

For The Term of His Natural Life

By MARCUS CLARKE

CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

The woman of whom they were speaking met him at the ladder. Her face was paler than usual, and dark circles round her eyes gave evidence of a sleepless night. She opened her red lips to speak, and then, seeing Vickers, stopped abruptly.

"Well, what is it?"

She looked from one to the other. "I came for Doctor Pine."

Vickers, with the quick intelligence of affection, guessed her errand. "Some one is ill?"

"Miss Sylvia, sir. It is nothing to signify, I think. A little feverish and hot, and my mistress—"

Vickers was down the ladder in an instant, with scared face. Pine caught the girl's round, firm arm. "Where have you been?"

Two great flakes of red came out in her white cheeks, and she shot an indignant glance at Blunt.

"Were you with the child last night?" went on Pine.

"No; I have not been in the cabin since dinner yesterday. Mrs. Vickers only called me in just now. Let go my arm, sir; you hurt me."

Pine loosened his hold as if satisfied at the reply. "I beg your pardon," he said, gruffly. "I did not mean to hurt you. But the fever has broken out in the prison, and I think the child has caught it. You must be careful where you go."

Sarah Purfoy stood motionless for an instant, in deadly terror. Her lips parted, her eyes glittered, and she made a movement as though to retrace her steps.

"Poor soul!" thought honest Blunt, "how she feels for the child! That lubberly surgeon, he's hurt her! Never mind, my lass," he said, aloud. "It was broad daylight, and he had not as much courage in love making as at night. 'Don't be afraid, I've been in ships with fever before now.'"

Awaking, as it were, at the sound of his voice, she came closer to him. "But ship fever! I have heard of it! Men have died like rotten sheep in crowded vessels like this."

"Tush! Not they. Don't be frightened; Miss Sylvia won't die, nor you neither." He took her hand. "It may knock off a few dozen prisoners or so. They are pretty close packed down there. What is the matter?"

"Nothing—a pain. I did not sleep last night. I have the toothache," said she, putting her hand to her face.

"Take some laudanum," says Blunt, with dim recollections of his old mother's treatment of such ailments. "Old Pine'll give you some. No, wait for it for you. You shan't ask that bear for it. Come into my cabin."

Blunt's cabin was in the starboard side of the ship, just under the awning, and possessed three windows—one looking out over the side, and two upon deck. The corresponding cabin on the other side was occupied by Mr. Maurice Frere. He closed the door and took down a small medicine chest.

"Here," said he, opening it. "I've carried this little box for years, but it ain't often I want to use it. Now, then, put some of this into your mouth, and hold it there."

"Good gracious, Captain Blunt, you'll poison me! Give me the bottle; I'll help myself. You need not fear. I've used it before." And she put the bottle in her pocket.

Her tears were all dry long ago, and had only given increased color to her face. This agreeable woman never wept long enough to make herself distasteful. She raised her dark eyes to his for a moment, with a saucy smile, and gained her cabin. It was next to that of her mistress, and she could hear the sick child feebly moaning. Her eyes filled with tears, real ones this time.

"Poor little thing," she said; "I hope she won't die."

And then she threw herself on her bed and buried her hot head in the pillow. The intelligence of the fever seemed to have terrified her. Had the news disarranged some well-concocted plan of hers? Being near the accomplishment of some cherished scheme, long kept in view, had the sudden and unexpected presence of disease falsified her carefully made calculations, and cast an almost insurmountable obstacle in her path?

"She die! and through me? How did I know that he had a fever? Perhaps I have taken it myself, I feel ill." She turned over on the bed, as if in pain, and then started to a sitting position, stung by a sudden thought. "Perhaps he might die! The fever spreads quickly, and if so, all this plotting will have been useless. It must be done at once. It will never do to break down now," and taking the phial from her pocket, she held it up, to see how much it contained. It was three parts full. "Enough for both," she said, between her set teeth. The action of holding up the bottle reminded her of Blunt, and she smiled. "I'll go through with it, and, if the worse comes to the worst, I can fall back on Maurice." She loosened the cork of the phial, so that it would come out with as little noise as possible, and then placed it carefully in her bosom. "I will get a little sleep if I can," she said. "They have got the note, and it shall be done to-night."

CHAPTER VI.

