

For The Term of His Natural Life

By MARCUS CLARKE

CHAPTER XXV.—(Continued.)

"Sell North End House!" cried poor Mr. Wade, in bewilderment. "Why, the carvings by Grinling Gibbons are the finest in the world."

"I can't help that," laughed Mr. Richard. "I want cash, and cash I must have."

"Then what do you propose doing, sir?"

"To buy my mother's life interest as provided, realize upon the property, and travel," said Mr. Richard.

"You amaze me, Richard. You confound me. Of course you can do as you please. But so sudden a determination. The old house—scattered—vases—coins—pictures—I—really— Well, it is your property, of course—and—and—and I wish you a very good morning!"

A knock at the door made Richard start. "Come in! What's that? Letters? Give them to me. He began to open his correspondence before his servant."

"When did this come?" asked Mr. Richard, holding out a letter more than usually disfigured with stampings.

"Last night, sir. It's bin to 'Amstead, sir, and come down directed with the hothers." The angry glare of the black eyes induced him to add, "I 'ope there's nothing wrong, sir!"

"Nothing, you idiot!" burst out Mr. Richard, white with rage, "except that I should have had this instantly. Can't you see it's marked urgent? Can you read? Can you spell? There, that will do. No lies. Get out!"

Left to himself again, Mr. Richard walked hurriedly up and down the chamber, wiped his forehead and finally sat down and re-read the letter. It was short, but terribly to the purpose:

"The George Hotel, Plymouth.
"My Dear Jack—I have found you out, you see. Never mind just how at present. I know all about your proceedings, and unless Mr. Richard Devine receives his wife with due propriety, he'll find himself in the custody of the police. Telegraph, dear, to Mrs. Richard Devine at above address. Yours as ever, Jack. SARAH."

The blow was unexpected and severe. It was hard, in the very high tide and flush of assured success, to be thus plucked back into the old bondage. Despite the affectionate tone of the letter, he knew the woman with whom he had to deal. For some furious minutes he sat motionless, gazing at the letter. He did not speak—men seldom do under such circumstances—but his thoughts ran in this fashion: "Here is this woman again! Just as I was congratulating myself on my freedom. How did she discover me? Small use asking that. What shall I do? I can do nothing. It is absurd to run away, for I shall be caught. Besides, I've no money. My account is overdrawn two thousand pounds. If I bolt at all, I must bolt at once—within twenty-four hours. Rich as I am, I don't suppose I could raise more than five thousand pounds in that time. These things take a day or two, say forty-eight hours. In forty-eight hours I could raise twenty thousand pounds, but forty-eight hours is too long. It's a bad job. However, she's not inclined to be gratuitously disagreeable. How lucky I never married again! I had better make terms and trust to fortune. After all, she's been a good friend to me. Poor Sally—I might have rotted on Eaglehawk Neck, if it hadn't been for her. She is not a bad sort. Handsome woman, too. I may make it up with her. I shall have to sell off and go away, after all. It might be worse. I dare say the property's worth three hundred thousand pounds. Not bad for a start in America. And I may get rid of her yet. Yes, I must give in. Smithers! A telegraph form and a cab! Stay. Pack me a dressing bag; I shall have to go away for a day or so. I'd better see her myself."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Time rolled on, and some years after the escape of Rex, the office of commandant at Norfolk Island became vacant. It was offered to Maurice Frere, who, much against the wishes of his wife, accepted it. On his arrival he found Mr. North occupying the position of chaplain there, having been transferred from Port Arthur some time previously. He found also Rufus Dawes, who had been sent there by the authorities as a last resource.

Though the house of the commandant was comfortable and well furnished, and though, of necessity, all that was most hideous in the "discipline" of the place was hidden, the loathing with which Sylvia had approached the last and most dreaded abiding place of the elaborate convict system, under which it had been her misfortune to live, had not decreased. The sights and sounds of pain and punishment surrounded her. She could not look out of her windows without a shudder.

