boat, endeavored to gain time. "Shut down the skylight, then," said he, with the ghost of an authority in his voice, "until I ask the lady."

"This, however, John Rex refused to do. "You can ask well enough where you are," he said.

But there was no need for Mr. Bates to put a question. The door of the stateroom opened, and Mrs. Vickers appeared, trembling, with Sylvia by her side. "Accept, Mr. Bates," she said, "since it must be so. We should gain nothing by refusing. We are at their mercy—God help us!"

"Amn to that," says Bates under his breath; and then, aloud, "We agree!"

"Put your pistols on the table and come up, then," says Rex, covering the tables with his musket as he spoke. "Nobody shall hurt you."

Mrs. Vickers, pale and sick with terror, passed rapidly under the open skylight, and prepared to ascend. Sylvia clung to her mother with one hand, and with the other pressed close to her little bosom the "English History."

"Get a shawl, ma'am, or something," says Bates, "and a hat for missy."

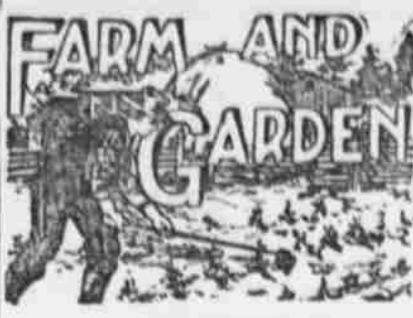
"Who's to command the brig now?" asked undaunted Bates, as they came up.

"I am," says John Rex; "and with these brave fellows I'll take her round the world."

"What are you going to do with us?" asked Bates.

"Leave you behind. Come, look alive there! Lower away the jolly-boat. Mrs. Vickers, go down to your cabin, and get anything you want. I am compelled to put you ashore, but I have no wish to leave you without clothes." Bates listened, in a sort of dismal admiration, at this courtly convict. He could not have spoken like that had life depended on it. "Now, my little lady," continued Rex, "run down with your mamma, and don't be frightened."

(To be continued.)



The Way to Make a Brooder.

Those who prefer the artificial method of raising chickens can make a brooder out of an old packing case which will accommodate fifty chicks at a cost of about a dollar. Such a brooder has given excellent results at one of the experimental stations when used in shed or colony house. Details of construction of a brooder of this kind are shown in the illustrations. The lower section of the brooder, which contains the lamp for heating, is a box

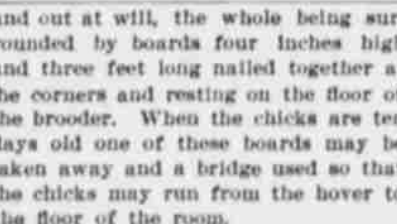


HOMEMADE BROODER.

three feet square made of ten-inch boards, which is covered with tin or galvanized iron.

Above this cover, around the edges of the lamp box, one-inch strips are nailed. Two one-inch holes are bored through the strips on each side of the box for the purpose of ventilation. A floor of matched boards is laid on the strips. A hole eight inches in diameter is cut in the center of this floor, and over it is reversed an old tin pan ten inches in diameter, the sides of the pan being punched full of holes to allow free circulation of heat. Over this is placed a table two feet six inches square, with legs four and a half inches high.

Around the sides of this table is tacked a curtain of felt cloth from top to bottom at intervals of five or six inches to allow the chicks to pass in eddyboardsfourinches rdlu uu unnnnn



SECTION OF BROODER.

and out at will, the whole being surrounded by boards four inches high and three feet long nailed together at the corners and resting on the floor of the brooder. When the chicks are ten days old one of these boards may be taken away and a bridge used so that the chicks may run from the hover to the floor of the room.

Bracing a Fence Post.

Oftentimes it is necessary or politic to curve the farm fence at a certain point, and those who have built such fences appreciate the difficulty of setting the post at the sharpest point of the curve, so that it will not pull over. Any of the ordinary methods of bracing do not seem to answer the purpose. An excellent brace may be made by the following plan: Place the post in position, then dig a hole two feet deep and about six or eight feet from the post. Obtain a heavy stone and fasten a stout piece of wire to it, long enough to reach to the post and wrap around it two or three times. Then bury the stone in the hole, covering it with the soil and tramping the soil down tightly. The other end of the wire is then wrapped about the post tightly and



HOW TO BRACE A FENCE POST.

held in position with staples. It should be drawn taut. It will not be possible for the post to draw away from this brace under any ordinary conditions. The illustration shows how simple the plan is.

