

For The Term of His Natural Life

By MARCUS CLARKE

CHAPTER XXI.

Rufus Dawes had been a fortnight at the settlement when a newcomer appeared on the chain gang. This was a young man of about twenty years of age, thin, fair and delicate. His name was Kirkland, and he belonged to what were known as the "educated" prisoners. He had been a clerk in a banking house, and was transported for embezzlement, though, by some, grave doubts as to his guilt were entertained. The commandant, Captain Burgess, had employed him as butler in his own house, and his fate was considered a "lucky" one. So, doubtless, it was, and might have been, had not an untoward accident occurred. Captain Burgess, who was a bachelor of the "old school," confessed an amiable weakness for swearing. Kirkland belonged to a Methodist family, and owned a piety utterly out of place in that region. The language of Burgess made him shudder, and one day he so far forgot himself and his place as to raise his hands to his ears. "I'll soon cure you of that!" cried Burgess, and forthwith ordered him to the chain gang for "insubordination."

He was received with suspicion by the gang, who did not like white-handed prisoners. Troke, by way of experiment in human nature, perhaps, placed him next to Gabbett. When the muster bell rang, and the gang broke up, Rufus Dawes, on his silent way to his separate cell, observed a notable change of custom. Instead of placing him in a cell by himself, Troke was turning him into the yard with the others.

"I'm not to go in there?" says the ex-bank clerk, drawing back in dismay from the cloud of foul faces which lowered upon him.

"But you are, then!" says Troke. "The governor says a night in there'll take the starch out of yer. Come, in yer go."

"Let him out, watchman!" said North, who happened by.

"Can't, sir, without an order from the commandant."

"I order you, sir!" North cried, indignant.

"Very sorry, your reverence; but your reverence knows that I daren't do such a thing."

North rushed away to the commandant, and the instant his back was turned, Halles, the watchman, flung open the door and darted into the dormitory.

"Take that!" he cried, dealing Kirkland a blow on the head with his keys, that stretched him senseless. "There's more trouble with you aristocrats than enough. Lie quiet!"

The commandant, roused from his slumber, told Mr. North that Kirkland might stop where he was, and that he'd thank the chaplain not to wake him up because a prisoner set up a howling.

North returned to the prison disconsolately, found the dutiful Halles at his post, and all quiet. "What's become of Kirkland?" he asked.

"Fretted himself to sleep, yer reverence," said Halles, in accents of parental concern. "Poor chap! It's hard for such young 'uns as he, sir."

In the morning Rufus Dawes, coming to his place on the chain gang, was struck by the altered appearance of Kirkland. His face was of a greenish tint, and wore an expression of bewildered horror.

"Cheer up, man!" said Dawes, touched with momentary pity. "It's no good being in the mopes, you know."

"What do they do if you try to bolt?" whispered Kirkland.

"Kill you," returned Dawes, in a tone of surprise at so preposterous a question.

"Thank God!" said Kirkland.

The work of the gang that afternoon was the carrying of some heavy logs to the water-side, and Rufus Dawes observed that Kirkland was exhausted long before the task was accomplished. "They'll kill you, you little beggar!" said he, not unkindly.

He had hardly uttered the words when the boy flung himself beneath the log. In another instant the train would have been scrambling over his crushed body, had not Gabbett stretched out an iron hand and plucked the would-be suicide from death.

"Hold on to me," said the giant. "I'm big enough to carry double!"

Kirkland uttered a cry, and then, holding up his iron with his hands, he started to run for the water.

"Halt, you young fool!" roared Troke, raising his carbine. But Kirkland kept steadily on for the river. Just as he reached it, however, the figure of Mr. North rose from behind a pile of stones. Kirkland jumped for the jetty, missed his footing and fell into the arms of the chaplain.

"You young vermin—you shall pay for this!" cries Troke. "You'll see if you won't remember this day."

"Oh, Mr. North," says Kirkland, "why did you stop me? I'd rather be dead than stay another night in that place."

"You'll get it, my lad!" said Gabbett, when the runaway was brought back. "Your blessed hide'll feel for this, see if it don't!"

