

For The Term of His Natural Life

By MARCUS CLARKE

CHAPTER XXX.—(Continued.)

Rufus Dawes, overpowered by the revelation so suddenly made to him, had remained for a few moments motionless in his cell, expecting to hear the heavy clang of the outer door, which should announce to him the departure of the chaplain. But he did not hear it, and it seemed to him that the air in the cell had grown suddenly cooler. He went to the door and looked into the narrow corridor, expecting to see the scowling countenance of Gimblett. To his astonishment the door of the prison was wide open, and not a soul in sight.

He looked around. The night was falling sullenly; the wind was mounting; from beyond the bar came the hoarse murmur of an angry sea. If the schooner was to sail that night, she had best get out into deep waters. Where was the chaplain? Pray heaven the delay had been sufficient, and they had sailed without him. Yet they would be sure to meet. He advanced a few steps nearer, and looked about him. Was it possible that, in his madness, the chaplain had been about to commit some violence which had drawn the trusty Gimblett from his post? The trusty Gimblett was lying at his feet—dead drunk!

"Hi! Hoho! Hello, there!" roared somebody from the jetty below. "Be that you, Muster Noarth? We ain't too much tiam, sur!"

From the uncurtained windows of the chaplain's house on the hill beamed the newly lighted candle. They in the boat did not see it, but it brought to the prisoner a wild hope that made his heart bound. He ran back to his cell, clasped on North's wide-awake, and, flinging the cloak hastily about him, came quickly down the steps. If the moon should shine out now!

"Jump in, sir," said unsuspecting Mannix, thinking only of the fogging he had been threatened with. "It'll be a dirty night, this night! Put this over your knees, sir. Shows her off! Give way!" And they were afloat. But one glimpse of moonlight fell upon the slouched hat and cloaked figure, and the boat's crew, engaged in the dangerous task of navigating the reef in the teeth of the rising gale, paid no attention to the chaplain.

"Lads, we're but just in time!" cried Mannix, and they laid alongside the schooner, black in blackness. "Up ye go, yer honor, quick!" And the anchor was a-trip as Rufus Dawes ran up the side.

The commandant, already pulling off in his own boat, roared a farewell. "Good-by, North. It was touch and go with ye," adding, "Curse the fellow; he's too proud to answer!"

The chaplain, indeed, spoke to no one, and, plunging down the hatchway, made for the stern cabins. "Close shaves, your reverence!" said a respectful somebody, opening a door. It was, but the clergyman did not say so. He double-locked the door, and, hardly realizing the danger he had escaped, flung himself on the bunk, panting. Over his head he heard the rapid tramp of feet. He could smell the sea, and through the open window of the cabin could distinguish the light in the chaplain's house on the hill. The tramping ceased, the vessel began to move swiftly, the commandant's boat appeared below him for an instant, making her way back; the Lady Franklin had set sail.

"That's a gun from the shore," said Partridge, the mate, "and they're burning a red light. There's a prisoner escaped. Shall we lie to?" "Lie to!" cried old Blunt. "We'll have suthin else to do. Look there!" The sky to the northward was streaked with a belt of livid green color, above which rose a mighty black cloud, whose shape was ever changing.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Blunt, recognizing the meteoric heralds of danger, began to regret his obstinacy. He saw that a hurricane was approaching.

Along the south coast of the Australian continent, though the usual westerly winds and gales of the highest latitudes prevail during the greater portion of the year, hurricanes are not infrequent. Gales commence at N. W. with a low barometer, increasing at W. and S. W., and gradually veering to the south. True cyclones occur at New Zealand. It was one of these rotatory storms, an escaped tempest of the tropics, which threatened the Lady Franklin.

Rufus Dawes, exhausted with the excitement through which he had passed, had slept for two or three hours, when he was awakened by the motion of the vessel going on the other tack. He rose to his feet and found himself in complete darkness. Overhead was the noise of tramping feet, and he could distinguish the hoarse tones of Blunt bellowing orders. Astonished at the absence of the moonlight which had so lately silvered the sea, he flung open the cabin window and looked out. The cabin allotted to North was one of the two stern cabins, and from it the convict had a full view of the approaching storm.