The felon, Rufus Dawes, had stretched himself in his bunk and tried to sleep. But though he was tired and sore, and his head felt like lead, he could not but keep broad awake. The long pull through the pure air, if it had tired him, had revived him, and he felt stronger; but for all that the fatal sickness

that was on him maintained its hold; his pulse beat thickly, and his brain throbbed with unnatural heat. Lying in his narrow space, in the semi-darkness, he tossed his limbs about and closed his eyes in vain; he could not sleep. His utmost efforts induced only an oppressive stagnation of thought, through which he heard the voices of his fellow-convicts; while before his eyes was the burning Hydaspes—that vessel whose destruction had destroyed forever all trace of the unhappy Richard Devine.

As yet there had been no alarm of fever. The three seizures had excited some comment, however, and had it not been for the counter excitement of the burning ship, it is possible that Pine's precaution would have been thrown away. The "old hands," who had been through the passage before, suspected, but said nothing save among themselves. It is likely that the weak and sickly would go first, and that there would be more room for those remaining. The "old hands" were satisfied.

Three of these old hands were conversing together just behind the partition of Dawes' bunk. The berths were five feet square, and each contained six men. No. 10, the berth occupied by Dawes, was situated in the corner made by the joining of the starboard and center lines, and behind it was a slight recess, in which the scuttle was fixed. His "mates" were at present but three in number, for John Rex and a cockney tailor had been removed to the hospital.

The three that remained were now in deep conversation in the shelter of the recess. Of these, a giant seemed to be the chief. His name was Gabbett. He was a returned convict. The other two were a man named Sanders, known as "the Mocher," and Jimmy Vetch, the "Crow." They were talking in whispers, but Rufus Dawes, lying with his head close to the partition, was enabled to catch much of what they said.

At first the conversation turned on the catastrophe of the burning ship. From this it grew to anecdote of wreck and adventure, and at last Gabbett said something which made the listener start from his indifferent efforts to slumber into sudden, broad wakefulness.

It was the mention of his own name, coupled with that of the woman he had met on the quarter-deck.

"I saw her speakin' to Dawes yesterday," said the giant, "we don't want no more than we've got. I ain't goin' to risk my neck for Rex's fancies, and so I'll tell her."

"It was something about the kid," said the Crow, in his elegant slang. "I don't believe she ever saw him before."

"If I thort she was goin' to throw us over, I'd cut her throat as soon as look at her," snorts Gabbett, savagely.

"Jack ud have a word in that," snuffles the Mocher; "and he's a curious cove to quarrel with."

"Well," grumbled Mr. Gabbett, "and let's have no more chaff. If we're for bizness, let's come to bizness."

"What are we to do now?" asked the Mocher. "Jack's on the sick list, and the gal won't stir 'bout him."

"My dear friends," said the Crow, "my keyind and keristian friends, it is to be regretted that when natur' gave you such tremendously thick skulls, she didn't put something inside of 'em. I say that now's the time. Jack's in the 'ospital; what of that? That don't make it no better for him, does it? Not a bit of it; and, if he drops his knife and fork, why, then it's my opinion that the gal won't stir a peg. It's on his account, not ours, that she's been manoeuvring, ain't it?"

"Well," says Mr. Gabbett, with the air of one who was but partly convinced, "I s'pose it is."

"All the more reason of getting it off quick. Another thing, when the boys know there's fever aboard, you'll see the rumpus there's be. They'll be ready enough to join us then. Once get the snapper-chest, and we're right as nine-penn'orth o'hapence."

This conversation had an intense interest for Rufus Dawes. Plunged into prison, hurriedly tried, and by reason of his surroundings ignorant of the death of his father and his own fortune, he had hitherto held aloof from the scoundrels who surrounded him. He now saw his error. He knew that the name he had once possessed was blotted out, that any shred of his old life which had clung to him hitherto was shriveled in the fire that consumed the Hydaspes. Richard Devine was dead—lost at sea with the crew of the ill-fated vessel in which—deluded by a skillfully sent letter from the prison—his mother believed him to have sailed. Rufus Dawes, alone should live. Rufus Dawes—the convicted felon, the suspected murderer, should live to claim his freedom. With his head swimming, and his brain on fire, he eagerly listened for more.

"But we can't stir without the girl," Gabbett said. "She's got to stall off the sentry."