Kirkland only breathed harder, and looked round for Mr. North; but Mr. North had gone. The new chaplain was to arrive that afternoon, and it was incumbent on the old one to be present at the reception.

Troke reported the ex-bank clerk that night to Burgess, and Burgess, who was about to go to dinner with the new chaplain, disposed of his case out of hand. "Tried to bolt, eh! Must stop that

Fifty lashes, Troke. Pick out some likely man, will you. That last fellow you had ought to have been tied up yourself. His flogging wouldn't have killed a flea."

"You can't get 'em to warm one another, your honor," says Troke. "They won't do it."

"Oh, yes, they will, though," says Burgess, "or I'll know the reason why. I won't have my men knocked up with flogging these rascals. If the scourger won't do his duty, tie him up and give him five-and-twenty for himself. I'll be down in the morning myself, if I can."

"Very good, your honor," says Troke. Kirkland was put into a separate cell that night; and Troke, by way of assuring him a good night's rest, told him that he was to have "fifty" in the morning. "And Dawes'll lay it on," he added. "He's one of the smartest men I've got, and he won't spare yer."

"You will find this a terrible place, Mr. Meekin," said North to his supplanter, as they walked across to the commandant's to dinner. "It has made us heart sick."

"I thought it was a little paradise," said Meekin. "Captain Frere says that the scenery is delightful."

The dinner went off successfully. Burgess—desirous, perhaps, of favorably impressing the chaplain whom the bishop delighted to honor—was urbane enough. "You'll find us rough, Mr. Meekin," he said, "but you'll find us 'all there' when we're wanted. This is a little kingdom in itself. Pray help yourself to wine."

"Thank you, none," said North, filling a tumbler with water. "I have a headache."

His manner of speech and action was so awkward that a silence fell upon the party, caused by each one wondering why Mr. North should grow confused, and drum his fingers on the table, and stare everywhere but at the decauter. Meekin was the first to speak. "Have you many visitors, Captain Burgess?"

"Very few. Sometimes a party comes over with a recommendation from the governor, and I show them over the place; but, as a rule, we see no one but ourselves."

"I asked," said Meekin, "because some friends of mine were thinking of coming. Do you know Captain Frere?"

"Frere! I should say so!" returned Burgess. "I was quartered with him at Sarah Island. So he's a friend of yours, eh?"

"I had the pleasure of meeting him in society. He is just married, you know. To Miss Vickers, a charming young person. They are going to Sydney, where Captain Frere has some interest, and Frere thinks of taking Port Arthur on his way down."

"A strange fancy for a honeymoon trip," said North.

"Captain Frere takes a deep interest in all relating to convict discipline," went on Meekin, "and is anxious that Mrs. Frere should see this place. A romantic story, Captain Burgess. He saved her life, you know."

"Ah! that was a queer thing, that mutiny," said Burgess. "We've got the fellows here, you know."

"I saw them tried at Hobart Town," said Meekin. "In fact, the ringleader, John Rex, gave me his confession, and I sent it to the bishop. Captain Frere tried to make me think his letters contained a hidden meaning, but I don't believe they did. He seems to me to be truly penitent for his offenses—a misguided but not a hypocritical man, if my knowledge of human nature goes for anything."

"I hope he is," said North. "I wouldn't trust him."

"Oh, there's no fear of him," said Burgess, cheerily; "if he grows uproarious, we'll soon give him a touch of the cat."

Here attention was called by the strange behavior of Mr. North. He had risen and, without apology, flung wide the window, as though he gasped for air. "Hallo, North! What's the matter?"

"Nothing," said North, recovering himself with an effort. "A spasm. I have these attacks at times."

"Have some brandy?" said Burgess. "No, no, it will pass. No, I say, Well, if you insist. And seizing the tumbler offered to him, he half filled it with raw spirits and swallowed the fiery draught at gulp. The Reverend Meekin eyed his clerical brother with horror.

"Ha!" said North, looking wildly round upon them. "That's better."

