

For The Term of His Natural Life

By MARCUS CLARKE

CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

"By the bye," said Vickers, "I suppose we shall have to get that fellow up for the trial. We have to identify the villains."

"Can't you and I do that?" asked Frere, uneasily.

"I am afraid not. I wouldn't like to swear to a man after five years."

"We had better get up a few prisoners who were at the harbor at the time," said Vickers, "I wouldn't let the villains slip through my fingers for anything."

"And are the men at Port Arthur old men?" asked Meekin.

"Old convicts," returned Vickers. "It's our case for 'colonial-sentence' men. The worst we have are there. It has taken the place of Macquarie Harbor. What excitement there will be among them when the schooner goes down on Monday! Most of the prisoners are lifers, you see, and a trip to Hobart Town is like a holiday to them."

"And do they never leave the place when sentenced for life?" said Meekin.

"Never, except when they die," said Frere, with a laugh; "and then they are buried on the island. Oh, it's a fine place! You should come down with me and have a look at it. Mr. Meekin, Picturesque, I can assure you."

"My dear Maurice," says Sylvia, going to the piano, as if in protest to the turn the conversation was taking, "how can you talk like that?"

"I should much like to see it," said Meekin.

The convict-servant, who had entered with some official paper for the major, stared at the dainty clergyman, and rough Maurice laughed again. "Oh, it's a stunning climate," he cried, "and nothing to do. Just the place for you. There's a regular little colony here. All the scoundrels in Van Dieman's Land are hatched at Port Arthur."

This agreeable chatter about scandal and climate seemed a strange contrast to the graveyard island and the men who were prisoners for life. Perhaps Sylvia thought so, for she struck a few chords, which, compelling the party, out of sheer politeness, to cease talking for a moment, caused the conversation to flag, and hinted to Mr. Meekin that it was time for him to depart.

Sylvia burst into laughter as the door closed. "What a ridiculous creature!" said she. "Bless the man, with his gloves and his umbrella, and his hair and his scent! Fancy that mincing noodle showing me the way to heaven! I'd rather have old Mr. Bowles, papa, though he is as blind as a beetle."

"My dear Sylvia," said Vickers, seriously, "Mr. Meekin is a clergyman, you know."

"Oh, I know," said Sylvia; "but then, a clergyman can talk like a man, can't he? Why do they send such people here? I am sure they could do much better at home. Oh, by the way, papa, dear, poor old Danny's come back again. I told him he might go into the kitchen. May he, dear?"

"You'll have the house full of these vagabonds, you little puss," said Vickers, kissing her. "I suppose I must let him stay."

"Maurice, you are a great bear, and if you hadn't saved my life, you know, I shouldn't love you a bit. There, you may kiss me" (her voice grew softer).

"This convict business has brought it all back, and I should be ungrateful if I didn't love you, dear."

Maurice Frere, with suddenly crimsoned face, accepted the proffered caress, and then turned away to the window. "I am not half good enough for you," he cried, with sudden vehemence.

"It's my happiness that you've got to think of, Captain Brum," said the girl. "You've saved my life, haven't you? And I should be wicked if I didn't love you! No, no more kisses," she added, putting out her hand. "Come, papa, it's cool now; let's walk in the garden, and leave Maurice to think of his own unworthiness."

Maurice watched the retreating pair with a puzzled expression. "She always leaves me for her father," he said to himself. "I wonder if she really loves me, or if it's only gratitude, after all?"

He had often asked himself the same question during the five years of his wailing, but he had never satisfactorily answered it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The evening passed as it had passed a hundred times before. Captain Frere's home was a cottage on the New Town road, which he had occupied since his appointment as assistant police magistrate, an appointment given to him as a reward for his exertions in connection with the Oprey mutiny. His convict servant had sat up for him, and, as he entered the man handed him a letter, bearing a superscription in a female hand.

"Who brought this?" asked Frere, hastily tearing it open to read.

"The groom, sir. He said that there was a gentleman at The George the Fourth who wished to see you."

"You needn't wait," said Frere to the man. "I shall have to go back again, I suppose." Changing his forage cap for a soft hat, and selecting a stick from a miscellaneous collection in a corner, he prepared to retrace his steps.

"What does she want?" he asked himself, fiercely, as he strode down the moonlit road.

The George the Fourth was a long, low house, situated in Elizabeth street. Its front was painted a dull red, and the narrow panes of glass in its windows, and the ostentatious affectation

of red curtains and homely comfort gave to it a spurious appearance of English jollity.

Pushing open the side door, Frere entered, and made his way along a narrow passage to a glass door at the further end. A tap upon this door brought a girl, who courtesied with servile recognition of the visitor, and ushered him upstairs.

The room into which he was shown was a large one. It had three windows looking into the street, and was handsomely furnished. The carpet was soft, the candles were bright, and the supper tray gleamed invitingly from a table between the windows. As Frere entered, a little terrier ran barking to his feet. It was evident that he was not a constant visitor.

