

# For The Term of His Natural Life

By MARCUS CLARKE

## CHAPTER XXII.—(Continued.)

Roused by the morning sun streaming in upon him, Mr. North opened his blood-shot eyes, rubbed his forehead with hands that trembled, and suddenly awakening, rolled off the bed and rose to his feet. He saw the empty brandy bottle on his wooden dressing table, and remembered what had passed. With shaking hands he dashed water over his aching head, and smoothed his garments. The debauch of the previous night had left the usual effects behind it. His brain seemed on fire, his hands were hot and dry, his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. He shuddered as he viewed his pale face and red eyes in the little looking glass. Stealing into the sitting room, he saw that the clock pointed to half-past six. The flogging was to have taken place at half-past five. Unless accident had favored him he was already too late. Fevered with remorse and anxiety, he hurried past the room where Meekin yet slumbered, and made his way to the prison. As he entered the yard Kirkland had just got his fiftieth lash.

"Stop!" cried North. "Captain Burgess, I call upon you to stop."

"You're rather late, Mr. North," retorted Burgess. "The punishment is nearly over."

North stood by, biting his nails and grinding his teeth during six more lashes. Kirkland had ceased to yell now, and merely moaned. His back was like a bloody sponge, while in the interval between the lashes the swollen flesh twitched like that of a new-killed bullock. Suddenly Macklewin saw his head drop on his shoulder. "Throw him off! Throw him off!" he cried, and Troke hurried to loosen the thongs.

"Fling some water over him!" said Burgess. "He's shamming."

A bucket of water made Kirkland open his eyes. "I thought so," said Burgess. "The him up again."

"No; not if you are Christians!" cried North.

He met with an ally where he least expected one. Rufus Dawes fung down the dripping cat. "I'll dog no more," said he.

"What?" roared Burgess, furious at this gross insolence.

"I'll dog no more. Get some one else to do your bloody work for you. I won't."

"The him up!" cried Burgess, foaming. "The him up! Here, constable, fetch a man here with a fresh cat. I'll give you that beggar's fifty, and fifty more on the top of 'em; and he shall look on while his back cooks."

Rufus Dawes, with a glance at North, pulled off his shirt without a word, and stretched himself at the triangles. His back was not white and smooth, like Kirkland's had been, but hard and seamed. He had been flogged before. Troke appeared with Gabbett, grinning. Gabbett liked flogging. It was his boast that he could flog a man to death on a place no bigger than the palm of his hand. He could use his left hand equally with his right, and if he got hold of a "favorite," would "cross the cuts."

Rufus Dawes planted his feet firmly on the ground, took fiver frop of the staves, and drew in his breath. Macklewin spread the garments of the two men upon the ground, and placing Kirkland upon them, turned to watch this new phase in the morning's amusement. He grumbled a little below his breath, for he wanted his breakfast, and when the commandant once began to flog, there was no telling where he would stop. Rufus Dawes took five-and-twenty lashes without a murmur, and then Gabbett "crossed the cuts." This went on up to fifty lashes, and North felt himself stricken with admiration at the courage of the man. "If it had not been for that cursed brandy," thought he, with bitterness of self-reproach, "I might have saved all this." At the hundredth lash, the giant paused, expecting the order to throw off, but Burgess was determined to "break the man's spirit."

"I'll make you speak, you dog, if I cut your heart out!" he cried. "Go on, prisoner."

For twenty lashes more Dawes was mute, and then the agony forced from his laboring breast a hideous cry. But it was not a cry for mercy, as that of Kirkland had been. Having found his tongue, the wretched man gave vent to his boiling passion in a torrent. He shrieked imprecations upon Burgess, Troke and North. He cursed all soldiers for tyrants, all persons for hypocrites. He called on the earth to gape and swallow his persecutors, for heaven to open and rain fire upon them, for hell to yawn and engulf them quick. It was as though each blow of the cat forced out of him a fresh burst of beast-like rage. He seemed to have abandoned his humanity. He foamed, he raved, he tugged at his bonds until the strong staves shook again; he writhed himself round upon the triangles and spit impotently at Burgess, who jeered at his torments. North, with his hands to his ears, crouched against the corner of the wall, pained with horror. He would fain have fled, but a horrible fascination held him back.

