

"Of course," replied Sylvia.

And then the pair began to make love, or rather, Maurice made it, and Sylvia suffered him.

Suddenly her eye caught something. "What's that—there, on the ground by the fountain?" They were near the spot where Dawes had been seized the night before. A little stream ran through the garden, and a Triton—of convict manufacture—blew his horn in the middle of a—convict built—rockery. Under the lip of the fountain lay a small packet. Frere picked it up. It was made of soiled yellow cloth, and stitched evidently by a man's fingers. "It looks like a needle-case," said he.

"Let me see. What a strange-looking thing! Yellow cloth, too. Why, it must belong to a prisoner. Oh, Maurice, the man who was here last night!"

"Ay," says Maurice, turning over the packet, "it might have been his, sure enough."

"He seemed to fling something from him, I thought. Perhaps this is it?" said she, peering over his arm, in delicate curiosity. Frere, with something of a scowl on his brow, tore off the outer covering of the mysterious packet, and displayed a second envelope, of grey cloth—the "good-conduct" uniform. Beneath this was a piece, some three inches square, of stained and discoloured merino, that had once been blue.

"Hallo!" says Frere. "Why, what's this?"

"It is a piece of a dress," says Sylvia.

It was Rufus Dawes's talisman,—a portion of the frock she had worn at Macquarie Harbour, and which the unhappy convict had cherished as a sacred relic for five weary years.

Frere flung it into the water. The running stream whirled it away. "Why did you do that?" cried the girl, with a sudden pang of remorse for which she could not account. The shred of cloth, caught by a weed, lingered for an instant on the surface of the water. Almost at the same moment, the pair, raising their eyes, saw the schooner which bore Rufus Dawes back to bondage glide past the opening of the trees and disappear. When they looked again for the strange relic of the desperado of Port Arthur, it also had vanished.

CHAPTER XII.

AT PORT ARTHUR.

THE usual clanking and hammering was prevalent upon the stone jetty of Port Arthur when the schooner bearing the returned convict, Rufus Dawes, ran alongside. On the heights above the esplanade rose the grim front of the soldiers' barracks; beneath the soldiers' barracks was the long range of prison buildings, with their workshops and tan-pits; to the left lay the Commandant's house, authoritative by reason of its embrasured terrace and guardian sentry; while the jetty, that faced the purple length of the "Island of the Dead," swarmed with parti-coloured figures, clanking about their enforced business, under the muskets of their gaolers.

Rufus Dawes had seen this prospect before, had learnt by heart each beauty of rising sun, sparkling water, and wooded hill. From the hideously clean jetty at his feet, to the signal station, that, embowered in bloom, reared its slender arms upwards into the cloudless sky, he knew it all. There was no charm for him in the exquisite blue of the sea, the soft shadows of the hills, or the soothing ripple of the waves that crept voluptuously to the white breast of the shining shore. He sat with his head bowed down, and his hands clasped about his knees, disdainingly 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 humour. "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? Well 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 yer 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 trouble yourself to tell a lie; it's quite unnecessary."

Dawes looked up again. This was a strange parson.

"What's your name, my man?" said Mr. North, suddenly, catching his eye.

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, eyeing him with a curious air of expectation that had something plying 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 goin' to send there for a fortnit, and in the mean time 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 favoured 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 with a curse.

"I don't want your tobacco," he said; "keep it."

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!" said Troke, rumbling oaths beneath his breath, 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 neighbour, and looking up, met a pair of black eyes which gleamed recognition. His neighbour 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 devils! 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 for ever, that the beauty had gone from earth, the brightness from heaven, and that he was doomed still to live. He went about his work, unheeding 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 con-

verse with him, but did not succeed. In the midst of one of Rex's excellent tales of London dissipation, 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."

It was in vain that Rex attempted to discover what this secret might be. To all questions concerning his past life—however artfully put—Rufus Dawes was dumb. In vain Rex practised all his arts, called up all his graces of manner and speech—and these were not few—to fascinate the silent man and win his confidence. Rufus Dawes met his advances with a cynical carelessness that revealed nothing; and, when not addressed, held a gloomy silence. Galled by this indifference, John Rex had attempted to practise those ingenious arts of torment by which Gabbett, Vetch, or other leading spirits of the gang asserted their superiority over their quieter comrades. But he soon ceased. "I have been longer in this hell than you," said Rufus Dawes, "and I know more of the devil's tricks than you can show me. You had best be quiet." Rex neglected the warning, and Rufus Dawes took him by the throat one day, and would have strangled him, but that Troke beat off the angered man with a favourite bludgeon. Rex had a whole-some respect for personal prowess, and had the grace to admit the provocation to Troke. Even this instance of self-denial did not move the stubborn Dawes. He only laughed.