Cattle That Are Immune.

A discovery that may have an important place in the world's history, though of apparent trivial importance in itself, is that native Japanese cattle, under natural conditions, are free from tuberculosis, while cattle imported into Japan appear to be highly susceptible. The significance of the discovery lies in the possibility that an immune breed of cattle may be developed which, of course, would be a big victory in the war being waged against the white plague.

Mixed Seeds for Meadows.

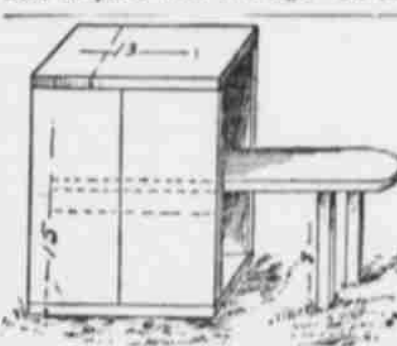
Taking one farm with another, there are few containing the soil necessary to grow a profitable crop of pure timothy hay, hence it is best to use mixed seeds. What the mixture should be depends somewhat on the locality and the strength of the soil. Where clover hay is mainly desired a mixture of alsike clover and timothy gives splendid results, particularly on soil that is inclined to be wet. Eight pounds of clover to the acre is the usual seeding for red clover, though on land that has been in clover six pounds is usually sufficient. As a rule, there is not enough clover hay grown on the farm. Valuable as timothy is for horses, the clover hay is much more valuable for a mixed lot of stock; it suits the cows, sheep, calves and lambs better than either timothy or mixed hay, and is very valuable for the poultry. Where there is an abundance we would not hesitate to feed more or less of it to swine as a variation in the roughage from corn stover.

Open the Stable Windows.

If the cows have been stabled all winter they are likely to become uneasy as spring advances and long for outdoors. It is an excellent plan to turn them out into sheltered barnyards that are clean and so arranged that the cold spring winds will not blow over them. Give them some roughage to munch over while they are out. If it is not feasible to turn them out yet, then arrange the stable so they may have all the fresh air possible without causing the air to blow over them so they are likely to catch cold. The window arranged so that it may be opened and the opening covered by the muslin sash will furnish this air without draught better than anything else. Especially give the cows sun if it can be done. If there is an open shed on the place facing the sun into which the cows may be turned they will enjoy it immensely. This little care just a few weeks before they are turned out to grass will help affairs wonderfully.

Good Milking Stool.

The milking stool on the average farm is of little value. Usually it is an affair with one leg, upon which the milker balances himself so that he can fall readily, carrying the pail of milk with him, should the cow move quickly. A stool that will not tip over is readily made of a small box that is strong. The box should be about fifteen inches high, unless the cow is built low, in which case the box can be three inches lower. It should be from twelve to fourteen inches square to form a comfortable seat. Nail two cleats on the inside of the box exactly eight inches from the bottom, then fit a bench or shelf on these cleats, with one end extending out the sufficient length and held in place with two legs. On this



AN IDEAL MILKING STOOL.

the pail is set, while the milker occupies the top of the box and straddles the pail. This appliance is readily made, is firm on the floor, and, except in unusual cases, no cow would be likely to upset either pail or milker. The illustration shows the affair very plainly.

Weighting the Milk.

There is no good reason why the plan of weighing the milk to ascertain what each cow is doing should be put off until fall. Start in with the fresh cows and keep it up around to the time they are dried off again, and one will then have a valuable record of results. A neighbor whom we induced to try this plan several years ago was glad enough to get rid of one-half of his herd of eighteen cows and buy new ones, for he found that those he sold had been robbing him for years; in the case of two of them they were a positive loss while the others gave not enough profit in the twelve months to anywhere near pay for the time consumed in caring for them. The eyes of more than one dairyman have been opened by this simple expedient of keeping a careful record, by weight, of the milk furnished by each cow for a given period of considerable length. This is necessary, for some cows are small milkers in summer, others in winter, and vice versa.—Indianapolis News.

Giant Among Incubators.