"I wish, Maurice, we had never come here," she said, piteously. "These unhappy men will do you some frightful injury one of these days."

"Stuff!" said her husband. "They're not the courage. I'd take the best man among them, and dare him to touch me. Jenkins, I say!" The convict servant entered. "Where is the charge book? I've told you always to have it ready for me. Why don't you do as you are told? Give me the book." Taking it and running his finger down the leaves, he commented on the list of offenses to which he would be called upon in the morning to mete out judgment.

"Miles Byrne, not walking fast

enough—We must enliven Mr. Byrne. Thomas Twist, haxing a pipe and striking a light. W. Barnes, not in place at muster; says he was 'washing himself.' I'll wash him! John Richards, missing muster and insolence. John Gateby, insolence and insubordination. James Hopkins, insolence. Rufus Dawes, gross insolence, refusing to work. Ah! we must look after you. You are a parson's man, are you? I'll break your spirit my man, or I'll—Sylvia! Your friend Dawes is doing credit to his bringing up."

"What do you mean?"

"That villain and reprobate, Dawes." She interrupted him. "Maurice, I wish you would not use such language. You know I dislike it." She spoke coldly and sadly, as one who knows that remonstrance is vain, and is yet constrained to remonstrate.

"Oh, dear! My Lady Proper! How refined we are getting!"

"There, I did not mean to annoy you," said she, wearily. "Don't let us quarrel, for goodness' sake."

The insubordination of which Rufus Dawes had been guilty was insignificant. It was the custom of the newly flogged constables of Captain Frere to enter the wards at night, armed with cutlasses, tramping about, and making a great noise. The men in Dawes' gang were often searched more than once in a night, searched going to work, searched at meals, searched going to prayers, searched coming out, and this in the roughest manner.

Now, Rufus Dawes, holding aloof, as was his custom, from the majority of his companions, had made one friend—if so mindless and battered an old wreck could be called a friend—Blind Mooney.

One of the many ways in which Rufus Dawes had obtained the affection of the old blind man was the gift of such fragments of tobacco as he had himself from time to time secured. Troke knew this; and on the evening in question hit upon an excellent plan. Admitting himself noiselessly into the boat shed, where the gang slept, he crept close to the sleeping Dawes, and counterfeiting Mooney's mumbling utterance, asked for "some tobacco." Rufus Dawes was but half awake, and Troke felt something put into his hand. He grasped Dawes' arm, and struck a light. He had got his man this time. Dawes had conveyed to his fancied friend a piece of tobacco almost as big as the top joint of his little finger.

One can understand the feelings of a man entrapped by such base means. Rufus Dawes no sooner saw the hated face of Warder Troke peering over his hammock than he sprang out, and, exerting to the utmost his powerful muscles, knocked Mr. Troke fairly off his legs into the arms of the incoming constables. A desperate struggle took place, at the end of which the convict, overpowered by numbers, was borne senseless to the ring bolt on the bare flags. While in this condition he was savagely beaten by five or six constables. To this maimed and manacled rebel was the commandant ushered by Troke the next morning.

"Ha! ha! my man," said the commandant. "Here you are again, you see. How do you like this sort of thing?" Dawes, glaring, makes no answer. "You shall have fifty lashes, my man," said Frere. "We'll see how you'll feel then!"

The fifty were duly administered, and the commandant called the next day. The rebel was still mute. Frere gave him fifty more lashes, and sent him the next day to grind cayenne pepper. This was a punishment more dreaded by the convicts than any other. The pungent dust filled their eyes and lungs, causing them the most excruciating torments. For a man with a raw back the work was one continued agony. In four days Rufus Dawes, emaciated, blistered, blinded, broke down.

"Captain Frere, kill me at once!" he said.

"No fear," said the other, rejoiced at this proof of his power. "You've given in; that's all I wanted. Troke, take him to the hospital."