Then Rex came to a conclusion. His mate was plotting an escape. He himself cherished a notion of the 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 Sydney. He is not in favour with the Bishop."

"How do you know?"

"By deduction," says Rex, with a smile peculiar to him. "He wears coloured clothes, and smokes, and doesn't patter Scripture. The Bishop dresses in black, detests tobacco, and

quotes the Bible like a concordance. North is sent here for a month, as a warning-pan for that ass Meekin. Ergo, the Bishop don't care about North."

Jemmy Vetch, who was next to Rex, let the full weight of his portion of tree-trunk rest upon Gabbett, in order to express his unrestrained admiration of Mr. Rex's sarcasm. "Aint Dandy a oneer?" said he.

"Are you thinking of coming the pious?" asked Rex. "It's no good with North. Wait until the highly-intelligent Meekin comes. You can twist that worthy successor of the Apostles round your little finger!"

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

Amid 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." At Port Arthur one went to an out station, as more fortunate people go to Queens-cliff or the Ocean Beach now-a-days for "change of air."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE COMMANDANT'S BUTLER.

RUFUS DAWES had been a fortnight at the settlement when a new-comer appeared on the chain-gang. This was a young man of about twenty years of age, thin, fair, and delicate. His name was Kirkland, and he belonged to what were known as the "educated" prisoners. He had been a clerk in a banking house, and was transported for embezzlement, though, by some, grave doubts as to his guilt were entertained. The commandant, Captain Burgess, had employed him as butler in his own house, and his fate was considered a "lucky" one. So, doubtless, it was, and might have been, had not an untoward accident occurred. Captain Burgess, who was a bachelor of the "old school," confessed to an amiable weakness for blasphemy, and was given to condemning the convicts' eyes and limbs with indiscriminate violence. Kirkland belonged to a Methodist family and owned a piety utterly out of place in that region.

The language of Burgess made him shudder, and one day, he so far forgot himself and his place as to raise his hands to his ears. "My blank!" cried Burgess. "You blank blank, is that your blank game? I'll blank soon cure you of that!" and forthwith ordered him to the chain-gang for "insubordination."

He was received with suspicion by the gang, who did not like white-handed prisoners. Troke, by way of experiment in human nature, perhaps, placed him next to Gabbett. The day was got through in the usual way, and Kirkland felt his heart revive.

The toil was severe, and the companionship uncouth, but despite his blistered hands and aching back, he had not experienced anything so very terrible after all. When the musier bell rang, and the gang broke up, Rufus Dawes, on his silent way to his separate cell, observed a notable change of custom in the disposition of the new convict. Instead of placing him in a cell by himself, Troke was turning him into the yard with the others.

"I'm not to go in there?" says the ex-bank clerk, drawing back in dismay from the cloud of foul faces which lowered upon him.

"By the Lord, but you are, then!" says Troke. "The Governor says a night in there'll take the starch out of yer. Come, in yer go."

"But, Mr. Troke——"

"Stow your gaff," says Troke, with another oath, and impatiently striking the lad with his thong—"I can't argue here all night. Get in." So Kirkland, aged twenty-two, and the son of Methodist parents, went in.

Rufus Dawes, among whose sinister memories this yard was numbered, sighed. So fierce was the glamour of the place, however, that when locked into his cell, he felt ashamed of that sigh, and strove to erase the memory of it. "What is he more than anybody else?" said the wretched man to himself, as he hugged his misery close.

About dawn the next morning, Mr. North—who, amongst other vagaries not approved of by his bishop, had a habit of prowling about the prison at unofficial hours—was attracted by a dispute at the door of the dormitory.

"What's the matter here?" he asked.

"A prisoner refractory, your reverence," said the watchman. "Wants to come out."

"Mr. North! Mr. North!" cried a voice, "for the love of God, let me out of this place!"