So they went on to the veranda, and looked down upon the lights of the prison, and listened to the sea lapping the shore. The Rev. Mr. North, in this cool atmosphere, seemed to recover himself, and conversation progressed with some sprightliness.

By and by a short figure came up out of the dark, and proved to be Doctor Macklewin, who had been prevented from attending the dinner by reason of an accident to a constable at Norfolk Bay, which had claimed his professional attention.

"Well, how's Forrest?" cried Burgess. "Mr. Meekin—Dr. Macklewin."

"Dead," said Macklewin. "Delighted to see you, Mr. Meekin."

"Confound it—another of my best men," grumbled Burgess. Macklewin was tired and wanted to get home.

"I must also be thinking of repose," said Meekin; "the journey, though most enjoyable, has fatigued me."

"Come on, then," said North. "Our roads lie together, doctor."

Before the two clergymen had got half way down the steep path that led from the commandant's house to the flat on which the cottages of the doctor and chaplain were built, Macklewin rejoined them. "Another flogging to-morrow," said he, grumblingly. "Up at daylight, I suppose, again."

"Whom is he going to flag now?" "That young butler-fellow of his."

"What, Kirkland? You don't mean to say he's going to flag Kirkland? Oh, this must be stopped!" cries North, in great alarm. "He can't stand it. I tell you he'll die, Macklewin."

Captain Burgess was shutting his veranda window when North hurried up. "Captain Burgess, Macklewin tells me you are going to flag young Kirkland. I have come to beg you not to do so, sir. The lad has been cruelly punished already. He attempted suicide to-day—unhappy creature!"

"Well, that's just what I'm flogging him for. I'll teach my prisoners to attempt suicide!"

"Captain Burgess," protested North, "I assure you that he does not deserve punishment. I have seen him, and his condition of mind is pitiable."

"Look here, Mr. North, I don't interfere with what you do to the prisoners' souls; don't you interfere with what I do to their bodies."

"Then, Captain Burgess," cried North, his pale face flushing, "I tell you the boy's blood will be on your head. I am a minister of God, sir, and I forbid you to commit this crime."

"You're a dismissed officer of the government, sir. You've no authority here in any way; and if you interfere with my discipline, sir, I'll have you put in irons until you're shipped out of the island."

This, of course, was mere bravado on the part of the commandant. North knew well that he would never dare to attempt any such violence, but the insult stung him like the cut of a whip. He made a stride toward the commandant, as though to seize him by the throat, but checking himself in time, stood still, with clenched hands, flashing eyes and beard that bristled.

North returned home in great agitation. Twice he paused on his way to the sitting room, and twice was he driven on by a power stronger than his will. He reached it at length, and opening the cupboard, pulled out what he sought—a bottle of brandy.

With this in his hand, all moderation vanished. He raised it to his lips and eagerly drank. Then, ashamed of what he had done, he thrust the bottle back, and made for his room. He wept, he prayed, he fought with his desire as with a madman. He told himself that another's life depended on his exertions; that to give way to his fatal passion was unworthy of an educated man and a reasoning being. In vain. In the midst of his arguments he found himself at the cupboard, with the bottle at his lips, in an attitude that was at once ludicrous and horrible.

His disease was a terrible one. The Rev. James North—gentleman, scholar and Christian priest—was what the world calls "a confirmed drunkard."

CHAPTER XXII.

The morning sun, bright and fierce, looked down upon a curious sight. In a stone yard was a little group of persons—Troke, Burgess, Macklewin, Kirkland and Rufus Dawes.

Three wooden staves, seven feet high, were fastened together in the form of a triangle. The structure looked not unlike that made by gypsies to boil their kettles. To this structure Kirkland was bound. His feet were fastened with thongs to the base of the triangle; his wrists, bound above his head, at the apex. His body was then extended to its fullest length, and his white back shone in the sunlight. During his trying-up he had said nothing.

"Now, prisoner," said Troke to Dawes, "do your duty."

Rufus Dawes looked from the three staves faces to Kirkland's white back, and his face grew purple. In all his experience he had never been asked to flag before. He had been flogged often enough. He picked up the heavy cat, and drew its knotted lashes between his fingers.