The next day Frere visited him, complimented him on his courage, and offered to make him a constable. Dawes turned his scarred back to his torturer, and resolutely declined to answer.

"I am afraid you have made an enemy of the commandant," said North the next day. "Why not accept his offer?" Dawes cast on him a glance of quiet scorn. "And betray my mates? I'm not one of that sort."

North pityingly implored the stubborn mind to have mercy on the lacerated body, but without effect. His own wayward heart gave him the key to read the cipher of this man's life. "A noble nature ruined," said he to himself. "What is the secret of his history?" One day this bond was drawn so close as to tug at both their heart strings. The chaplain had a flower in his coat. Dawes eyed it with hungry looks, and, as the clergyman was about to quit the room, said, "Mr. North, will you give me that rosebud?" North paused irresolutely, and, finally, as if after a struggle with himself, took it carefully from his button hole and placed it in the prisoner's brown, scarred hand. In another instant, Dawes believing himself alone, pressed the gift to his lips. North turned abruptly, and the eyes of the pair met. Dawes flushed crimson, but North turned white as death. Neither spoke, but each was drawn closer to the other,

since both had kissed the rosebud plucked by Sylvia's fingers.

Since the "tobacco trick," Mooney and Dawes had been placed in the new prison, together with a man named Bland, who had already twice failed to kill himself. When old Mooney lamented his hard case, Bland proposed that the three should put in practice a scheme in which two at least must succeed. The scheme was a desperate one, and attempted only in the last extremity. It was the custom of the "ring," however, to swear each of its members to carry out to the best of his ability this last invention of the convict disciplined mind, should two other members crave his assistance.

The scheme was simplicity itself. That evening, when the cell door was securely locked, and the absence of a visiting jailer might be counted upon for an hour at least, Bland produced a straw, and held it out to his companions. Dawes took it, and tearing it into unequal lengths, handed the fragments to Mooney.

"The longest is the one," said the blind man. "Come on, boys, and dip in the lucky bag."

It was evident that lots were to be drawn to determine to whom fortune would grant freedom. The men drew in silence, and then Bland and Dawes looked at each other. The prize had been left in the bag. Mooney—fortunate old fellow—retained the longest straw. Bland's hand shook as he compared notes with his companions. There was a moment's pause, during which the blank eye-balls of the blind man fiercely searched the gloom, as if in that awful moment they could penetrate it.

"I hold the shortest," said Dawes to Bland. "Tis you that must do it."

"I'm glad of that," said Mooney.

Bland, seemingly terrified at the danger which fate had decreed that he should run, tore the fatal lot into fragments, and sat gnawing his knuckles in excess of abject terror. Mooney stretched himself out upon his plank bed. "Come on, mate," he said, Bland extended a shaking hand, and caught Rufus Dawes by the sleeve.

"You have more nerve than I. You do it."

"No, no," said Dawes, almost as pale as his companion. "I've run my chance fairly. 'Twas your own proposal."

The coward who, confident in his own luck, would seem to have fallen into the pit he had dug for others, sat rocking himself to and fro, holding his head in his hands.

"I can't do it!" he whispered, lifting a white, wet face.

"What are you waiting for?" said fortunate Mooney. "Come on; I'm ready."

"I—I—thought you might like to—to—pray a bit," said Bland.

The notion seemed to sober the senses of the old man, exalted too fiercely by his good fortune.

"Ay!" he said. "Pray! A good thought!" And he knelt down, and, shutting his blind eyes—"twas as though he was dazzled by some strong light—unseen by his comrades, moved his lips silently.

It was quite dark now in the cell; but as Bland advanced his face was like a white mask floating upon the darkness. Dawes pressed his lucky comrade's hand, and withdrew to the furthest corner.

When Troke came in the morning, he saw what had occurred at a glance, and hastened to remove the corpse of the strangled Mooney.

"We drew lots," said Rufus Dawes, pointing to Bland, who crouched in the corner furthest from his victim, "and it fell upon him to do it. I'm the witness."