The Crow produced a dirty scrap of paper, over which his companions eagerly bent their heads.

"Where did yer get that?" asked Gabbett.

"Yesterday afternoon Sarah was standing on the deck throwing bits o' toke to the gulls, and I saw her a-looking at me very hard. At last she came down as near the barricade as she dared, and throwed crumbs and such-like up in the air over the side. By and by a pretty big lump, doughed up round, fell close to my foot, and, watching a favorable opportunity, I pouched it. Inside was this bit o' rag-bag."

The writing, though feminine in char-

acter, was bold and distinct. Sarah had evidently been mindful of the education of her friends, and had desired to give them as little trouble as possible.

"All is right. Watch me when I come up to-morrow evening at three bells. If I drop my handkerchief, get to work at the time agreed on. The sentry will be safe."

Rufus Dawes, though his eyelids would scarcely keep open, and a terrible lassitude almost paralyzed his limbs, eagerly drank in the whispered sentence. There was a conspiracy to seize the ship. Sarah Purfoy was in league with the convicts. She had come on board armed with a plot, and this plot was about to be put in execution.

True, that the head of this formidable chimera—John Rex, the forger—was absent, but the two hands, or rather claws—the burglar and the prison breaker—were present, and the slimy mad, effeminate Crow, if he had not the brains of his master, yet made up for his flaccid muscles and nerveless frame by a cat-like cunning and a spirit of volatility that nothing could subdue. With such a powerful ally outside as the mock maid servant, the chance of success was enormously increased. There were one hundred and eighty convicts and but fifty soldiers. If the first rush proved successful, the vessel was theirs. Rufus Dawes thought of the little bright-haired child who had run so confidently to meet him, and shuddered.

"There!" said the Crow, with a sneering laugh, "what do you think of that? Does the girl look like disappointing us now?"

There was silence for a minute or two. The giant was plunged in gloomy abstraction, and Vetch and the Mocher interchanged a significant glance. Gabbett had been ten years at the colonial penal settlement of Macquarie Harbor, and he had memories that he did not confide in his companions. When he indulged in one of these fits of recollection, his friends found it best to leave him to himself.

Rufus Dawes was no longer stimulated by outward sounds, his senses appeared to fail him. The blood rushed into his eyes and ears. He made a violent, vain effort to retain his consciousness, but with a faint cry fell back, striking his head against the edge of the bunk.

The noise roused the burglar in an instant. There was some one in the berth! The three looked into each other's eyes, in guilty alarm, and then Gabbett dashed round the partition.

"It's Dawes!" said the Mocher. "We had forgotten him!"

"He'll join us, mate, he'll join us!" cried Vetch, fearful of bloodshed.

Gabbett, flinging himself on to the prostrate figure, dragged it, head foremost, to the floor. The sudden vertigo had saved Rufus Dawes' life. The robber twisted one brawny hand in his shirt, and pressing the knuckles down, prepared to deliver a blow that should forever silence the listener, when Vetch caught his arm. "He's been asleep," he cried. "Don't hit him! See, he's not awake yet."

A crowl gathered round. The giant relaxed his grip, but the convict gave only a deep groan, and allowed his head to fall on his shoulder.

Gabbett took another look at the purpling face and the bedewed forehead, and then sprang erect, rubbing at his right hand, as though he would rub-off something sticking there.

"He's got the fever!" he roared, with a terror-stricken grimace. "I've seen it before to-day. The typhus is aboard and he's the fourth man down!"

The circle of beast-like faces, stretched forward to "see the fight," widened at the half-comprehended, ill-omened word. It was as though a bombshell had fallen into the group. Rufus Dawes lay on the deck motionless, breathing heavily. The savage circle glared at his prostrate body. The alarm ran round, and all the prison crowded down to stare at him. All at once he uttered a groan, and turning, propped his body on his two rigid arms, and made an effort to speak. But no sound issued from his convulsed jaws.

"He's done," said the Mocher, brutally. "He didn't hear nuffin'."