"Go on, Dawes," whispered Kirkland, without turning his head. "You are no more than another man."

Rufus Dawes lifted the cat, swung it round his head, and brought its knotted cords down. The white back was instantly striped with six crimson bars. Kirkland stifled a cry. It seemed to him that he had been cut in half.

"Now, then, you scoundrel," roared Burgess; "separate your cats! What do you mean by flogging a man that fashion?"

Rufus Dawes drew his crooked fingers through the entangled cords and struck again. This time the blow was more effective, and the blood beaded on the skin. The boy did not cry; but Macklewin saw his hands clutch the staves tightly, and the muscles of his naked arms quiver.

The third blow sounded as though it had been struck upon a piece of raw beef, and the crimson turned purple. The flogging proceeded in silence for ten strokes, and then Kirkland gave a screech like a wounded horse.

"Oh!—Captain Burgess!—Dawes!—Mr. Troke!—Oh! oh!—Mercy!—Oh, doctor!—Mr. North!—Oh! oh! oh!"

The lad's back, swollen into a hump, now presented the appearance of a ripe peach which a willful child has scored with a pin. Dawes turning away from his bloody handiwork, drew the cats through his fingers twice. They were beginning to get clogged a little.

"Go on," said Burgess, with a nod. (To be continued.)

Woman is a miracle of divine contradictions.—Michelet.

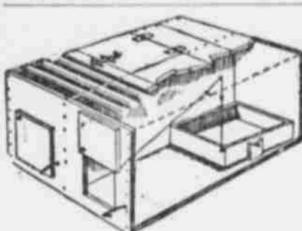


FARM AND GARDEN

Effective Trap Nest.

A very simple trap nest is thus described by Orange Judd Farmer: One side and part of the top on one compartment is removed to show the interior construction. Each compartment should be 13 inches wide, 15 inches high and 30 inches deep, while the nest box is 12 inches square and 3 inches deep. Every poultry raiser knows the value of a trap nest, so it is not necessary to enter into its utility. Any number of them may be constructed side by side, and all equipped in the same manner. The doorway at the front is 10 inches wide and 12 inches high, the door is 12 inches square and is caught at one corner with a screw. When it is set the doorway is open, but when the hen has sprung it the door falls and the opposite end to the screw catches in an iron staple which prevents it from being moved by the captive hen.

The top of the nests are provided with a few slats at the forward end for light and ventilation, and each compartment has a trapdoor hinged at the top.



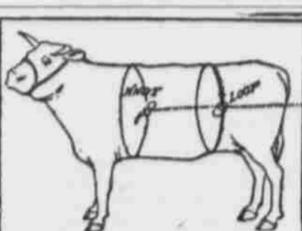
SERVICEABLE TRAP NEST.

The top so the hen can be removed from the nest. The nest box is provided with two screws at each side just forward from the middle. These rest on blocks with a V-shaped top.

The nest is balanced so the weight of a hen when she steps on the front edge will tip it down, thereby releasing the wire end that holds the door and allows it to fall. Two pieces of wire are used. One is made fast to a screw eye driven in the front edge of the box and extends up nearly to the under side of the top, where a piece of cord is tied to it. The cord passes through a screw eye and toward the front of the box, where, four inches from the eye, it is tied to the longer piece of wire that extends to the door. The wire and string are adjusted so the front end of the wire passing through a hole in the board will project a quarter of an inch and support the door. When the hen steps on the box and drags the wire down that pulls the long wire in and the door drops. By opening the trap door at the top it is easy to set the door again.

How to Throw a Steer.

Here is a very simple but sure way to throw a large or small steer. Use rope, three-quarter inch, about 25 feet long, is best passing one end of the rope around the steer, and tying in a hard knot; pass the rope back and around the body again in front of the hips, passing the end of the rope under the rope, so as to form a draw, extending the end of the rope straight behind the steer. By pulling 100 pounds on the end of the rope, a 1,000-pound steer can be thrown with ease.