Kirkland, ghastly pale, bleeding, with his woollen shirt torn, and his blue eyes wide open with terror, was clinging to the bars.

"Oh, Mr. North! Mr. North! Oh, Mr. North! Oh! for God's sake, Mr. North!"

"What, Kirkland!" cried North, who was ignorant of the vengeance of the Commandant. "What do you do here?"

But Kirkland could do nothing but cry,—“Oh, Mr. North! For God's sake, Mr. North!” and beat on the bars with white and sweating hands.

"Let him out, watchman!" said North.

"Can't, sir, without an order from the Commandant."

"I order you, sir!" North cried, indignant.

"Very sorry, your reverence; but your reverence knows that I darent do such a thing."

"Mr. North!" screamed Kirkland. "Would you see me perish, body and soul, in this place? Mr. North! Oh, you ministers of Christ—wolves in sheep's clothing—you shall be judged for this! Mr. North, I say!"

"Let him out!" cried North again, stamping his foot.

"It's no good," returned the gaoler. "I can't. If he was dying, I can't."

North rushed away to the Commandant, and the instant his back was turned, Hailes, the watchman, flung open the door, and dived into the dormitory.

"Take that!" he cried, dealing Kirkland a blow on the head with his keys, that stretched him senseless. "There's more trouble with you bloody aristocrats than enough. Lie quiet!"

The Commandant, roused from slumber, told Mr. North that Kirkland might stop where he was, and that he'd thank the chaplain not to wake him up in the middle of the night because a blank prisoner set up a blank howling.

"But, my good sir," protested North, restraining his impulse to overstep the bounds of modesty in his language to his superior officer, "you know the character of the men in that ward. You can guess what that unhappy boy has suffered."

"Impertinent young beggar!" said Burgess. "Do him good, curse him! Mr. North, I'm sorry you should have had the trouble to come here, but *will* you let me go to sleep?"

North returned to the prison disconsolately, found the dutiful Hailes at his post, and all quiet.

"What's become of Kirkland?" he asked.

"Fretted himself to sleep, yer reverence," said Hailes, in accents of parental concern. "Poor young chap! It's hard for such young 'uns as he, sir."

In the morning, Rufus Dawes, coming to his place on the chain-gang, was struck by the altered appearance of Kirkland. His face was of a greenish tint, and wore an expression of bewildered horror.

"Cheer up, man!" said Dawes, touched with momentary pity. "It's no good being in the mopes, you know."

"What do they do if you try to bolt?" whispered Kirkland.

"Kill you," returned Dawes, in a tone of surprise at so posterous a question.

"Thank God!" said Kirkland.

"Now, then, Miss Nancy," said one of the men, "what's the matter with *you*?"

Kirkland shuddered, and his pale face grew crimson.

"Oh," he said, "that such a wretch as I should live!"

"Silence!" cried Troke. "No. 44, if you can't hold your tongue I'll give you something to talk about. March!"

The work of the gang that afternoon was the carrying of some heavy logs to the water-side, and Rufus Dawes observed that Kirkland was exhausted long before the task was accomplished. "They'll kill you, you little beggar!" said he, not unkindly. "What have you been doing to get into this scrape?"

"Have you ever been in that—that place I was in last night?" asked Kirkland.

Rufus Dawes nodded.

"Does the Commandant know what goes on there?"

"I suppose so. What does he care?"

"Care! Man, do you believe in a God?"

"No," said Dawes, "not here. Hold up, my lad. If you fall, we must fall over you, and then you're done for."

He had hardly uttered the words, when the boy flung himself beneath the log. In another instant the train would have been scrambling over his crushed body, had not Gabbett stretched out an iron hand, and plucked the would-be suicide from death.

"Hold on to me, Miss Nancy," said the giant, "I'm big enough to carry double."

Something in the tone or manner of the speaker affected Kirkland to disgust, for, spurning the offered hand, he uttered a cry, and then, holding up his irons with his hands, he started to run for the water.

"Halt! you young fool," roared Troke, raising his carbine. But Kirkland kept steadily on for the river. Just as he reached it, however, the figure of Mr. North rose from behind a pile of stones. Kirkland jumped for the jetty, missed his footing, and fell into the arms of the chaplain.

"You young vermin—you shall pay for this," cries Troke.