"They'll hang you all for that," said Troke.

"I hope so," said Rufus Dawes.

The scheme of escape hit upon by the convict intellect was simply this: Three men being together, lots were drawn to determine who should be murdered. The drawer of the longest straw was the "lucky" man. He was killed. The drawer of the next longest straw was the murderer. He was hanged. The unlucky one was the witness. He had, of course, an excellent chance of being hanged also, but his doom was not so certain, and he therefore looked upon himself as unfortunate.

(To be continued.)

Helping Him.

"I wish," said the bashful suitor, desperately, "I wish—that is, I would like—I'd give a good deal to know—to find out whether—whether you could care for me."

"Well," said the weary maiden, with thinly veiled sarcasm. "Of course, there's only one person to go to for such information—you must go to New York and consult a good clairvoyant."—Cleveland Leader.

Sufficient Reason.

Hoogley—Yes, I'm mighty glad I ain't got no children.

Pepprey—It's just as well.

Hoogley—Sure it is.

Pepprey—Yes, for in these days of free education they wouldn't be able to escape some knowledge of grammar, and they'd be forever correcting you.—Philadelphia Press.

Two Questions.

"I've got something important to do," said the practical young man, "and I just don't know how to go about it. I'd like you to help me."

"Yes?" replied Miss Pechis. "What is it you propose to do?"

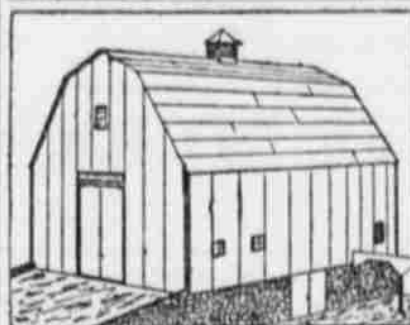
"That's not the question. It's 'what is it you do to propose?'—Philadelphia Press.

Cats can swim if they only care to exert themselves sufficiently. The ancient Egyptians used to fish with them on the Nile, according to the representations on walls, and so forth, that have come down to us.



Plank-Frame Barn.

The evolution of the plank-frame barn is the natural result of the scarcity of timber for building. A considerable saving in lumber and ease of building is effected in the plank



PLANK-FRAME BARN.

frame. Less time and fewer men are required in the erection, and there is little or nothing sacrificed in strength since the excellent method of bracing enables them to stand the pressure of hay and grain within or strong winds without. A solid frame foundation may be used or the entire structure may be of plank. A good, firmly built stone and cement foundation is advisable. With this to rest the plank upon the frame is raised.

No sills are used and the upright studs take the place of posts. Two for each post are set on the foundation on each side. Between these the cross-plank is placed and spiked so that it will extend the width of the barn and tie the two sides together. The scantlings on each side of the barn floor, forming center posts, are then raised and spiked in place. Upon the outside of each upright is spiked a plank of the same size as and parallel with the first cross plank. This gives three 2x8 inches for cross sills through the center of the barn, each joint or hard being fixed in this way. End joints, using boards instead of plank on outside, give the bedwork of the barn. At the sides, between uprights in place of sill, a plank is firmly spiked; this holds the uprights firmly in place and prevents working sideways while the thoroughly spiked cross planks prevent all movement in other directions. Throughout

there should be no sparing of spike nails, as these are an essential feature to secure solidity.

Reviving Old Fruit Trees.

A Maryland fruit grower has after several years of experimenting discovered a way to revive old fruit trees and keep them in bearing condition long after their supposed stage of usefulness has passed. As the cause of decay in a tree is its inability to carry the sap to all of its branches, heading the tree lessens the area to be traversed, the amount of top to be removed, varying according to the farmer's judgment. Bone-dust and ashes must then be administered—as a fertilizer, the latter in the autumn and the other in the spring. This treatment will revive old trees, the cutting off the branches, tending to increase the number of fruit buds formed, and the ashes and bone-dust tending to stimulate the tree growth.