In the midst of this—when the cat was hissing the loudest, Burgess laughing his hardest, and the wretch on the triangles filling the air with his cries, North saw Kirkland look at him with what he thought a smile. Was it a smile? He leaned forward, and uttered a cry of dismay so loud that all turned. "Hullo!" said Troke, running to the heap of clothes, "the young 'un's slipped his wind!"

Kirkland was dead. "Throw him off!" says Burgess, aghast at the unfortunate accident; and Gabbett reluctantly untied the thongs that bound Rufus Dawes. Two constables were alongside him in an instant, for sometimes newly tortured men grow desperate. This one, however, was silent with the last lash, only, in taking his shirt from under the body of the boy, he muttered "Dead!" and in his tone there seemed to be a touch of envy. Then flinging his shirt over his bleeding shoulders, he walked out, defiant to the last.

"Game, ain't he?" said one constable to the other, as they pushed him, not ungently, into an empty cell, there to wait for the hospital guard. The body of Kirkland was taken away in silence, and Burgess turned rather pale when he saw North's threatening face. "It isn't my fault, Mr. North," he said. "I didn't know that the lad was chicken-hearted." But North turned away in disgust, and Macklewin and Burgess pursued their homeward route together.

Mr. North, in agony of mind at what he considered the consequences of his neglect, slowly, and with head bowed down, as one bent on a painful errand, went to see the prisoner who had survived. He found him kneeling on the ground, prostrate.

"Rufus Dawes!"

At the tone Rufus Dawes looked up, and seeing who it was, waved him off. "Don't speak to me," he said, with an imprecation that made North's flesh creep. "I've told you what I think of you—a hypocrite, who stands by while a man is cut to pieces, and then comes and whines religion to him."

North stood in the center of the cell, with his arms hanging down, and his head bent. "You are right," he said, in a low tone. "I must seem to you a hypocrite. I a servant of Christ? A besotted beast rather! I am not come to whine religion to you. I am come to ask your pardon. I might have saved you from punishment—saved that poor boy from death. I wanted to save him, God knows! But I have a vice; I am a drunkard, I yielded to temptation, and—"

"—I was too late. I come to you, as one sinful man to another, to ask you to forgive me." And North suddenly flung himself down before the convict, and catching his blood-be spotted hands in his own, cried, "Forgive me, brother."

Rufus Dawes, too much astonished to speak, bent his black eyes on the man, who crouched at his feet, and a ray of divine pity penetrated his gloomy soul. He seemed to catch a glimpse of misery more profound than his own, and his stubborn heart felt human sympathy with this erring brother. "Then in this cell there is yet a man," said he; and a hand-grasp passed between these two unhappy beings. North arose, and with averted face, passed quickly from the cell. Rufus Dawes looked at the hand which his strange visitor had taken, and something glittered there. It was a tear. He broke down at the sight of it, and when the guard came to fetch the tameless convict, they found him on his knees in a corner, sobbing like a child.

The morning after this, the Rev. Mr. North departed in the schooner for Hobart Town. Between the officious chaplain and the commandant the events of the previous day had fixed a great grief. Burgess knew that North meant to report the death of Kirkland, and guessed that he would not be backward in relating the story to such persons in Hobart Town as would most readily repeat it.

Burgess, however, touched with self-hatred, determined to balk the person at the outset. He would send down an official "return" of the unfortunate occurrence by the same vessel that carried his enemy, and thus get the ear of the office. Meekin, walking on the evening of the flogging past the wooden shed where the body lay, saw Troke bearing buckets filled with dark-colored water, and heard a great splashing and splashing going on inside the hut. "What is the matter?" he asked.

"Doctor's bin post-mortem the prisoner what was flogged this morning, sir," said Troke, "and we're cleanin' up."

North, on his arrival, went straight to the house of Major Vickers. "I have a complaint to make, sir," he said. "I wish to lodge it formally with you. A prisoner has been flogged to death at Port Arthur. I saw it done."

Vickers bent his brow. "A serious accusation, Mr. North. I must, of course, receive it with respect, coming from you, but I trust that you have fully considered the circumstances of the case. I always understood Captain Burgess was a most humane man."

North shook his head. He would not accuse Burgess. He would let events speak for themselves. "I only ask for an inquiry," said he.

"Yes, my dear sir, I know. Very proper, indeed, on your part, if you think any injustice has been done; but have you considered the expense, the delay, the immense trouble and dissatisfaction all this will give?"