"You'll see if you won't remember this day."

"Oh, Mr. North," says Kirkland. "Why did you stop me? I'd better be dead than stay another night in that place."

"You'll get it, my lad," said Gabbett, when the runaway was brought back. "Your blessed hide'll feel for this, see if it don't."

Kirkland only breathed harder, and looked round for Mr. North, but Mr. North had gone. The new chaplain was to arrive that afternoon, and it was incumbent on the old one to be present at the reception.

Troke reported the ex-bank clerk that night to Burgess, and Burgess, who was about to go to dinner with the new chaplain, disposed of his case out of hand. "Tried to bolt, eh! Must stop that. Fifty lashes, Troke. Tell Macklewin to be ready—or stay, I'll tell him myself—I'll break the young devil's spirit, blank him."

"Yes, sir," said Troke. "Good evening, sir."

"Troke—pick out some likely man, will you? That last fellow you had ought to have been tied up himself. His flogging wouldn't have killed a flea."

"You can't get 'em to *warn* one another, your honour," says Troke. "They *won't* do it."

"Oh, yes, they will, though," says Burgess, "or I'll know the reason why. I won't have my men knocked up with flogging these rascals. If the scourger won't do his duty, tie him up, and give him five-and-twenty for himself. I'll be down in the morning myself if I can."

"Very good, your honour," says Troke. Kirkland was put into a separate cell that night; and Troke,

by way of assuring him a good night's rest, told him that he was to have "fifty" in the morning. "And Dawes'll lay it on," he added. "He's one of the smartest men I've got, and he won't spare yer, yer may take your oath of that."

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. NORTH'S INDISPOSITION.

"YOU will find this a terrible place, Mr. Meekin," said North to his supplanter, as they walked across to the Commandant's to dinner. "It has made me heart-sick."

"I thought it was a little paradise," said Meekin. "Captain Frere says that the scenery is delightful."

"So it is," returned North, looking askance; "but the prisoners are not delightful."

"Poor, abandoned wretches," says Meekin, "I suppose not. How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon that bank! Eh!"

"Abandoned, indeed, by God and man—almost."

"Mr. North, Providence never abandons the most unworthy of His servants. Never have I seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread. In the valley of the shadow of death He is with us. His staff, you know, Mr. North. Really, the Commandant's house is charmingly situated!"

Mr. North sighed again. "You have not been long in the colony, Mr. Meekin. I doubt—forgive me for expressing myself so freely—if you quite know our convict system."

"An admirable one! A most admirable one!" said Meekin. "There were a few matters I noticed in Hobart Town that did not quite please me—the frequent use of profane language for instance—but on the whole I was delighted with the scheme. It is so complete."

North pursed up his lips. "Yes, it is very complete," he said; "almost too complete. But I am always in a minority when I discuss the question, so we will drop it, if you please."

"If you please," said Meekin, gravely. He had heard from the Bishop that Mr. North was an ill-conditioned sort of person, who smoked clay pipes, had been detected in drinking beer out

of a pewter pot, and had been heard to state that white neck-cloths were of no consequence.

The dinner went off successfully. Burgess—desirous, perhaps, of favourably impressing the chaplain whom the Bishop delighted to honour—shut off his blasphemy for a while, and was urbane enough. "You'll find us rough, Mr. Meekin," he said, "but you'll find us 'all there' when we're wanted. This is a little kingdom in itself."

"Like Béranger's?" asked Meekin, with a smile. Captain Burgess had never heard of Béranger, but he smiled as if he had learnt his words by heart.

"Or like Sancho Panza's island," said North. "You remember how justice was administered there?"

"Not at this moment, sir," said Burgess, with dignity. He had been often oppressed by the notion that the Reverend Mr. North "chaffed" him. "Pray, help yourself to wine."

"Thank you, none," said North, filling a tumbler with water. "I have a headache."

His manner of speech and action was so awkward that a silence fell upon the party, caused by each one wondering why Mr. North should grow confused, and drum his fingers on the table, and stare everywhere but at the decanter. Meekin—ever softly at his ease—was the first to speak. "Have you many visitors, Captain Burgess?"

"Very few. Sometimes a party comes over with a recommendation from the Governor, and I show them over the place; but, as a rule, we see no one but ourselves."