CROSS-SECTION SHOWING BRACING.

As soon as the lima beans start up the pole, be sure to tie them up with raffia. If you are trying to use last year's white birch poles, you are going to have them rot off and fall down and cause no end of trouble. There is nothing better than cedar bean poles.

Testing Soils.

All soils are formed from disintegrated rocks and organic matter. Of the latter, soils contain from 1 to more than 70 per cent; it is, however, only in bogs or beds of peat that the amount last named is ever present. The best wheat lands contain only from 4 to 6 per cent of organic matter; oats and rye will grow in soils containing only 1 or 2. The intelligent farmer should endeavor to ascertain what is wanting in the soil and supply it, remembering that he can make no possible mistake with barnyard manure.

Bean Poles.

Collar and Saddle Galls.

Galls on horses are due to several causes, but frequently to saddles and harness that press unevenly on the body. The collar should fit the horse perfectly, and it cannot be too good. A loose girth to a saddle may allow it to shift. When a gall is noticed there is something wrong with the saddle or harness, and no remedy will be available until the cause of the gall is removed. An examination of the harness should be made whenever the horse is brought up from work at night, and it should be kept in good condition or the horse will suffer.

Feeding Meat to Poultry.

That fowls and especially laying pullets and hens require a certain amount of animal food is admitted by every one who understands poultry, but it is an extremely nice point to know just how to feed them and not overdo it. There is much danger in feeding meat for, to be valuable and do the fowls no harm, it should be perfectly fresh and fed in small quantities. The local butcher is tempted to work off his putrid meat on the customers who want it for feeding fowls and such meat will mean trouble for the birds, bowel trouble of a serious nature.

Swiss Tartlets.

Remove the stems and flowers, but leave the fruit whole; wipe with a damp cloth and simmer very gently until tender but not broken; drain in a colander; make sufficient syrup to cover the fruit in the proportion of one pint of vinegar to two pounds of granulated sugar. Use only the best elder vinegar. Put the fruit in the syrup and keep at the boiling point, but not boiling, for ten minutes, then seal boiling hot in self-sealers or jars. These may be spiced if preferred.

Strawberry Ice Cream.

Put a pint of cream in a saucepan with half a pound of sugar, and set over the fire to heat. When the sugar is dissolved stand aside to cool; add a pint of cream. Mash a quart and a half of ripe strawberries with three-quarters of a pound of sugar and let stand one hour, then strain the juice off, pour into the cream, mix well, turn into a freezer and freeze.

Almond Cakes.

Rub two ounces of butter into five ounces flour, five ounces powdered lump sugar, beat an egg with half the sugar, then put it to the other ingredients. Add one ounce blanched almonds and a little almond flavor, roll them in your hand to the size of a nutmeg, and sprinkle with fine lump sugar. They should be lightly baked.

To Choose Apples.

In choosing apples be guided by the weight; the heaviest are the best, and those should always be selected which, on being pressed by the thumb, yield to it with a slight cracking noise. With large apples waste is saved in peeling and coring them.

Why Not Try It?

Place an apple in the bread and cake boxes to keep bread and cake moist. Add one or two tablespoons of sugar to strong turnips when cooking. Try rubbing tough meat with a cut lemon to make it tender. Sprinkle clothes with a whisk broom and hot water.

Crop-Round Fowls.

Every farmer is familiar with what is called "crop-round" in fowls. The crop becomes packed with food that has ceased to pass into the gizzard of the bird. If the contents of the crop consist of grain only, the fowl should be kept from food for some days. In addition, the crop should be manipulated with the hands. This will tend to loosen the grain and start its passage into the gizzard.