The noise of the heavy bolts shooting back broke the spell. The first detachment were coming down from "exercise." The door was flung back, and the bayonets of the guard gleamed in a ray of sunshine that shot down the hatchway. This glimpse of sunlight—sparkling at the entrance of the fetid and stifling prison—seemed to mock their miseries. It was as though heaven laughed at them. By one of those terrible and strange impulses which animate crowds, the mass, turning from the sick man, leaped toward the doorway. The interior of the prison flashed white with suddenly turned faces. The gloom scintillated with rapidly moving hands. "Air, air! Give us air!"

"That's it!" said Sanders to his companions. "I thought the news would rouse 'em."

Gabbett—all the savage in his blood stirred by the sight of flashing eyes and wrathful faces—would have thrown himself forward with the rest, but Vetch plucked him back.

"It'll be over in a moment," he said. "It's only a fit they've got."

His Favorite.

After many years Remus returned to the old folks in the little Dixie cabin. There was much rejoicing.

"See, boy," said the old father, "yo' am de prodigal en Ah am gwine to kill de fatted calf."

But Remus protested.

"Fatted calf?" he echoed. "Huh! Doan kill no fatted calf foh dis child. Kill a fatted 'possum."

Clever at Handling Men.

"How did that young stripling get that diplomatic position? Has he ever shown any diplomatic ability?"

"Yes, indeed! He landed the job."—Detroit Free Press.

THE WAIL OF THE FAKER.

Copy Days with the "Bunc" Game Have Gone Forever.

"There ain't nothing to it; suckers and good farmers are getting scarcer every day," said an old-time street faker the other day to a Kansas City Star man. "There was a time when a wise guy at the ballyhoo business could get out and collect the dough, but the good old days have passed and to-day the Rubes won't give 15 cents to see an earthquake. They've been wised up by the papers, and a good piece of soda pop bottle don't look like a real diamond to them no more."

"Us street corner Senators used to go out and get the con with any old gag, but now you can't stand on the corner and deal the bunc for an hour at a time and nick about enough gill to cop a scuttie of stids. I'm in the legit now. Peddling stuff that's worth the dough. I used to go out with a bit of stock and ballyhoo in front of a tent for the farmers and get their dimes."

"I remember one time when I was stranded out in Western Kansas that the game was so good that I pulled off over a century one afternoon with no stock but the bunc. I was broke, but I had a tent and a big tub. I would have spread for the lemonade gag, but I didn't have the dough to buy the acid and the floaters, so I pulled off a side-show. I filled up my tub with water and placed a lone match in it. Then I stood outside and spied for my life. 'Come inside gentlemen, and see the great swimming mach.' Well, they passed in their dimes and just stood around and watched that match swim around in the water. At first they were sore and wanted their dough back, but I kidded them and told them to get even by boosting their friends against the game. It was great and I left town with enough soft goods to open a medicine show."

"Another time when I was pretty badly crimped, I opened up a side show with the dancing rooster. This was a good show and they got a run for their money. I placed old milder nigger fruit on a piece of zinc and then lit a lamp under it. He danced all right and once more I was little bright eyes. I've cleaned up lots of times with nothing but the bunc, but now with the straight goods it's hard pickings."

JOHN MITCHELL.

Acknowledged Leader of the United Mine Workers of America.

John Mitchell, the acknowledged leader of the United Mine Workers of America, who presented to the operators the *doctors of the workers*, is one of the foremost labor leaders of the day. He did not organize the United Mine Workers, but he made the organization the most powerful in the labor field. He first gained prominence in the strike of 1897, when he succeeded in bringing about the system of joint conference which is now in vogue between the miners and operators in the Eastern States. There are over half a million men who are more or less influenced by his will, though he does not by any means control them. In the memorable anthracite strike of 1902 he was for peace. He had to fight the corporations and battle against the conflicting opinions of



JOHN MITCHELL.

his own people, but his business-like methods, his sincerity and determination attracted the attention of President Roosevelt and enlisted the sympathy of the country, to the end that by Presidential mediation peace was established, with the miners getting an advance of 10 per cent, having their hours reduced and an arbitration board being established.

His Foot in It Again.

Mr. Brakes—Who is that sour-looking dame over there?

Mr. Gubbins—Sir, she has the misfortune to be my wife.

Oh—ah—er—indeed, sir, the misfortune is—er—ah—yours, I'm sure.—Cleveland Leader.

No Words Wasted.

"Whenever I express a desire for anything," said Mrs. Newbride, "my husband never objects."