"I asked," said Meekin, "because some friends of mine were thinking of coming."

"And who may they be?"

"Do you know Captain Frere?"

"Frere! I should say so!" returned Burgess, with a laugh, modelled upon Maurice Frere's own. "I was quartered with him at Sarah Island. So he's a friend of yours, eh?"

"I had the pleasure of meeting him in society. He is just married, you know."

"Is he?" said Burgess. "The devil he is! I heard something about it, too."

"Miss Vickers, a charming young person. They are going to Sydney, where Captain Frere has some interest, and Frere thinks of taking Port Arthur on his way down."

"A strange fancy for a honeymoon trip," said North.

"Captain Frere takes a deep interest in all relating to convict discipline," went on Meekin, unheeding the interruption, "and is anxious that Mrs. Frere should see this place."

"Yes, one ought not to leave the colony without seeing it," says Burgess; "it's worth seeing."

"So Captain Frere thinks. A romantic story, Captain Burgess. He saved her life, you know."

"Ah! that was a queer thing, that mutiny," said Burgess. "We've got the fellows here, you know."

"I saw them tried at Hobart Town," said Meekin. "In fact, the ringleader, John Rex, gave me his confession, and I sent it to the Bishop."

"A great rascal," put in North. "A dangerous, scheming, cold-blooded villain."

"Well now!" said Meekin, with asperity, "I don't agree with you. Everybody seems to be against that poor fellow—Captain Frere tried to make me think his letters contained a hidden meaning, but I don't believe they did. He seems to me to be truly penitent for his offences—a misguided, but not a hypocritical man, if my knowledge of human nature goes for anything."

"I hope he is," said North. "I wouldn't trust him."

"Oh! there's no fear of him," said Burgess, cheerily; "if he grows uproarious, we'll soon give him a touch of the cat."

"I suppose severity is necessary," returned Meekin; "though to my ears a flogging sounds a little distasteful. It is a brutal punishment."

"It's a punishment for brutes," said Burgess, and laughed, pleased with the nearest approach to an epigram he ever made in his life.

Here attention was called by the strange behaviour of Mr. North. He had risen, and, without apology, flung wide the window, as though he gasped for air. "Hullo, North! what's the matter?"

"Nothing," said North, recovering himself with an effort. "A spasm. I have these attacks at times."

"Have some brandy," said Burgess.

"No, no, it will pass. No, I say. Well, if you insist." And seizing the tumbler offered to him, he half-filled it with raw spirit, and swallowed the fiery draught at a gulp.

The Reverend Meekin eyed his clerical brother with horror. The Reverend Meekin was not accustomed to clergymen who wore black neckties, smoked clay pipes, chewed tobacco, and drank neat brandy out of tumblers.

"Ha!" said North, looking wildly round upon them. "That's better."

"Let us go on to the verandah," said Burgess. "It's cooler than in the house."

So they went on to the verandah, and looked down upon the lights of the prison, and listened to the sea lapping the shore. The Reverend Mr. North, in this cool atmosphere, seemed to recover himself, and conversation progressed with some sprightliness.

By-and-by, a short figure, smoking a cheroot, came up out of the dark, and proved to be Dr. Macklewain, who had been prevented from attending the dinner by reason of an accident to a constable at Norfolk Bay, which had claimed his professional attention.

"Well, how's Forrest?" cried Burgess. "Mr. Meekin—Dr. Macklewain."

"Dead?" said Dr. Macklewain. "Delighted to see you, Mr. Meekin."

"Confound it—another of my best men," grumbled Burgess. "Macklewain, have a glass of wine." But Macklewain was tired, and wanted to get home.

"I must also be thinking of repose," said Meekin; "the journey—though most enjoyable—has fatigued me."

"Come on, then," said North. "Our roads lie together, doctor."

"You *won't* have a nip of brandy before you start?" asked Burgess. "No? Then I shall send round for you in the morning, Mr. Meekin. Good night. Macklewain, I want to speak with you a moment."

Before the two clergymen had got half-way down the steep path that led from the Commandant's house to the flat on which the cottages of the doctor and chaplain were built, Macklewain rejoined them. "Another flogging to-morrow," said he, grumblingly. "Up at daylight, I suppose, again."

"Whom is he going to flog now?"

"That young butter-fellow of his."