An incubator holding 11,700 eggs is now in operation in Buffalo, N. Y., and the company building it is said to have orders for three more of the mammoth incubators in different parts of the United States. It would seem from this that the problem of artificial incubation had passed the experimental stage, which many people seem to think it is still laboring in.

It is better to look for a physician than for sympathy when you are sick.

Her Second Choice.

Nobody was more desirous of saying pleasant things than Mrs. Appleby, and she never realized what an uncomplimentary vision of themselves her listeners sometimes obtained through her agency.

Mr. Appleby often realized it, however, and he spent a good deal of time endeavoring to smooth troubled waters in the neighborhood.

"I didn't get to the funeral over at Mashby, after all," said the good woman, one night at the supper table. "I felt sort of disappointed when I found the Larabee carriage was all full—three on the back seat, and no place for an extra one."

"Then I bethought me of poor Anne Willard that lives down that next street to the Larrabees. She's lame, you know, and pretty deaf, but I scream right into her ear, so she can always hear me."

"I went right down there and found her alone, as usual, and I said to her, 'Anne, I couldn't get over to Mashby to a funeral, so I did the next best thing, and came to see you.'"

"You'd never have suspected from her face how gratified she was. She has these long features, and they seemed to be drawn out solemnly than usual, but of course I knew she was pleased, anybody that sees as few as she does, living out of the way and lived up in that little house."

Beyond the Limit.

"I don't mind folks borrowing," said Miss Hodges, plaintively, to an old friend who was paying her a visit, "but I've got an awful trying woman for a neighbor just now. She borrows such queer things I'm most out of patience with her."

"Shears and brooms and the flour-sifter and ironing board, I s'pose," said the guest, who had known life in a country town.

"Merely me, I don't count such things!" said Miss Hodges. "Nor my best umbrella nor my carving knife. I can make shift to get on without 'em for a while any time. But when she come over to borrow my diary the other day, so's she could keep account of the weather and her hens' eggs and so on till her husband come back from California, she having given him hers to put down his expenses and sights in, so's she could copy her record in from my book in the right place—I declare I called it the cap-sheaf!"

Pepys' Furnace.

An electric resistance furnace was used by Pepys in 1815 for the cementation of iron. He took a piece of pure, soft iron and cut a slit along its length. The slit was filled with diamond dust, which was prevented from falling out by fine iron wire. The portion of the wire containing the dust was wrapped in mica. The wire thus charged was heated quickly to redness by the current from a battery. On opening the wire Pepys found that the diamond dust had disappeared and that around where it had been the wire had been converted to steel.—London Engineer.

Its Thrilling Effect.

The great organ pealed forth. The leader of the choir waved his baton with great energy, his head and his whole body assisting in keeping time and giving expression to the noble anthem. And the choir sang, in full chorus:

"Aw naw O waw naw raw yaw jaw;
Woe yo law ho raw law aw waw.
Law jaw O law waw raw.
Yo law haw aw law jaw O law
Woe law daw naw aw daw raw aw,
Baw waw shaw law O law!"

The congregation had some difficulty in understanding the words, but the music was grand, and it sounded like worship.—Chicago Tribune.

Taking No Chances.

The visitor had asked permission to inspect the extensive works. "Certainly," said the superintendent. "You won't mind being searched before you begin, I presume? It's merely a formality."

"What do you want to search me for? Do you think I have bombs concealed about me?"

"Worse than that. You might have a note book and pencil, you know."—Chicago Tribune.

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Assisting Conversation.

"Yes," remarked the professor, "I rather pride myself on the discovery of another hypothesis."

"Indeed," replied Mrs. Cumrox, a little doubtfully, "I had an idea they were quite extinct."—Washington Star.

A GUARANTEED CURE FOR PILES. (Healing, Itching, Bleeding, Protruding Piles. Druggists sell authorized to refund money if PAINFUL REMEDY fails to cure in 10 to 15 days.)

Woman's Way.

She—We never hear of any women after-dinner speakers.

He—No, women can't wait until after-dinner. They tell everything they know before dinner.—Yonkers Statesman.

Mothers will find Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup the best remedy to use for their children during the teething period.

Conjectural.

"The Judge let you off on account of your youth and because it was your first offense, hey? Told you to go and sin no more, did he?"

"I reckon so. When I heard him say so, I didn't wait to hear any more."