

For The Term of His Natural Life

By MARCUS CLARKE

CHAPTER XIX.—(Continued.)

"Well, you see, that is the reason why I am angry with myself for not loving you as I ought. I want you to like the things I like, and to love the books and the music and the pictures and the world I love; and I forget that you are a man, you know, and that I am only a girl; and I forget how nobly you behaved, Maurice, and how unselfishly you risked your life for mine. Why, what is the matter, dear?"

He had put her away from him suddenly, and gone to the window, gazing across the sloping garden at the bay below, sleeping in the soft evening light. The schooner which had brought the witnesses from Port Arthur lay off the shore, and the yellow flag at her mast fluttered gently in the cool evening breeze. The sight of this flag appeared to anger him, for, as his eyes fell on it he uttered an impatient exclamation, and turned round again. Some sudden, desperate whim caused him to exclaim, "Suppose I had not done all you think, would you not love me still?"

Her eyes, raised to his face with anxious tenderness for the pain she had believed herself to have inflicted, fell at this speech.

"What a question! I don't know. I suppose I should; yet—but what is the use, Maurice, of supposing? I know you have done it, and that is enough. How can I say what I might have done if something else had happened? Why, you might not have loved me."

If there had been for a moment any sentiment of remorse in his selfish heart, the hesitation of her answer went far to dispel it. With the hypocrisy of selfishness which deceives even itself, he laid the little head upon his heart with a sensible glow of virtue.

"God bless you, darling! You are my good angel."

The girl sighed. "I will be your good angel, dear, if you will let me."

CHAPTER XX.

Rex told Mr. Meekin, who, the next day, did him the honor to visit him, that, "under Providence, he owed his escape from death to the kind manner in which Captain Frere had spoken of him."

"I hope your escape will be a warning to you, my man," said Mr. Meekin, "and that you will endeavor to make the rest of your life an atonement for your early errors."

"Indeed I will, sir," said John Rex, who had taken Mr. Meekin's measure very accurately, "and it is very kind of you to condescend to speak so to a wretch like me. Ah! sir, I wish I had attended to the gospel's teachings when I was younger. I might have been saved from all this."

"You might, indeed, poor man; but the Divine Mercy is infinite—quite infinite, and will be extended to all of us—to you as well as to me." (This with the air of saying, "What do you think of that?") "Remember the penitent thief, Rex—the penitent thief."

"Indeed I do, sir."

"I will speak to the authorities about a change in your dietary scale," returned Meekin, patronizingly. "In the meantime, just collect together in your mind those particulars of your adventures of which you spoke. Such a remarkable history ought not to be lost."

"Thank you kindly, sir. I will, sir. Ah! I little thought, when I occupied the position of a gentleman, Mr. Meekin, that I should be reduced to this. But it is only just, sir. Good morning, and heaven bless you, sir!" said Rex, with his tongue in his cheek for the benefit of his yard mates; and so Mr. Meekin tripped gracefully away, convinced that he was laboring most successfully in the vineyard, and that the convict Rex was really a superior person.

"I will send his narrative to the bishop," said he to himself. "It will amuse him. There must be many strange histories here, if one could but find them out."

As the thought passed through his brain his eye fell upon the "notorious Dawes," who, while waiting for the schooner to take him back to Port Arthur, had been permitted to amuse himself by breaking stones.

A fanciful visitor, seeing the irregularly rising hammers along the line, might have likened the shed to the interior of some vast piano, whose notes an unseen hand was erratically fingering. Rufus Dawes was seated last of the line. This was the place nearest the watching constable, and was allotted on that account to the most ill-favored.

"Well, Dawes," says Mr. Meekin, measuring with his eye the distance between the prisoner and himself, as one might measure the chain of some ferocious dog. "How are you this morning, Dawes?"

Dawes, scowling in a parenthesis between the cracking of two stones, was understood to say that he was very well.

"I am afraid, Dawes," says Mr. Meekin, reproachfully, "that you have done yourself no good by your outburst in court on Monday. I understand that public opinion is quite incensed against you."

Dawes, slowly arranging one large fragment of bluestone in a comfortable basin of smaller fragments, made no reply.

"I am afraid you lack patience, Dawes. You do not repent of your offenses against the law, I fear."