"What, Kirkland?" cried North. "You don't mean to say he's going to flog Kirkland?"

"Insubordination," says Macklewain. "Fifty lashes."

"Oh, this must be stopped," cries North, in great alarm. "He can't stand it. I tell you he'll die, Macklewain."

"Perhaps you'll have the goodness to allow me to be the best judge of that," returned Macklewain, drawing up his little body to its least insignificant stature.

"My dear sir," replied North, alive to the importance of conciliating the surgeon, "you haven't seen him lately. He tried to drown himself this morning."

Mr. Meekin expressed some alarm; but Dr. Macklewain re-assured him. "That sort of nonsense must be stopped," said he. "A nice example to set. I wonder Burgess didn't give him a hundred."

"He was put into the long dormitory," said North; "you know what sort of a place that is. I declare to Heaven his agony and shame terrified me."

"Well, he'll be put into the hospital for a week or so to-morrow," said Macklewain, "and that'll give him a spell."

"If Burgess flogs him I'll report it to the Governor," cries North, in great heat. "The condition of those dormitories is infamous."

"If the boy has anything to complain of, why don't he complain? We can't do anything without evidence."

"Complain! Would his life be safe if he did? Besides, he's not the sort of creature to complain. He'd rather kill himself than say anything about the matter."

"That's all nonsense," says Macklewain. "We can't flog a whole dormitory on suspicion. I can't help it. The boy's made his bed, and he must lie on it."

"I'll go back and see Burgess," said North. "Mr. Meekin, here's the gate, and your room is on the right hand. I'll be back shortly."

"Pray don't hurry," said Meekin politely. "You are on an errand of mercy, you know. Everything must give way to that. I shall find my portmanteau in my room, you said."

"Yes, yes. Call the servant if you want anything. He sleeps at the back," and North hurried off.

"An impulsive gentleman," said Meekin to Macklewain, as

the sound of Mr. North's footsteps died away in the distance. Macklewain shook his head seriously.

"There is something wrong about him, but I can't make out what it is. He has the strangest fits at times. Unless it's a cancer in the stomach, I don't know what it can be."

"Cancer in the stomach! dear me, how dreadful!" says Meekin. "Ah! Doctor, we all have our crosses, have we not? How delightful the grass smells? This seems a very pleasant place, and I think I shall enjoy myself very much. Good-night."

"Good-night, sir. I hope you will be comfortable."

"And let us hope poor Mr. North will succeed in his labour of love," said Meekin, shutting the little gate, "and save the unfortunate Kirkland. Good-night, once more."

Captain Burgess was shutting his verandah-window when North hurried up. "Captain Burgess, Macklewain tells me you are going to flog young Kirkland."

"Well, sir, what of that?" said Burgess.

"I have come to beg you not to do so, sir. The lad has been cruelly punished already. He attempted suicide to-day—unhappy creature."

"Well, that's just what I'm flogging him for. I'll teach my prisoners to attempt suicide!"

"But he can't stand it, sir. He's too weak."

"That's Macklewain's business."

"Captain Burgess," protested North, "I assure you that he does not deserve punishment. I have seen him, and his condition of mind is pitiable."

"Look here, Mr. North, I don't interfere with what you do to the prisoners' souls, don't you interfere with what I do to their bodies."

"Captain Burgess, you have no right to mock at my office."

"Then don't you interfere with me, sir."

"Do you persist in having this boy flogged?"

"I've given my orders, sir."

"Then, Captain Burgess," cried North, his pale face flushing, "I tell you the boy's blood will be on your head. I am a minister of God, sir, and I forbid you to commit this crime."

"Damn your impertinence, sir!" burst out Burgess. "You're a dismissed officer of the Government, sir. You've no authority

here in any way; and, by God, sir, if you interfere with my discipling, sir, I'll have you put in irons until you're shipped out of the island."

This, of course, was mere bravado on the part of the Commandant. North knew well that he would never dare to attempt any such act of violence, but the insult stung him like the cut of a whip. He made a stride towards the Commandant, as though to seize him by the throat, but, checking himself in time, stood still, with clenched hands, flashing eyes, and beard that bristled.

The two men looked at each other, and presently Burgess's eyes fell before those of the chaplain.

"Miserable blasphemer," says North, "I tell you that you shall not flog the boy."