"No trouble, no expense, no dissatisfaction, should stand in the way of humanity and justice," cried North. "Of course not. But will justice be done? Are you sure you can prove your case? Mind, I admit nothing against Captain Burgess, whom I have always considered a most worthy and zealous officer; but, supposing your charge to be true, can you prove it?"

Manners carry the world for the moment, character for all time.—A. B. Alcott.

## THE OLD FLAG.

"Yes. If the witnesses speak the truth."

"Who are they?"

"Myself, Dr. Macklewin, the constable and two prisoners, one of whom was flogged himself. He will speak the truth, I believe. The other man I have not much faith in."

"Very well; then there is only a prisoner and Dr. Macklewin; for if there has been foul play the convict-constable will not accuse the authorities. Moreover, the doctor does not agree with you."

"No!" cried North, amazed.

"No. You see, then, my dear sir, how necessary it is not to be hasty in matters of this kind. I really think that your goodness of heart has misled you. Captain Burgess sends a report of the case. He says the man was sentenced to a hundred lashes for gross insubordination and disobedience of orders; that the doctor was present during the punishment; and that the man was thrown off by his directions after he had received fifty-six lashes. That, after a short interval, he was found to be dead, and that the doctor made a post-mortem examination of the body and found disease of the heart."

North started. "A post-mortem? I never knew there had been one held."

"Here is the medical certificate," said Vickers, holding it out, "accompanied by the copies of the evidence of the constable and a letter from the commandant."

Poor North took the papers and read them slowly. They were apparently straightforward enough. Aneurism of the ascending aorta was given as the cause of death; and the doctor frankly admitted that he had known the deceased to be suffering from that complaint he would not have permitted him to receive more than twenty-five lashes.

North, going out with saddened spirits, met in the passage a beautiful young girl. It was Sylvia, coming to visit her father. He lifted his hat and looked after her. He guessed that she was the daughter of the man he had left—the wife of the Captain Frere concerning whom he had heard so much. North was a man whose morbidly excited brain was prone to strange fancies; and it seemed to him that beneath the clear blue eyes that flashed upon him for a moment lay a hint of future sadness, in which, in some strange way, he himself was to bear part. He stared after her figure until it disappeared; and long after the dainty presence of the young bride—trimly booted, tight-waisted and neatly gloved—had faded, with all its sunshine and gaiety and health, from out of his mental vision, he still saw those blue eyes and that cloud of golden hair.

## MICKY EMMETT'S FOURTH OF JULY.

He's a man now, and a good one, but July 4, 1872, he was a freckled-faced, barefooted school boy in Elwood, Kan. He's a division superintendent on the Illinois Central railroad now, and he writes his name "M. R. Emmett, Supt.," but in those days he was known at the village school as Micky Emmett. Of course Michael Robert Emmett would have been more distinguished and deferential, but in those days he didn't go in much for style, and with the memory of his dead father's fine Irish brogue yet ringing in his ears, "Mickey" sounded all right.

Micky's widowed mother "kept cows." Nobody called her little establishment a "dairy" except herself, but she managed to eke out a decent living for herself and Micky, and she was proud of her ambition to give him an education and prouder of the fact that he always was first at his studies.

But when the glorious Fourth of 1872 drew near, Micky made an eloquent plea for some fireworks. He wanted to show his patriotism. He had an ambition to make as much noise as the other boys, and his heart rebelled at the suggestion that "twas a waste of money." The widow promised him a flag.

"O'll give yer a two-bit flag," said she, "an take yer over 't the picnic at Lake Contrary. They've 't' be a balloon ascension and free for wurruks, and 'twill cost us both only four-bits."

Micky preferred to make bedlam in his own yard, but the widow was bent on the picnic, and the boy agreed to go.

It was the balloon that fascinated the lad. He was no sooner on the picnic grounds than he sought out the cord-netted bag of yellow, with its wicker basket, its anchor and its gapping mouth. When the great charcoal fire was kindled and the pipe inserted into the big balloon, Micky was the busiest lad in the neighborhood. His good mother watched him and cautioned him a hundred times, but he hovered about the balloon like a bee at an alfalfa blossom.