The sight was one of wild grandeur. The huge black cloud which hung in the horizon had changed its shape. Instead of a curtain, it was an arch. Beneath this vast and magnificent portal shone a dull phosphoric light. Across this livid space pale flashes of sheet-lightning passed noiselessly. Behind it was a dull and threatening murmur, made up of the grumbling thunder, the falling of rain, and the roar of contending wind and water. The lights of the

prison-island had disappeared, so rapid had been the progress of the schooner under the steady breeze, and the ocean stretched around, black and desolate. Gazing upon this gloomy expanse, Rufus Dawes observed a strange phenomenon—lightning appearing to burst upward from the sullen bosom of the sea. At intervals, the darkly rolling waves flashed fire, and streaks of flame shot upward. The tone of a woman's voice recalled him to himself. Cautiously unlocking the cabin door, he peered out. The cuddy was lighted by a swinging lamp which revealed Sylvia questioning one of the women concerning the storm. Locking the door, he proceeded hastily to dress himself in North's clothes. He would wait until his aid was absolutely required, and then rush out. In the darkness Sylvia would mistake him for the priest. He could convey her to the boat—if recourse to the boats should be rendered necessary—and then take the hazard of his fortune. While she was in danger his place was near her.

From the deck of the vessel the scene was appalling. The clouds had closed in. The arch of light had disappeared and all was a dull, windy blackness. Gigantic seas seemed to mount in the horizon and sweep toward and upon them. It was as though the ship lay in the vortex of a whirlpool, so high on either side of her were piled the rough pyramidal masses of sea. The vessel lay almost on her beam ends, with her helm up, stripped even of the sails which had been furled upon the yards. Mortal hands could do nothing for her. By 5 o'clock in the morning the gale had reached its height.

The sea, pouring down through the burst hatchway, tore the door of the cuddy from its hinges. Sylvia found herself surrounded by a wildly surging torrent which threatened to overwhelm her. She shrieked aloud for aid, but her voice was inaudible even to herself. Clinging to the mast which penetrated the little cuddy, she whispered a last prayer for success. The door opened, and from out the cabin came a figure clad in black. She looked up, and the light of the expiring lamp showed her a face that was not that of the man she had expected to see. Then a pair of dark eyes beaming ineffable love and pity were bent upon her, and a pair of dripping arms held her above the brine as she had once been held in the misty mysterious days that were gone.

In the terror of that moment, the cloud which had so long oppressed her brain passed from it. The action of the strange man before her completed and explained the action of the convict chained to the Port Arthur coal wagons, of the convict kneeling in the Norfolk Island torture chamber. She remembered the terrible experience of Macquarie Harbor. She recalled the evening of the boat building, when, swung into air by stalwart arms, she had promised the rescuing prisoner to plead for him with her kindred. Regaining her memory thus, all the agony and shame of the man's long life of misery became at once apparent to her. She understood how her husband had deceived her, and with what base injustice and falsehood he had bought her young love. No question as to how this doubly condemned prisoner had escaped from the hideous lair of punishment she had quit occurred to her. She asked not—even in her thoughts—how it had been given to him to supplant the chaplain in his place on board the vessel. She only considered, in her sudden awakening, the story of his wrongs, remembered only his marvelous fortitude and love, knew only, in this apparently last instant of her pure, ill-fated life, that as he had saved her once from starvation and death, so had he come again to save her from despair.

The eyes of the man and woman met in one long, wild gaze. Sylvia stretched out her white hands and smiled, and Richard Devine understood, in his turn, the story of the young girl's joyless life, and knew how she had been sacrificed.

In the great crisis of our life, when brought face to face with annihilation, we are suspended gasping over the great emptiness of death, we become conscious that the self which we think we know so well has strange and unthought-of capacities. To describe a tempest of the elements is not easy, but to describe a tempest of the soul is impossible. Amidst the fury of such a tempest, a thousand memories, each bearing in its breast the corpse of some dead deed whose influence haunts us yet, are driven like feathers before the blast, as unsubstantial and as unregarded. The mists which shroud our self-knowledge become transparent, and we are smitten with sudden, lightning-like comprehensions of our own misused power over our fate.

This much we feel and know, but who can coldly describe the hurricane which thus overwhelms him? As well ask the drowned mariner to tell of the marvels of mid-sea when the great deeps swallowed him and the darkness of death encompassed him round about. These two human beings felt that they had done with life. Together thus, alone in the very midst and presence of death, the distinctions of the world disappeared. Their vision grew clear. They felt as beings whose bodies had already perished, and as they clasped hands, their freed souls, recognizing each the loveliness of the other, rushed tremblingly together.