The only answer vouchsafed by the ironed man was a savage blow, which split the stone into sudden fragments,

and made the clergyman skip a step backward.

"You are a hardened ruffian, sir! Do you not hear me speak to you? I came to console you, man. I wanted to give you some good advice!"

"I beg your pardon, sir. Pray go on."

"I was going to say, my good fellow, that you have done yourself a great deal of injury by your ill-advised accusation of Captain Frere, and the use you made of Miss Vickers' name."

A frown, as of pain, contracted the prisoner's brows, and he seemed with difficulty to put a restraint upon his speech. "Is there to be no inquiry, Mr. Meekin?" he asked, at length. "What I stated was the truth. Are they not going to ask her for her story? They told me that she was to be asked. Surely they will ask her."

"I am not, perhaps, at liberty," said Meekin, placidly, unconscious of the agony of despair and rage that made the voice of the strong man before him quiver, "to state the intentions of the authorities, but I can tell you that Miss Vickers will not be asked anything about you. You are to go back to Port Arthur on the 24th, and to remain there."

A groan burst from Rufus Dawes; a groan so full of torture that even the comfortable Meekin was thrilled by it.

"Come," says Meekin, "you can't complain. You have broken the law, and you must suffer. Civilized society says you shan't do certain things, and if you do them you must suffer the penalty civilized society imposes. You are not wanting in intelligence, Dawes, more's the pity—and you can't deny the justice of that."

Rufus Dawes, as if disdaining to answer in words, cast his eyes round the yard with a glance that seemed to ask, grimly, if civilized society was progressing quite in accordance with justice, when its civilization created such places as that stone-walled, carbine-guarded prison shed, and filled it with such creatures as those forty human beasts, doomed to spend the best years of their manhood cracking pebbles in it.

Meditating that night in the solitude of his cell, he almost wept to think of the cruel deception that had doubtless been practiced on her. "They have told her that I was dead, in order that she might learn to forget me; but she could not do that. I have thought of her so often during these weary years that she must sometimes have thought of me. Five years! She must be a woman now. My little child a woman! Yet, she is sure to be child-like, sweet and gentle. How she will grieve when she hears of my sufferings! Oh! my darling, my darling, you are not dead!" And then, looking hastily about him in the darkness, as though fearful even there of being seen, he pulled from out his breast a little packet, and felt it lovingly with his coarse, toll-worn fingers, reverently raising it to his lips, and dreaming over it, with a smile on his face, as though it were a sacred talisman that should open to him the doors of freedom.

The usual clanking and hammering were prevalent upon the stone jetty at Port Arthur when the schooner bearing the returned convict, Rufus Dawes, ran alongside. He sat with his head bowed down and his hands clasped about his knees, disdaining to look until they roused him.

"Hallo, Dawes!" says Warder Troke, halting his train of ironed yellow-jackets. "So you've come back again! Glad to see yer, Dawes! It seems an age since we had the pleasure of your company, Dawes!" At this pleasantry the train laughed, so that their irons clanked more than ever. They found it often inconvenient not to laugh at Mr. Troke's humor. "Step down here, Dawes, and let me introduce yer to your hold friends. They'll be glad to see yer, won't yer, boys? Why, bless me, Dawes, we thort we'd lost yer! We thort yer'd given us the slip altogether, Dawes. They didn't take care of yer in Hobart Town, I expect, eh, boys? We'll look after yer here, Dawes, though. You won't bolt any more."

"Take care, Mr. Troke," said a warning voice, "you're at it again! Let the man alone!"

By virtue of an order transmitted from Hobart Town, they had begun to attach the dangerous prisoner to the last man of the gang, riveting the leg irons of the pair by means of an extra link, which could be removed when necessary; but Dawes had given no sign of consciousness. At the sound of the friendly tones, however, he looked up, and saw a tall, gaunt man, dressed in a shabby pepper and salt raiment, and wearing a black handkerchief knotted round his throat. He was a stranger to him.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. North," said Troke, sinking at once the bully in the sneak. "I didn't see yer reverence."

"A parson!" thought Dawes, with disappointment, and dropped his eyes.

"I know that," returned Mr. North, coolly. "If you had, you would have been all butter and honey. Don't you trouble yourself to tell a lie; it's quite unnecessary. What's your name, my man?"