"Neither does mine," replied Mrs. Oldun. "He simply ignores it."—Philadelphia Press.

Pale, Thin, Nervous?

Then your blood must be in a very bad condition. You certainly know what to take, then take it—Ayer's Sarsaparilla. If you doubt, then consult your doctor. We know what he will say about this grand old family medicine. Sold for over 60 years.

This is the first question your doctor would ask: "Are your bowels regular?" He knows that daily action of the bowels is absolutely essential to recovery. Keep your liver active and your bowels regular by taking laxative doses of Ayer's Pills.

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Ayer's
HAIR VIGOR,
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Almost Time.

The convention of physicians was called secretly and hurriedly. Dr. Kill-em rose to speak.

"Gentlemen of the profession," he said, "something must be done. Our automobile tires are wearing out, our daughters' music lessons are unpaid for and nearly all our good patrons have already been operated upon for appendicitis. What shall we do?"

"Let's discover a new microbe," said Dr. Quack.

The motion was carried unanimously and a wave of sickness wafted ducats to the doctors' coffers.—Indianapolis Star.

There is more Catarrh in this section of the country than all other diseases put together, and until the last few years was supposed to be incurable. For a great many years doctors pronounced it a local disease, and prescribed local remedies, and by constantly failing to cure with local treatment, pronounced it incurable. Science has proven catarrh to be a constitutional disease, and therefore requires constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure, manufactured by F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, Ohio, is the only constitutional cure on the market. It is taken internally in doses from 10 drops to a teaspoonful. It acts directly on the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. They offer one hundred dollars for any case it fails to cure. Send for circulars and testimonials. Address, F. J. CHENEY & CO., Toledo, O. Sold by Druggists 75c.

Hall's Family Pills are the best.

Everything Worn.

"And you still delay the wedding," sighed the beautiful girl. "My heart is worn out."

"Is that all?" demanded the suitor, who upon the subject of matrimony was a confirmed non-resistance.

"No," the carpet is worn out, the parlor sofa is worn out, my hopes are worn out and my patience is worn out."

The suitor whistled.

"Well, by gum!" he retorted. "My shoes are worn out coming here every two or three nights."

A GUARANTEED CURE FOR PILES. Itching, Bleeding, Protruding Piles. Druggists are authorized to refund money if FAZO OINTMENT fails to cure in 3 to 14 days. 50c.

One Cause of Poverty.

A Philadelphian was praising the late Mary Mapes Dodge. "Wise woman as she was," he said, "Mrs. Dodge considered organized charity rather cold. She believed in the charity spirit, which, she said, was best fostered by the direct personal contact of recipient and giver. Hence she never refused a beggar. And, defending herself from attacks one day, she narrated a conversation she once overheard between two Maryland tramps, or 'peach plucks.' These peach plucks, as they lay under a tree on a superb afternoon, philosophized. 'Bill,' said the first, 'why is it that poor people is always willin' to help us, while rich folks always turns us down?' The other, with a mirthful laugh, replied: 'Them that don't mind givin' things away is the ones that stays poor.'"—Philadelphia Bulletin.

FITS Permanently Cured. No fits or nervousness after first day's use of Dr. Kline's Great Nerve Restorer. Send for Free 62 trial bottle and treatise. Dr. R. H. Kline, Ltd., 931 Arch St., Philadelphia, Pa.

The American Chameleon.

The American chameleon, a small lizard (Anolis carolinensis), inhabits various parts of the Southern United States. The little animal has the remarkable habit of quickly and completely changing its colors, varying from brown to yellow or pale green. Its food consists of insects. The little animal is perfectly harmless to higher forms of life, is often kept as a pet, and has been worn attached to a chain as an ornament.

The toes are provided with adhesive pads, which enable the lizard to run upon smooth vertical surfaces.—St. Nicholas.

You Can Get Allen's Foot-Ease FREE.

Write Allen S. Olmsted, Le Roy, N. Y., for a free sample of Allen's Foot-Ease. It cures sweating, hot swollen, aching feet. It makes new or tight shoes easy. A certain cure for corns, ingrowing nails and bunions. All druggists sell it. 25c. Don't accept any substitute.

For each child born to the families of the municipal clerks in Kansas City the civic authorities promise to add \$5 a month to the father's salary.