In a stately home in "dear old England" a bronzed, serious-faced man knows the peace and contentment that come only with the calm after the storm

—the rare joy of love requited, the solemn satisfaction of innocence vindicated, the "glory of sunlit lawns" and "green pastures and still waters."

They who had robbed Rufus Dawes, convict, of the best years of his life could not restore their golden promise or atone for the shipwreck of youth and early manhood.

But they could tear the false veil from the past. The storm that swept the Lady Franklin to the cruel rocks drifted to a friendly shore the man and woman who, clasped in each other's arms, saw love ineffable in each other's eyes for the first time.

Rufus Dawes escaped to England, Sylvia Frere followed on the next steamer, for, at the first port, she had learned of the death of Maurice Frere, brained by the manacles of a convict he had goaded to desperation the very night of the escape of the man he had so cruelly wronged.

Then the world knew the story of the man who had twice saved her life—knew as well of his innocence, and Mr. North, reformed, repentant, from a quiet parish in Australia, supplied the final evidence that cleared his name of every black vestige of guilt.

As Sir Richard Devine, as a shipwrecked mariner safe with home, love and mother, the old Rufus Dawes became a man among men, notable for charity, probity and justice—famous as the first to lift his hand to strike from the fair, false face of Tasmania the hideous mask that had converted into a living hell an earthly paradise, the foul plague-spot of the universe to which he had been condemned "For the term of his natural life."

(The end.)

STRIKING FACTS ABOUT SLEEP.

One of the Most Mysterious of the Ways of Nature.

"Shakespeare," said a scientist, "called sleep the ape of death. That is a striking name for a striking thing. Sleep is a wonderland. Let us explore it."

"Self-hypnotism is a mysterious force that we can exercise on ourselves in sleep alone. We are all self-hypnotists. We all, on certain nights, tell ourselves firmly that we must not oversleep; that the next morning—at 4, at 5 or 6 precisely we must wake up. Our sleeping selves respond to the hypnotic suggestion made the night before by our waking selves. That is mysterious and striking, isn't it? Still more mysterious and striking, though, is the fact of our keeping track of the time somehow in our slumber. How on earth do we do that?"

"It is impossible to do without sleep. Men have slept standing, even running. They have slept in battle, under fire, with guns roaring on all sides. They have slept in unendurable and deadly pain."

"There is no torture equal to that which the deprivation of sleep entails. The Chinese are the cruellest folks on earth, and the most ingenious of torturers. Well, the Chinese place the deprivation of sleep at the head of their torture list."

"Sleep is a state of rest. The heart rests in sleep. The heart is a rhythmic muscle, not one that never reposes, but one that works at short shifts, like a puddler, a moment on, a moment off. Well, when we sleep, the heart's shifts of rest are redoubled. It works then, one on, two off, getting, indeed, pretty nearly as much repose as we do."

"The brain in sleep becomes pale and sinks below the level of the skull. When we are awake the brain is high and full and ruddy."

"Not only the brain and heart, but even the tear glands rest in sleep. That is why when we awake we always rub our eyes. The rubbing is an instinctive action that stimulates the stagnant tear glands and causes them to moisten properly our eyes, all dried from their inaction."

Dust on the Ocean.

"To talk of a 'dusty' ocean highway sounds absurd, but the expression is perfectly accurate," states a writer. "Everyone who is familiar with ships knows that, no matter how carefully the decks may be washed in the morning, a great quantity of dust will collect by nightfall. You say, 'But the modern steamship, burning hundreds of tons of coal a day, easily accounts for such a deposit.'"

"True, but the records of sailing vessels show that the latter collected more dust than a steamer. On a recent voyage of a sailing vessel—a journey which lasted ninety-seven days—twenty-four barrels of dust were swept from the decks! The captain was a man of scientific tastes and made careful observations, but could not solve the mystery. Some, no doubt, comes from the wear and tear on the sails and rigging, but that accounts for only a small portion. To add to the mystery, bits of cork, wood and vegetable fiber are frequently found in this sea dust. Where does it come from?"—Corea Daily News.

Where He Was.

"Major Longbeau tells such exciting stories of the civil war, doesn't he?"