Rufus Dawes had intended to scowl, but the tone, sharply authoritative, roused his automatic convict second nature; and he answered, almost despite himself, "Rufus Dawes."

"Oh," said Mr. North, eying him with a curious air of expectation that had something pitying in it. "This is the man, is it? I thought he was to go to the coal mines."

"So he is," said Troke, "but we hain't a-going to send there for a fortnight, and in the meantime I'm to work him on the chain."

"Oh," said Mr. North again. "Lend me your knife, Troke."

And then, before them all, this curious parson took a piece of tobacco out of his ragged pocket, and cut off a "chaw" with Mr. Troke's knife. Rufus Dawes felt what he had not felt for three days—an interest in something. He stared at the parson in unaffected astonishment. Mr. North perhaps mistook the meaning of his fixed stare, for he held out the remnant of tobacco to him.

The chain-line vibrated at this, and bent forward to enjoy the vicarious delight of seeing another man chew tobacco. Troke grinned with a silent mirth that betokened retribution for the favored convict. "Here," said Mr. North, holding out the dainty morsel upon which so many eyes were fixed. Rufus Dawes took the tobacco, looked at it hungrily for an instant, and then—to the astonishment of everybody—flung it away.

From convict mouths went out a respectful roar of amazement, and Mr. Troke's eyes snapped with pride of outraged janitorship. "You ungrateful dog!" he cried, raising his stick.

Mr. North put up a hand. "That will do, Troke," he said; "I know your respect for the cloth. Move the men on again."

"Get on!" and Dawes felt his newly riveted chain tug. It was some time since he had been in a chain gang, and the sudden jerk nearly overbalanced him. He caught at his neighbor, and looking up, met a pair of black eyes which gleamed recognition. His neighbor was John Rex. Mr. North, watching them, was struck by the resemblance the two men bore to each other. Their height, eyes, hair and complexion were similar. Despite the difference in name, they might be related. "They might be brothers," thought he. "Poor fellows! I never knew a prisoner refuse tobacco before." And he looked on the ground for the despised portion. But in vain. John Rex, oppressed by no foolish sentiment, had picked it up and put it in his mouth.

So Rufus Dawes was relegated to his old life again, and came back to his prison with the hatred of his kind, that his prison had bred in him, increased a hundred-fold. It seemed to him that the sudden awakening had dazed him, that the flood of light so suddenly let in upon his slumbering soul had blinded his eyes, used so long to the sweetly cheating twilight. He was at first unable to apprehend the details of his misery. He knew only that his dream-child was alive and shuddered at him; that the only thing he loved and trusted had betrayed him; that all hope of justice and mercy had gone from him forever; that the beauty had gone from earth, the brightness from heaven; and that he was doomed still to live. He went about his work, unheeded of the jests of Troke, ungalled by his irons, unmindful of the groans and laughter about him. His magnificent muscles saved him from the lash, for the amiable Troke tried to break him down in vain. He did not complain, he did not laugh, he did not weep. His "mate" Rex tried to converse with him, but did not succeed. In the midst of one of Rex's excellent tales Rufus Dawes would sigh wearily. "There's something on that fellow's mind," thought Rex, prone to watch the signs by which the soul is read. "He has some secret which weighs upon him."

Then Rex came to a conclusion. His mate was plotting an escape. He himself cherished a notion of that kind, as did Gabbett and Vetch, but by common distrust no one ever gave utterance to thoughts of this nature. It would be too dangerous. "He would be a good comrade for a rush," thought Rex, and resolved more firmly than ever to ally himself to this dangerous and silent companion.

One question Dawes had asked which Rex had been able to answer, "Who is that North?"

"A chaplain. He is only here for a week or so. There is a new one coming. North goes to Sidney. He is not in favor with the bishop."

"Silence there!" cries the overseer. "Do you want me to report yer?"

Amidst such diversions the days rolled on, and Rufus Dawes almost longed for the coal mines. To be sent from the settlement to the coal mines, and from the coal mines to the settlement, was to these unhappy men a "trip."

(To be continued.)

In 1920.

Visitor—I suppose there is a history connected with that spade?

Museum Attendant—There is, sir; it is one of our greatest curiosities. That spade was actually used to dig with at Panama.—Puck.

An Arboreal Observation.

"That supercilious man is always talking about his family tree."