Finally, the aeronaut, Prof. Winball, came forth with a bath robe flowing gracefully from his shoulders. His spangled tights gleamed in the hot sunlight, and he superintended the inflation of his balloon with the careless confidence of a master. Micky redoubled his efforts to help so great a man. He helped to lift the sand bags into the car, and as the yellow bulb, like a monstrous orange, bobbed upward in its efforts to be free, the little Irish boy was beside himself with delight. He hopped into the basket a dozen times. The professor smiled beatingly upon him and asked:

"Will you go up with me, little man?"

Micky glanced at his mother, who shook her head fiercely, and then he dodged away again into the crowd.

Fifty stout arms were now holding the guy ropes which confined the balloon. The day was perfect. Not a breath of wind disturbed the air. The smoke from the little steamer in the lake curled straight upward in a widening cone of gray. The trees were motionless. No cloud specked the blue sky, the water lay flat and shined like a mirror in the sun.

"Now, my friends," thundered Prof. Winball, casting aside his robe and standing resplendent in the sunlight, "when I shout 'Let go!' you must all loose hold upon the ropes."

The volunteer assistants chorused "All right." Then there was a wait while the professor looked after some carrier pigeons that were to accompany him in the ascent. Somebody shouted "Let go!" The restraining ropes were dropped with one accord, and the balloon, tenantless and like a rayless planet, rose upward from the ground.

Then the round, brown, freckled face of a small boy peeped over the rim of the basket. A woman screamed and fainted, and Micky Emmett, the small boy of Elwood, Kan., went sailing toward the south alone in a slender basket, swinging by four taut cords, with the upward-sweeping bulb of yellow silk lifting him beyond the sound of voices and into the measureless space where the winds are free and the world is but a silver-striped ball of green and yellow.

"When I looked over the edge of that basket," said Superintendent Emmett, telling the story, "I didn't realize that I was going up. For five minutes or more it seemed to me that the earth had suddenly dropped downward into space. I heard my mother scream and was vaguely convinced that she had felt the earth dropping under her and was frightened. It didn't occur to me that I was in danger. I rather felt that I was lucky to be

in a balloon at the very moment when the world fell from its place. I speculated upon what would happen when the globe went crash against the moon, and selfishly chuckled at the thought that I, at least, wouldn't be in the smash-up.

"The only breeze I felt seemed to come straight down from above. I dropped my cap out and it fell like a pound of lead. Then, for the first time, I began to realize that I was going up and the earth was standing still, doing business in the same old place. For a quarter of an hour the ground below me looked like a concave basin. The horizon seemed like the high outer rim, and below me, so far that the people looked like small bugs, was the bottom of the hollow dish. To the west, like a yellow ribbon winding among green fields and forests and squares of golden harvest field, the Missouri river lay flashing in the sun. Lake Contrary, a sheet of water four miles

## THE FIFTH OF JULY—CALLING THE ROLL.

(Adapted from a famous old poem.)

Off with your hat as the flag goes by!  
And let the heart have its say;  
You're man enough for a tear in your eye  
That you will not wipe away.  
You're man enough for a thrill that goes  
To your very finger tips—  
Aye, the lump just then in your throat that rose  
Spoke more than your parted lips!  
Lift up the boy on your shoulder high  
And show him the faded shred—  
Those stripes would be red as the sunset sky  
If death could have dyed them red.  
The man that bore it with death has lain  
This twenty years and more;  
He died that the work should not be vain  
Of the men who bore it before.  
The man that bears it is bent and old,  
And ragged his beard and gray,  
But look at his eye the young and bold  
At the time that he bears them play.  
The old tune thunders through all the air  
And strikes right into the heart—  
If ever it calls for you, boy, be there!  
Be there and ready to start!

Off with your hat as the flag goes by!  
Uncover the youngster's head;  
Teach him to hold it holy and high  
For the sake of its sacred dead.  
—Henry Cuyler Bunner.



"Benjamin Jones!" the father cried.  
"Here!" was the answer loud and clear.  
From the lips of a youngster standing near;  
And "here!" was the word the next replied.  
"Johnnie Jones!" and a silence fell.  
This time, no answer followed the call;  
Only his brother saw him fall,  
Killed or wounded, he could not tell.

There they stood in the morning light  
On July the fifth, the present year,  
And the roll was read in accents clear.  
By the senior Jones, who was ghostly white,  
"Charlie Jones!" At the call there came  
Two ambulance men and some doleful groans,  
As they bore in the body of Charlie Jones.