The rustle of a silk dress behind the terrier betrayed the presence of a woman; and Frere, rounding the promontory of an ottoman, found himself face to face with Sarah Purfoy.

"Thank you for coming," she said. "Pray sit down."

This was the only greeting that passed between them, and Frere sat down, in obedience to a motion of a plump hand that twinkled with rings. Eleven years had dealt gently with this woman. Her foot was as small and her hand as white as of yore. Her hair was plentiful and glossy, and her eyes had lost none of their dangerous brightness.

Maurice Frere spoke first; he was anxious to bring his visit to as speedy a termination as possible. "What do you want of me?" he asked.

Sarah Purfoy laughed; a forced laugh, that sounded so unnatural that Frere turned to look at her. "I want you to do me a favor, a very great favor; that is, if it will not put you out of the way."

"What do you mean?" asked Frere, roughly, pursing his lips with a sullen air.

She suddenly rose and crossed to where he was standing.

"Maurice, you were very fond of me once. Not so very many years ago."

"Hang it!" said he, shifting his arm from beneath her hand, "don't let us have all that stuff over again. Let old times be old times, Sarah. What do you want?"

"There was a transport came in this morning."

"Well?"

"You know who was on board her, Maurice?"

Maurice brought one hand into the palm of the other with a rough laugh.

"Oh, that's it, is it? What a fat I was not to think of it before! You want to see him, I suppose?"

She came close to him, and, in her earnestness, took his hand. "I want to save his life!"

Maurice Frere flung her off. "I tell you the man's as good as dead, for all I shall do to save him."

At this repulse her pent-up passion broke forth. She sprung to her feet, and, pushing back the hair that in her frenzied pleading had fallen about her face, poured out upon him a torrent of abuse. "You! Who are you that you dare to speak to me like that? His little finger is worth your whole body. He is a man, a brave man, not a coward like you. A coward! Yes, a coward! A coward! You are very brave with defenseless men and weak women. Do not I know you? I have seen you taunt a man at the triangles until I wished the screaming wretch could get loose and murder you, as you deserve. You will be murdered one of these days, Maurice Frere, take my word for it. Men are flesh and blood, and flesh and blood won't endure the torments you lay out on it."

"There, that'll do," says Frere, growing paler. "Don't excite yourself."

"I'll go to this girl you want to marry, and tell her all I know of you. I have seen her in the streets—have seen her look the other way when I passed her—have seen her gather up her muslin skirts when my silks touched her—I that saved her, that heard her say her baby prayers—O, pity me! She would shudder at you if she would shudder at you if she knew what I know. Shudder! She would hate you! And I will tell her! Ay, I will! You will be respectable, will you? A model husband?"

Frere caught her by both wrists, and with all his strength forced her to her knees. "Don't speak her name," he said, in a hoarse voice. "Or I'll do you a mischief. I know all you mean to do. I'm not such a fool as not to see that. Be quiet! Men have murdered women like you, and now I know how they came to do it. I'll do what you want, on one condition."

"What?"

"That you leave this place."

"There is nothing in the bargain to prevent me helping him to escape?"

"Escape? He won't escape again, I'll go bail. Once get him in double-irons at Port Arthur, and he's safe enough."

She put out her hand as if nothing had happened. "Good night, Captain Frere. It's a bargain, then?"

"A bargain."

Getting into the cool street directly, and seeing the calm stars shining, and the placid water sleeping with a peace in which he had no share, he strove to cast off the nervous fear that was on him. The interview had frightened him, for it had made him think.

The reader of the foregoing pages has doubtless asked himself, "What is the link which binds together John Rex and Sarah Purfoy?"

In the year 1825 there lived, at St. Heliers, Jersey, a watchmaker, named Urban Purfoy. He was a hard-work-

ing man, and had amassed a little money, sufficient to give his granddaughter an education above the common in those days. At sixteen, Sarah Purfoy was an empty-headed, strong-willed, precocious girl, with big brown eyes. She was brimful of vitality, and had little religious sentiment. She courted notoriety by eccentricities of dress, and was never so happy as when she was misunderstood. She was the sort of girl of whom women say, "It is a pity she has no mother;" and men, "It is a pity she does not get a husband;" and who say to themselves, "When shall I have a lover?"

There was no lack of beings of this latter class among the officers quartered in Fort Royal and Fort Henry; but the female population of the island was numerous, and, in the embarrassment of riches, Sarah was overlooked. Though she adored the soldier, her first lover was a civilian.

The object of her affections was one Mr. Lionel Crofton. Crofton was tall, well made, and with an insinuating address. His features were too strongly marked for beauty. His eyes were the best part of his face, and, like his hair, they were jet black. He had broad shoulders, sinewy limbs and small hands and feet. His head was round and well shaped, but it bulged a little over the ears, which were singularly small, but lay close to his head. With this man, barely four years older than herself, Sarah, at seventeen, fell violently in love. Touched by her affection, and rating her intelligence and unscrupulousness at their true value, he told her who he was. He was a swindler, a forger and a thief, and his name was John Rex.