"Yes," answered Miss Cayenne, "I have observed in nature that it is always the smallest twig that does the most rustling."—Washington Star.

Everybody Seeing the Error.

Traveler—I hear you have had a great religious revival in this town?

Westerner—Yes-sire. Why, even the gamblers had to jine th' church or lose their customers.—New York Weekly.

Logic in the Schoolroom.

A Rockland schoolboy's composition on Whittier, handed in the other day, reached the following conclusion: "He was never married. He hated slavery."—Rockland (Me.) Star.

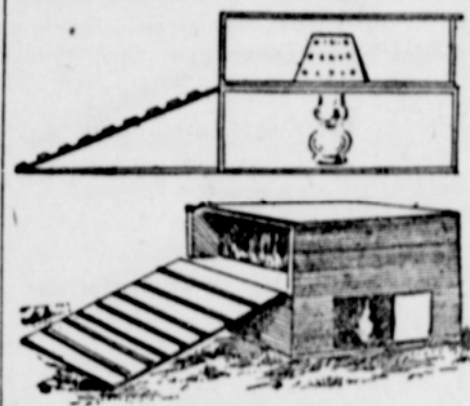
As Long as It's Broad.

A woman is never happy until she made her husband confess all; and then she is miserable.



A Home-Made Brooder.

The brooders sold by manufacturers are usually all that are claimed for them, but when one desires to economize, a home-made affair can be constructed by anyone with a little ingenuity which will work nicely. Take two boxes of convenient size, three feet square by fifteen or eighteen inches high is a good size, and set one on top of the other, cutting a hole through each directly in the middle. The hole in the bottom or floor of the upper box is covered

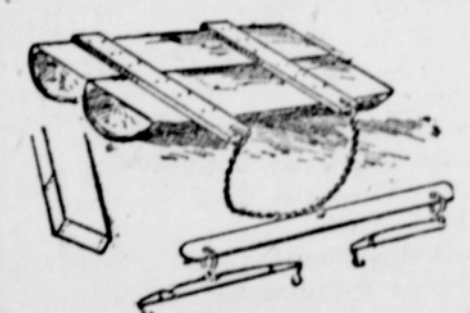


HOME-MADE BROODER.

with an inverted tin pail, or can, which is perforated at intervals of two inches, using a wire nail for the work and punching in. Fit this can snugly over the hole and place the regular brooder lamp underneath it, resting on floor of the lower box. A little door is made in the side of the lower box so that the lamp may be properly attended to. The roof of the upper box is lined with cotton flannel, as are also the sides, except the front, which is left open and across it, three inches from the edge, is nailed a strip (doubled) of cotton flannel, which is cut in strips an inch wide. A walkway is built from the ground to this opening through which the chicks pass. Essential ventilation may be had by boring a few tiny holes in the upper box at a point furthest away from the lamp.—Exchange.

A Profitable Implement.

On soil that is inclined to lump up some implement must be used which will level the soil readily, and at the same time crush the clods. Such an implement can readily be made at home and be quite as effective as those which must be bought for the purpose, if one has a leaning toward manufactured articles. This home-made clod crusher and soil leveler can be made of a log of hard wood by splitting it in half. The log should be about two feet in diameter to work to the best advantage. Lay the two halves of the log side by side with the rounding part down and at either end, about a foot from the end, spike a two-by-four strip, letting them project out sufficiently far at one side so that an iron strip or hoop may be set over the ends, into which to hook the whiffletree chains. This implement can be made at small cost, and unless the logs are too heavy a good team of horses can



CLOD-CRUSHER AND LEVELER.

handle it nicely. The illustration shows the idea clearly and how very simple it is.—Indianapolis News.

Sheep Are Good Fertilizers.

When a flock of sheep is kept on a field the land will be made fertile in a short time, as the sheep not only distribute the manure, but press it into the ground by trampling, the loss being but little. For that reason it has been said that "the foot of the sheep is gold to the land." A flock of sheep, however, cannot add anything to the land other than to prevent waste of materials, which they naturally consume and are, therefore, more valuable when they are fed at a barn at night, the additional food rendering the manure valuable.

German Carp.