"Yes, he does tell some good ones."

"Which side was he on during the war?"

"The other side."

"Confederate?"

"No—the other side of the Atlantic."

—Cleveland Leader.

POPULATION MOVEMENT IN AMERICA.



The center of population in the United States has been moving steadily westward for more than a century with remarkable regularity, both as regards distance and direction, says the Chicago Record-Herald. Since the year 1790 the exact location of this mythical point has been calculated by figures extracted from the census reports calculated officially at Washington for every ten years of the nation's history. When these points are plotted upon the map and connected a remarkable line of progress is obtained, in which may be read at a glance much of this country's history. "Westward the course of empire takes its way," as all the world knows, but it is probable that nowhere in history has any similar line of progress, as it may be called, proceeded westward so directly according to compass and at so even a rate of progress.

In the year 1790, when the center of population was first calculated, it was found to be at a point twenty-three miles east of Baltimore. In making this estimate the entire population of the United States of that period was, of course, considered. It was the population center of a strip extending from Maine to Florida. And since the frontier population of that early day was inconsiderable the center of population was practically the same as the geographical center. To-day the geographical center of the country is, of course, considerably west of the Mississippi. In more than a century these two theoretical points have become widely separated. The center of population in the United States is at present six miles southeast of Columbus, Ind.

The regularity of this line is the more remarkable when it is considered that the United States has grown, geographically, by leaps and bounds. The development of the country has not been a steady growth westward as regards its acquisition of territory. The Louisiana Purchase, for example, by adding millions of acres to the United States at one time would presumably have had the effect of drawing this line of progress sharply to the southwest. The acquisition of Alaska again would have had a similar influence in another direction. And yet the line shows little deflection at the important dates when these territories were added.

For a century again the distance covered by this point during each decade has varied very slightly. It has moved westward at the rate of about forty miles every ten years, a little more or less, whether at the beginning or the end of the century. The shortest distance traveled

was between years 1800 and 1810, when only thirty-six miles were traversed. The longest jump was between 1850 and 1860, when eighty-one miles were covered. The regularity of the movement of the center of population while the population of the country has increased at such an enormous rate is obviously very remarkable.

By reference to the accompanying map it will be seen that the digressions of this line either to the north or south have been somewhat less than fifty miles in a full century. These figures apply, however, only until the end of the last century. Since 1900 the line has shown a tendency to move southward, while at the same time its rate of progress has been abruptly checked. In other words, while the movement of the line was at the rate of about forty miles every ten years, its movement during the decade from 1890 to 1900 was but fourteen miles, a startling contrast with previous decades for a century. This abrupt check to its movement and its southward tendency indicate, of course, a rapid increase of the population in the South.

The first movement recorded, that between 1790 and 1800, was from a point twenty-three miles east of Baltimore to a point eighteen miles west of that city, a total movement of forty-one miles. Ten years later it was located forty miles northwest by west of Washington, having moved thirty-six miles in the decade. By the year 1820 it had reached a point sixteen miles north of Woodstock, Va., having traveled at an even fifty miles. In the following decade it left the State of West Virginia, nineteen miles west-southwest of Moorfield, a distance of thirty-nine miles. It next traveled to a point sixteen miles south of Clarksburg, in the same State, fifty-five miles. The next decade carried it to a point twenty-three miles southeast of Parkersburg, repeating the same distance of the previous decade, fifty-five miles. In 1860 it moved into Ohio, to a point twenty miles south of Chillicothe, having traveled eighty-one miles, the longest movement in its history.

Ten years later it had reached a point eight miles northeast of Cincinnati, fifty-eight miles. The southern tendency then became obvious, for in the following ten years, between 1870 and 1880, it traveled to a point eight miles west by south of Cincinnati. It next moved to a point twenty miles east of Columbus, Ind., and in the last ten years, in 1900, it had reached its present resting place. The total distance traveled in 110 years has been exactly 519 miles.

FRIENDS.

JIM is going instead of Herman," announced Mrs. Day. "But I don't know Jim," objected Lois.

"And that's the reason," answered Mrs. Day, "that I want to tell you about him. The fact is, Jim was jilted last spring. She was one of the most beautiful girls I have ever seen"—Mrs. Day talked rapidly—"but none of us wanted her. She was selfish and thoughtless and exacting, but Jim never saw it. He just adored her and followed her about, and gloried in being her slave, until we were all in despair."