When she heard this, she experienced a sinister delight. He told her of his plots, his tricks, his escapes, his villainies; and seeing how for years this young man had preyed upon the world, which had deceived and disowned her, her heart went out to him. "I am glad you found me," she said. "Two heads are better than one. We will work together."

Working through many channels, and never omitting to assist a fellow worker when in distress, John Rex, in a few years, and in a most prosaic, business way, became the head of a society of ruffians.

Under the names of Mr. and Mrs. Skinner, John Rex and Sarah Purfoy were living in quiet lodgings. Their landlady was a respectable, poor woman, and had a son who was a constable. This son was given to talking, and, coming in to supper one night, he told his mother than on the following evening an attack was to be made on a gang of coiners, whose leader was named Green. This she repeated to Sarah.

John Rex, eating his dinner more nervously than usual, ruminated on the intelligence, and thought it would be but wise to warn Green of his danger. Not that he cared much for Green personally; but it was bad policy to miss doing a good turn to a comrade, and, moreover, Green, if captured, might wag his tongue too freely. But how to do it? He went—and was captured. When Sarah heard of the calamity, she set to work to help him. She collected all her money and jewels, paid Mrs. Skinner's rent, went to see Rex, and arranged his defense. Green, who came very near hanging, admitted that the man was an associate of his, and the recorder, being in a severe mood, transported him for seven years.

Sarah Purfoy vowed that she would follow him. She was going as passenger, as emigrant, anything, when she saw Mrs. Vickers' advertisement for a "lady's maid," and answered it. It chanced that Rex was shipped in the Malabar, and Sarah, discovering this before the vessel had been a week at sea, conceived the bold project of inciting a mutiny for the rescue of her lover. We know the result of that scheme, and the story of the scoundrel's subsequent escape from Macquarie Harbor.

(To be continued.)

What They Missed.

"Dem of Greeks must have been sporty people," said little Remus, as he studied his ancient history. "Dey was always habin' contests ob all kinds."

"Huh!" responded Uncle Jasper. "Dey wan't so much. Dey nebbed had ny pie-eating contests."

Chip Off the Old Block.

High Financier—My son, I am pained to hear that you are at the foot of the class.

Son—Why, pa, I judged from your testimony that it was proper not to know anything at all.—New York Sun.

Self-Education.

Briggs—Blitter's daughter did very well in literature, didn't she?

Griggs—Yes, indeed. I understand that she made money enough on her first novel to get herself an education.—Life.

Bobby's Version.

"Say, Bobby," said little Beattie as she struggled over the long words in the stock reports, "what is a 'curbstone broker'?"

"Why, a broker that sells curbstones, of course," elucidated Bobby.

The World.

"It's true, indeed," remarked Kwother, "that 'one-half of the world doesn't know how the other half lives.'"

"Perhaps, but they have their suspicions," replied Knox.—Philadelphia Press.

A Noticeable Difference.

"After all," said the dissatisfied chorus singer, "what is the real difference between me and a prima donna?"

"About \$90 a night," replied the eminent manager.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

FARMS AND FARMERS



Growing Black Raspberries.

The amateur who wishes to try berry growing will find the black raspberry a good plant to begin with. The raspberry is to all probability the most honest of berry growing plants. There is no waste, the berries are uniform in size, and as soon as gathered they are ready for the table, or for preserving.

A plantation of this fruit, once established, should last six or eight years. It will grow in almost any soil except a very stiff clay, or one that is so poorly drained that the water stands on the soil for some time before being drained away. It is a heavy feeder, so its soil must be fertilized every year or two to keep up its maximum productivity.

A northern exposure is best for the plant, for it suffers from extreme heat, and the direct rays of the sun, more than from extreme cold weather. A sloping ground is preferred to either the summit or base of a hill. The black raspberry is propagated by burying the tips of the canes about August. Simply dig a little hole with a spade, and bend the cane so that the tip will lay in the hole, then cover it with soil and press it down. The weight of the soil will usually hold the cane; if not a small peg may be used. In the fall a young plant with a mass of roots will have been formed. The old cane may be cut away and the young plants will be ready for setting out. In most cases it is well to let the young plants remain until spring before transplanting. Proper attention should be given to pruning raspberries. Canes of the first season produce fruit the following season, but after bearing they may be cut away.

Hold Cross-Cut Saw to File.

Take two pieces of one-inch board (hard wood is best), wide as saw in widest place, and as long as the saw between the handles. Shape the boards with a "billy" like the cutting edge of saw. Lay your saw on one of these boards with the teeth above the board enough to file evenly, and straddle the saw with a pair of six-inch strap hinges, near the ends of the boards. Now open the hinges and remove the saw, and mark around the hinges to show where to let them in the board the thickness of the hinge. Fasten hinges to this board, and then to the other board in the same manner. Now you have a pair of jaws in which your saw will rest on its back, permitting the teeth to come above the edge of the jaw to file. Bevel edge of boards. Now

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