Burgess, white with rage, rang the bell that summoned his convict servant.

"Show Mr. North out," he said, "and go down to the barracks, and tell Troke that Kirkland is to have a hundred lashes to-morrow. I'll show you who's master here, my good sir."

"I'll report this to the Government," said North, aghast. "This is murderous."

"The Government may go to ———, and you, too!" roared Burgess. "Get out!"

And God's vicegerent at Port Arthur slammed the door.

North returned home in great agitation. "They shall not flog that boy," he said. "I'll shield him with my own body if necessary. I'll report this to the Government. I'll see Sir John Franklin myself. I'll have the light of day let into this den of horrors." He reached his cottage, and lighted the lamp in the little sitting-room. All was silent, save that from the adjoining chamber came the sound of Meekin's gentlemanly snore. North took down a book from the shelf and tried to read, but the letters ran together. "I wish I hadn't taken that brandy," he said. "Fool that I am."

Then he began to walk up and down, to fling himself on the sofa, to read, to pray. "O God, give me strength! Aid me! Help me! I struggle, but I am weak! O Lord, look down upon me!"

To see him rolling on the sofa in agony, to see his white face, his parched lips, and his contracted brow, to hear his moans

and muttered prayers, one would have thought him suffering from the pangs of some terrible disease. He opened the book again, and forced himself to read, but his eyes wandered to the cupboard. There lurked something that fascinated him. He got up at length, went into the kitchen, and found a packet of red pepper. He mixed a teaspoonful of this in a pannikin of water and drank it. It relieved him for a while.

"I *must* keep my wits for to-morrow. The life of that lad depends upon it. Meekin, too, will suspect. I will lie down."

He went into his bedroom and flung himself on the bed, but only to toss from side to side. In vain he repeated texts of Scripture and scraps of verse; in vain counted imaginary sheep, or listened to imaginary clock-tickings. Sleep would not come to him. It was as though he had reached the crisis of a disease which had been for days gathering force. "I *must* have a teaspoonful," he said, "to allay the craving."

Twice he paused on his way to the sitting-room, and twice was he driven on by a power stronger than his will. He reached it at length, and opening the cupboard, pulled out what he sought. A bottle of brandy.

With this in his hand, all moderation vanished. He raised it to his lips and eagerly drank. Then, ashamed of what he had done, he thrust the bottle back, and made for his room. Still he could not sleep. The taste of the liquor maddened him for more. He saw in the darkness the brandy bottle,—vulgar and terrible apparition! He saw its amber fluid sparkle. He heard it gurgle as he poured it out. He smelt the nutty aroma of the spirit. He pictured it standing in the corner of the cupboard, and imagined himself seizing it and quenching the fire that burned within him. He wept, he prayed, he fought with his desire as with a madness. He told himself that another's life depended on his exertions, that to give way to his fatal passion was unworthy of an educated man and a reasoning being, that it was degrading, disgusting, and bestial. That, at all times debasing, at this particular time it was infamous; that a vice, unworthy of any man, was doubly sinful in a man of education and a minister of God. In vain. In the midst of his arguments he found himself at the cupboard, with the bottle at his lips, in an attitude that was at once ludicrous and horrible.

He had no cancer. His disease was a more terrible one. The Reverend James North—gentleman, scholar, and Christian priest—was what the world calls “a confirmed drunkard.”

CHAPTER XV.

ONE HUNDRED LASHES.

THE morning sun, bright and fierce, looked down upon a curious sight. In a stone-yard was a little group of persons—Troke, Burgess, Macklewain, Kirkland, and Rufus Dawes.

Three wooden staves, seven feet high, were fastened together in the form of a triangle. The structure looked not unlike that made by gipsies to boil their kettles. To this structure Kirkland was bound. His feet were fastened with thongs to the base of the triangle; his wrists, bound above his head, at the apex. His body was then extended to its fullest length, and his white back shone in the sunlight. During his tying up he had said nothing—only when Troke roughly pulled off his shirt he shivered.

“Now, prisoner,” said Troke to Dawes, “do your duty.”

Rufus Dawes looked from the three stern faces to Kirkland’s white back, and his face grew purple. In all his experience he had never been asked to flog before. He had been flogged often enough.