Jim was the brother of Mrs. Day's husband, but it was her way to take all the responsibility, even of her husband's family. "So we were all very much relieved when she jilted Jim."

Lois was listening quietly, somewhat at a loss to get the trend of these confidences.

"We were all rather glad, as I said, except"—here Mrs. Day paused, then plunged ahead—"except for the dreadful effect it has had upon Jim. He was heart-broken; he's young, you know." This is apology to Lois' smile. "And since then he has been perfectly reckless."

Mrs. Day stopped for breath. It was hard to say what she meant to say.

"Lois, my dear," she finally continued, "don't let Jim make love to you at camp. He has vowed to be revenged on the whole race of women, and that is the way he has taken to do it."

The first night at camp Lois had cause to remember Mrs. Day's warning. It was a party of lovers, all young married couples, or engaged, all except Lois and Jim, the youngest. These two started up the lake in a canoe, just as the others did; but when Jim suggested that they drift, Lois felt a misgiving. Jim must be made to understand. She stopped his half-tender compliments with a warning hand.

"Listen, Jim," she said, slowly and earnestly, "your sister has told me about your trouble. I'm not going to talk about that," she added hastily, as Jim frowned, "but I want to tell you this: Somewhere there is a man that I

love as dearly as you love this girl. For his sake and for hers, let's you and I help each other. I want to be true"—diffidently, it was hard to say—"and so, I know, do you. Let us here and now promise to be just good comrades. Nothing more."

She looked at the boy with a bright smile and held out her hand. He hesitated a minute, then grasped her hand. "It's a go, Lois," he said.

And so it became the custom for these two youngest to entertain or harass the others, as the mood seized them. On the water they sang and played on mandolins and guitars; in camp they indulged in endless games of cards, or got off jokes at the expense of the others. They earned the nickname of the "two young fellows," and all mundane matters were left in their



JUST GOOD COMRADES.

charge, such as the planning of trips, the care of the lunch.

"Let the lovers love," was their motto; "we'll have a good time." And they certainly did. They explored all the inlets and outlets of the lake, discovered the big cave, brought home the last water lilies of the season, and wandered far afield, spied out tracks unmistakably those of a bear. Lois grew brown and hardy with the long tramps which she alone of the women found time to take. The biggest berries and the fattest fish were hers, and she it was who caught the prize trout, thanks to the patience and energy with which she angled.

It was the last night. Mrs. Day looked about the table and sighed. "This is the first year we haven't had an engagement to announce," she said; "we are all getting old, I am afraid." And it was proof of the success of Lois' plan that not one of them thought to

joke about the "young fellows." There was no question of sentimentality with them.

Lois and Jim were forbidden to give a concert to spoil the last evening, so they paddled swiftly along the south shore. At length Jim broke the unusual silence. "This has been the best summer of my life," he said, "and it has all been due to you, Lois."

The girl looked up, startled at this sudden transition from bonhomie to something very like sentiment.

"I'm not going to break our promise," Jim said in answer to the look. "I want you to be as true as ever to that man. But I'm going to tell you this, that other girl was a dream."

They both laughed.

"I mean she wasn't real, like you. I understand now that she never could have been a wife to me. Why, we weren't friends."

Lois was silent.

"Lois (Jim's voice faltered, so intense were his feelings), would it be unfair to the other man or to you if I tell you that you are truly the only woman I love; the only one I could possibly marry? A man ought to spend his life with a girl who is his friend," he added wistfully. "I never knew that before."

"Somewhere," remarked Lois, inconsequently, "is a very indefinite place, and you remember that's where I said the man was."

Jim was quick-witted, and association with Lois had sharpened his perception. He asked eagerly, "Was he a dream, too?"

"No," Lois laughed; "he's no dream, Jim; he's—well, he's in love, and," she drew to keep up the suspense as long as possible, "he's in love, and so am I. We're both in the same boat, you see."—Milwaukee Wisconsin.

Consolation.

A minister, who has since attained prominence in New York, says a writer in the Sun, was in his earlier years called from a village church. One of the sisters expressed grief at his going.

"They will get a better preacher to take my place," he consoled her.

"No, that's just the trouble," she said. "Every preacher, lately, is worse than the last."

When a man says, "I didn't eat my breakfast," ever remark his mournful way of saying it?