Sometimes the condition is caused by feeding cut hay, dried alfalfa or clover, which have packed at the point where the food should pass out of the crop. One poultry raiser in cases of this kind pours sweet oil down the throat of the bird, and this loosens up the mass. In bad cases he opens the crop by cutting and removes the collected food, afterward sewing up the crop. He says that this does appear to cause the bird much pain. After this is done the bird should be fed only milk or other light food for some days.

For Weighing Lambs.

Mr. John Spears, of British Columbia, sends to the Montreal Star a sketch of a contrivance for weighing live lambs. Farmers who have lambs to sell are in need of some such method of ascertaining their weight. It consists of an ordinary wheat sack, having two suitable sticks attached to top and bottom. A stout piece of rope is attached to the ends of each of these sticks. The whole forms a sling. By this method the lambs do not wriggle

and they can't get out when once in, and it is very quick, humane and effective.

The Farm Garden.

No farmer can afford to do without a good garden. It is not to be expected that every one will be a fancy gardener, but every one should give sufficient attention to the subject so as to produce all staple vegetables earlier than can be produced in the field. It is not only essential to the health and proper enjoyment of the family, but it is actually a matter of profit. Could your whole farm be made as smooth, dry, rich and as well cultivated as a good garden, the increased product would pay a large per cent of profit upon the outlay. In the garden, or in a separate compartment, may be cultivated strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, currants, grapes and dwarf pears. They can all be had at a very small cost of money or labor, and will add immensely to the enjoyment of the household.

Crabapple Pickles.

Remove the stems and flowers, but leave the fruit whole; wipe with a damp cloth and simmer very gently until tender but not broken; drain in a colander; make sufficient syrup to cover the fruit in the proportion of one pint of vinegar to two pounds of granulated sugar. Use only the best elder vinegar. Put the fruit in the syrup and keep at the boiling point, but not boiling, for ten minutes, then seal boiling hot in self-sealers or jars. These may be spiced if preferred.

Swiss Tartlets.

Take one egg, its weight in stale cake crumbs and fresh butter, a tablespoonful of sugar, and a little flavoring. Beat up the butter to a cream with the sugar, add the cake crumbs and eggs, then flavoring, mixing all together. Line some patty pans with puff paste, and then a layer of apricot jam and a thick layer of the mixture. Bake about a quarter of an hour in a sharp oven.

Strawberry Ice Cream.

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Useful to Housewife.

Handling boiling clothes with an ordinary pole was not considered an up-to-date method by an Iowa inventor. He therefore evolved

the apparatus shown here—a pair of forceps as shaped as to firmly and positively grip the clothes so that they can be handled without tearing. It resembles very much a pair of scissors, having two

for hot clothes. Levers intermediately pivoted. One end of the levers is shaped to form a handle and the other into spoons. These spoons are hollowed out to form a recess, the back being slotted, which reduces the weight and also affords a firm grip. Between the handles is a spring. It is the intention of the inventor to manufacture these forceps of aluminum.

Spiced Crabapples.

Prepare the apples as for preserves. Make a syrup of one pint of vinegar to three and a half pints of sugar. Pour over the fruit and let stand overnight. Boil the fruit, a little at a time, in the syrup till tender. Pack the fruit in jars. Add mixed spices to the vinegar to suit the taste, boil down to enough to just cover the fruit, pour over it and seal. Crabapples can be carefully gathered and stored away till the through of other fruits is over. In fact, the above recipes are those used with wild crabapples, which were formerly buried in the ground to ripen; but these formulas can be used successfully with the cultivated varieties.

Deviled Eggs.

Boil as many eggs as are required for ten minutes, put them in cold water, and when cold shell them. Cut in halves lengthwise, remove the yolks, and rub them to a smooth paste with a tablespoonful of chopped tongue to six eggs, a dessertspoonful of salad oil, salt and cayenne to taste, a few drops of onion juice, and half a teaspoonful of French mustard. Cut a tiny slice off the bottom of each half of the white so that it will stand on the dish, fill with the prepared mixture, and serve, garnishing with watercress.

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