Greatly disfigured, to answer his name.  
"Albert Jones!" and a voice said "here!"  
"Chauncy Jones!" "He's down at St. Luk's"  
With a couple of badly damaged "dukes,"  
The doctors say he'll be well next year.  
"William Jones!"—then some one said  
"A small toy pistol went off and shot him."  
And the ambulance people hurried and  
Got him  
To make some repairs on his injured head."

"'Twas a gallant day, but it cost us dear:  
For that family roll when called to day,  
Of a total of seven that entered the fray,  
Numbered but four that answered 'here.'"  
—Chicago Tribune.

rotund and bulging, and saw that its sides were dented and flabby. I found a package of cards in the basket, advertisements for the balloonist, and throwing them out saw that they sailed lazily upward.

"I'm falling!" I murmured, and for the first time became conscious of the most terrible fear. My hair was rather long, and stood on end partly with terror and partly from the upward draught through which I was descending more rapidly each second. The moon peeped over the eastern hills suddenly, and then I could see the earth again, luminous in a pale green glow and apparently soaring steadily toward me. Then I could see blotches of darker shadowy green, the river looked broader, and now I could see the lake as if coming up directly under me, silvery blue. Then I heard a murmur of many distant voices which grew louder and louder. I heard cheers and looked over for the last time. I was falling so swiftly now that I prayed and thought of my mother by turns. Then I covered my face with my hands and waited for the crash.

"But suddenly the basket in which I crouched stopped with a sudden jerk, and then the big silken bag came softly rustling down over me. I felt another gentle bump, the voices were ringing in my ears, and I felt a hundred hands pulling away at the empty balloon. When I came to I was in a hammock on the porch of the little hotel near the lake. I wasn't hurt in the least, and my mother, laughing, crying and thanking God in her reverent old Irish way, was holding my hands. I had descended within a hundred yards of the place I had started from and had spent nearly three hours at a great altitude. Of course my mother was wild with fear, but Prof. Winball, who knew his business, reassured her somewhat by his own certainty that the absolute stillness of the air would insure my safe descent near by. His only worry was that I'd fall in the lake, and a score of boats were patrolling the waters watching for me. The balloon anchor was what caused the first jolt as I swept downward, but it broke the force of the fall and probably saved me from a broken limb at least. No, I never went near a balloon again, but I'm not sorry for the experience."—John H. Rafferty in Chicago Record-Herald.



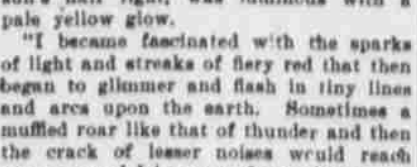
long, looked like the half-closed blue eye of a woman. St. Joe, smokeless and spangled with tin roofs and glass, seemed almost beneath me, like a toy village on a checkerboard, its hills flattened and its streets merely dotted with crawling specks.

"It must have been past 6 o'clock in the evening when the balloon let go. The sun was low, and yet before it set beyond the Kansas plains the world no longer looked flat. Just as the sun, monstrous in size and braced with the dull color that you have seen at sunset, struck the horizon, the world suddenly assumed the appearance of a globe. The lake below me, now looking like a silver dime, seemed like the apex of the sphere, and then, as the sun dropped below the sky line, shadows crept about it. I saw, like stars reflected in the water, the city's lights shining dimly below. Soon the globe, down upon which I gazed with fascinating interest, lost all color. The pale lights seemed to be swimming round and round. But yet my balloon, still in the sun's half light, was luminous with a pale yellow glow.

"I became fascinated with the sparks of light and streaks of fiery red that then began to glimmer and flash in tiny lines and arcs upon the earth. Sometimes a muffled roar like that of thunder and then the crack of lesser noises would reach my ears, and I began to fancy that I was far above the clouds and was looking down upon a miniature thunder storm. But finally I remembered that it was the Fourth, and then I knew that the disturbed area upon which I saw so many little darting lights was St. Joe and its evening display of Roman candles, rockets and bombs. They all seemed very trifling and pitiful to me then, and I remembered conceiving a genuine contempt for so small a thing as a pack or even a box of fire-crackers.

"Then I noticed that the breeze no longer blew downward upon my bare head. I watched the bag which had been

Uncle Rastus comes to town early to be on hand for the celebration.



The celebration begins.

An Epitaph.  
Stop, traveler, and weep for him  
Who's lying here below.  
He filled his cannon to the brim—  
That's all you'll ever know.  
—New York World.