A few years ago there was considerable enthusiasm regarding German carp. A pond covering one acre will, it is stated, hold 7,000 carp to growing condition, if they are fed. The carp will eat anything that a hog will consume, even corn, and will gain about three pounds annually until it reaches 12 or 15 pounds. Belonging to the "sucker" family of fishes, the carp has not become popular in this country, and probably never will, as it is not very desirable, compared with other varieties of fish.

Hoed Crops in the Orchard.

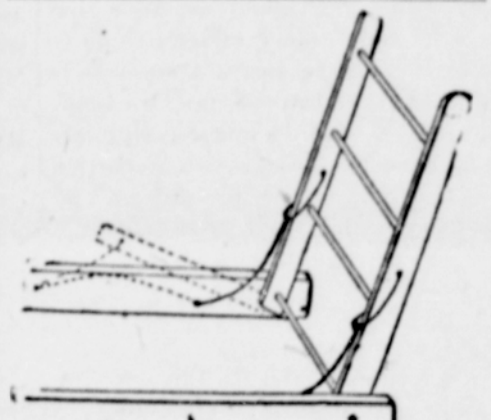
The best orchardists are averse to growing anything in the orchards but the trees even when the latter are young. They argue, and properly, that the growing trees need all the virtue there is in the soil and that if the apple crops in future years are to be of any value they must be provided for during the earlier years of the trees. There are fruit growers, on the other hand, who insist that a hoed crop will be of benefit to the trees, and that this may be considered so under certain conditions and up to certain limits. If the soil in the orchard is kept up to the highest state of fertility so that the trees will not suffer the want of the portion of the fertilizer taken by the hoed crop, then the latter can do no harm, indeed, it will be of value because the soil will receive a certain amount of cultivation which, perhaps, would not be given it if it were not for the hoed crop. Work the hoed crop in the orchard cautiously, and watch the effect on the trees.

Caring for Chicks.

When chicks are removed from the incubator to the brooder great care should be taken that they do not become chilled. The floor of the brooder should be covered with fine, clean chaff. Fine sand and clean water should be in the brooder from the beginning. All the fine, dry bread crumbs they will pick up every two hours should constitute the feed for several days, gradually adding rolled oats, hard-boiled eggs, cracked wheat, Johnny cake, millet seed, etc. Milk and water should always be kept in the fountains. When three weeks old make mashies of bran, meal, middlings, beef scraps, table refuse, all salted to season and mixed together with skim milk. Alfalfa leaves may also be thrown into the brooder in the place of straw or chaff. The mash in the morning, wheat at noon and cracked corn or kaffir corn at night constitute the main feed to keep the chicks growing.

Holder for Hay Rack.

I used a pair of the jointed braces to a commonplace top buggy, writes a correspondent. The illustration explains the position of braces on rack when standard is up and down.



HOLDER FOR THE HAYRACK.

Fasten braces on outside of standard and on inside of bed piece. By taking brace and trying you can soon tell how far back to fasten it.

Shape of Ideal Dairy Cow.

Whether she be a Holstein, a Jersey or whatever she may be, you will find the typical dairy cow with bony head and strong jaw, long between the eyes and nose, with broad muzzle. She should have a bright, protruding eye, which means strong nerve force and action later on. She should have a thin neck and retreating brisket. The lines above and below must not be straight, or she will steal from you. She should be slightly depressed behind the shoulders with a sharp chine—not too straight a backbone. She must have large organs of reproduction and large heart girth, wide between fore legs and sharp on shoulders, which gives large heart action and strong arterial circulation. And last, but by no means least, she must have a good udder, for one-half the value of a cow is in her udder, which should be long from front to rear.

Poultry Pointers.

Never refuse a fair price for a bird that you do not want for breeding purposes. At the same time never sell a good bird that you want yourself.

Do not feed the newly hatched chickens too early; wait at least twenty-four hours. There is sufficient amount of feed in the shell for the chick this length of time.

In feeding fowls always keep in view the fact that the excess of food over and above that required for warmth of body and egg production will be converted into fat.—Journal of Agriculture.

A correspondent of a farm paper, who was not well satisfied with his disk harrow while it had the tongue on it, thus tells how he improved it:

I have been using my disk harrow without a tongue, or rather, I cut the tongue off just ahead of the eveners. I find that this is very much more satisfactory than to use with the tongue; in turning all the horses help turn the harrow instead of the two pole horses having to pry it around by the pole. In addition to this, it takes the weight off of the horses' necks when they stop.