FOR THROWING THE STEER.

Farm Notes.

Be slow to condemn an old sow that does good work.

More money is lost by feeding hogs too long than by selling too early.

If you desire to hit the bull's eye aim high and in doing so load so as to obtain more bushels from fewer acres.

When clover fields are infected with the root borer, allowing them to stand but two years will help to subjugate the pest in any locality.

Potato scab can be largely prevented by submerging the seed for two hours or more in a formalin solution made by dissolving one pint of formaldehyde in thirty gallons of water.

Every farmer should have his seed corn testing patch, on which competing selections from his own fields and varieties secured elsewhere may be subjected to a careful field test under his own eye.

For making good grafting wax melt together four parts resin (by weight); two parts beeswax; one part tallow.

In the spring the muscles of a horse are soft and they tire easily. Let them take it easy until they become accustomed to work and then you can "push on the lines."

Paint, judiciously applied to farm implements, will give better returns than when applied to buildings. Paint buildings for appearances and implements for durability.

The increasing price of fence posts, and the decreasing supply is causing men to reflect about the future post. We will have to get some good substitute or plant trees.

Breaking a Stall Kicker.

The chronic stable kicker, aside from being a nuisance, causes much damage and often injures other animals. To break him of the habit, fill a grain sack half full of sand and swing from ceiling with rope, so sack will hang where heels or horse will have good play upon it. Tie him firmly in the stall with a heavy, stout rope. At the first kick the bag will swing away, often as high as the ceiling, if kicked squarely. It will then return and give him as good as he sent. This will lead to a general mixup between the horse and sandbag, and the sack of sand will hold its own, returning all he sends, with considerable interest. He will soon find that he is up against a losing proposition, and, learning this, will be thoroughly cowed. Leave the sack behind him for a week or more and then remove. If he should at any time show any tendency to return to his old habit of kicking, arrange the sack as before and the cure will be final.—Successful Farming.

Water for Sheep.

The necessity of a continual water supply for sheep is a much controverted point, says Farm and Live Stock Journal. We are unable to find any definite and decisive data on the question and think it would make a good topic for our experiment stations. There are many farmers who would like to know whether the pasturing of sheep at any or all seasons of the year in a lot where water is not accessible is a losing practice. We believe that experiments would prove that it is, as we can see no reason why they are so different from other stock as not to repay attention to their water supply.

Buggy Steps for Harness Hooks.

Old buggy steps make good harness hooks one gets at the stores, writes socks one gets at the stores, writes



GOOD HARNESS HOOKS.

An Indiana farmer. Cut off the step at the dotted line A, and nail the hook part up as shown in B.

Don't Neglect the Stables.

Many dairymen who are inclined to be exceedingly cleanly about the stables during the winter give them little care during the summer when the cows are largely milked in the pasture, a plan of milking many follow. There are days and nights during the summer when the cows must be housed and the milking done in the stables, hence if they have been neglected the milk is surely to absorb any undesirable odor that may exist.

We find it an excellent plan to clean the stables thoroughly just as soon as the cows are turned out to grass, and this thoroughness consists in washing the walls with a strong solution of carbolic acid, then going over them thoroughly with whitewash. In this manner all germs and odors are destroyed. This is by no means all, for each week the stables are thoroughly purified, so that there will be no possible odor to spoil the milk.—Exchange.

Dwarfing Apple Trees.

Apple trees are dwarfed by grafting them on trees of the same general type but of smaller stature. There are two stocks in general use in Europe and in this country. These are Paradise and Doucin. Paradise produces a fully dwarfed apple tree of very small size. The Doucin is a tree of intermediate size, and therefore, does not dwarf the stock so emphatically as the Paradise.

Carrots and Parsnips.

An excellent mode of planting carrot and parsnip seed is to drop the seed in small quantity, six inches apart in the rows, instead of scattering the seed in the row. By this method the plants will come up in stools, and can be thinned out of too thick, whereas if the seed is scattered the plants may come up straggling, as the seed does not germinate very easily under adverse conditions. Extra plants taken from the rows may be planted elsewhere. The seed drills do the work well in that respect.



Kicker—Few girls keep up their music after they are married. Bucker—And yet some persons say that marriage is a failure.—New York Sun.

His Wife—Have you had a bad day, dear? The Financier—Yes, I lost over \$250,000. And the worst of it is that nearly \$100 of that was my own money!—Life.

Uncle—How do you like your employer? Tommy—I think he's bigoted. Uncle—In what way? Tommy—Well, he thinks dat words oughter be spelt his way all de time.

Molly—He is a student at one of the big colleges. Polly—Nonsense! He talked with us for an hour when he was here yesterday and never used a bit of slang.—Somerville Journal.

"Is it expensive sending your girls to college?" "I should say so! My wife takes advantage of their absence to dress about twenty years younger than she really is."—Brooklyn Life.

"This flower is strictly up-to-date," said the florist. "What do you mean by that?" asked the prospective customer. "Why," he explained, "it was obtained by grafting."—Detroit Free Press.

"Is she pretty?" they asked of the young man who was speaking of his fiancée. "Well, I don't want to boast," he replied, "but she always gets a seat in a crowded street car."—Stray Stories.

If the sweet girl graduate of last June hasn't got a school or an engagement ring yet, it is high time for her to study shorthand and hustle around to get a job at typewriting.—Somerville Journal.

Ferdie—Really, Patrick, I'd rather ride Stagers than take a spin in the touring car. The Groom—Sure, 'tis strange ye fule that way, sor, considerin' that Stagers is ownly a wan-hoss-power hoss.—Luck.

"He claims that he built the first passenger elevators used in this country." "Nonsense! The Mississippi steamboats were running and blowing up regularly long before he was born."—Philadelphia Press.

Mother—Come now, Will, if you'll only be good I'll give you a penny. Willie—No'm; I won't be good for less'n five cents. Mother—Why, you were good yesterday for a penny, Willie—I know, but yesterday was bargain day.—Philadelphia Press.

First Girl—What are you waiting for? Why don't you finish your letter to Ella? Second Girl—I don't know whether to say "Ever yours, with trust love," or simply "Yours affectionately." You see, I can't endure Ella—I think she's detestable!—Tit-Bits.

"See here!" snapped the landlord, who had responded to the tenant's hurry call for a plumber. "I thought you said the water in your cellar was two feet deep. 'It's only a few inches.' 'Well, that's as deep as my two feet.'" retorted the tenant, "and that's too much."

Clara—Did the papers notice your father at the great banquet? Johnny—Yes, Clara—Well, mamma said she could not see his name on the list. Johnny—No; but the list ends up with "and others." That means papa. They always mention him that way.—Illustrated Bits.

Magistrate and M. P.—After mature and careful consideration of your case, I have come to the conclusion that you are a lazy, good-for-nothing rogue. May I ask if you ever earned a shilling in your life? Prisoner—Oh, yes, I have, yer 'onor. I voted for yer 'onor once.—The Sketch.

Tom—Look at that crowd of women trying to get in that department store. Dick—Yes, it's a regular crush. Tom—But it's so early. Why, the doors aren't open yet. Dick—Yes, they're the women who followed the line of advice in the advertisement: "Come early and avoid the rush."—Catholic Standard and Times.

The desperate man, weary of life, opened an upper window in the skyscraper and threw himself out. He landed on top of a load of mattresses with which a teamster happened to be driving along at the moment. "Hang the luck!" he exclaimed, as he rose to his feet, shook himself, and found that he was practically uninjured. "I might have known this would be the result of jumping from the thirteenth floor!"

A clergyman who had accepted an invitation to officiate at Sunday services in a neighboring town entrusted his new curate with the performance of his own duties. On returning home he asked his wife what she thought of the curate's sermon. "It was the poorest one I ever heard," she replied, promptly—"nothing in it at all." Later in the day the clergyman, meeting his curate, asked him how he had got on. "Oh, very well," was the reply. "I didn't have time to prepare anything, so I preached one of your unused sermons."