“You don’t want me to flog him, sir?” he said to the Commandant.

“Pick up the cat, sir!” said Burgess, astonished; “what is the meaning of this?”

Rufus Dawes picked up the heavy cat, and drew its knotted lashes between his fingers.

“Go on, Dawes, whispered Kirkland, without turning his head. “You are no more than another man.”

“What does he say?” asked Burgess.

“Telling him to cut light, sir,” said Troke, eagerly lying; “they all do it.”

“Cut light, eh! We’ll see about that. Get on, my man, and

look sharp, or I’ll tie you up and give you fifty for yourself, as sure as God made little apples.”

“Go on, Dawes,” whispered Kirkland again, “I don’t mind.”

Rufus Dawes lifted the cat, swung it round his head, and brought its knotted cords down upon the white back.

“Womn!” cried Troke.

The white back was instantly striped with six crimson bars. Kirkland stifled a cry. It seemed to him that he had been cut in half.

“Now, then, you scoundrel!” roared Burgess; “separate your cats! What do you mean by flogging a man that fashion?”

Rufus Dawes drew his crooked fingers through the entangled cords, and struck again. This time the blow was more effective, and the blood beaded on the skin.

The boy did not cry; but Macklewain saw his hands clutch the staves tightly, and the muscles of his naked arms quiver.

“Tew!”

“That’s better,” said Burgess.

The third blow sounded as though it had been struck upon a piece of raw beef, and the crimson turned purple.

“My God!” said Kirkland, faintly, and bit his lips.

The flogging proceeded in silence for ten strokes, and then Kirkland gave a screech like a wounded horse.

“Oh! . . . Captain Burgess! . . . Dawes! . . . Mr. Troke!

. . . Oh, my God! . . . Oh! oh! . . . Mercy! . . . Oh, Doctor! . . . Mr. North! . . . Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!”

“Ten!” cried Troke, impassably counting to the end of the first twenty.

The lad’s back, swollen into a hump, now presented the appearance of a ripe peach which a wild child has scored with a pin. Dawes, turning away from his bloody handiwork, drew the cats through his fingers twice. They were beginning to get clogged a little.

“Go on,” said Burgess, with a nod; and Troke cried “Womn!” again.

Roused by the morning sun streaming in upon him, Mr. North opened his bloodshot eyes, rubbed his forehead with hands that trembled, and suddenly awakening to a consciousness of his promised errand, rolled off the bed and rose to his

fect. He saw the empty brandy-bottle on his wooden dressing-table, and remembered what had passed. With shaking hands he dashed water over his aching head, and smoothed his garments. The debauch of the previous night had left the usual effects behind it. His brain seemed on fire, his hands were hot and dry, his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. He shuddered as he viewed his pale face and red eyes in the little looking-glass, and hastily tried the door. He had retained sufficient sense in his madness to lock it, and his condition had been unobserved. Stealing into the sitting-room, he saw that the clock pointed to half-past six. The flogging was to have taken place at half-past five. Unless accident had favoured him he was already too late. Fevered with remorse and anxiety, he hurried past the room where Meekin yet slumbered, and made his way to the prison. As he entered the yard, Troke called "Ten!" Kirkland had just got his fiftieth lash.

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

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

"Wonn!" cried Troke again; and North stood by, biting his nails and grinding his teeth, during six more lashes.

Kirkland had ceased to yell now, and merely moaned. His back was like a bloody sponge, while, in the interval between the lashes, the swollen flesh twitched like that of a new-killed bullock. Suddenly, Macklewain saw his head droop on his shoulder. "Throw him off! Throw him off!" he cried, and Troke hurried to loosen the thongs.

"Fling some water over him!" said Burgess, "he's shaming."

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

"No. Not if you are Christians!" cried North.

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

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

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

"Tie him up!" cried Burgess, foaming. "Tie him up. Here, constable, fetch a man here with a fresh cat. I'll give

you that beggar's fifty, and fifty more on the top of 'em; and he shall look on while his back cools."

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

Rufus Dawes planted his feet firmly on the ground, took fierce grasp of the staves, and drew in his breath.

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

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

For twenty lashes more Dawes was mute, and then the agony forced from his labouring breast a hideous cry. But it was not a cry for mercy, as that of Kirkland's had been. Having found his tongue, the wretched man gave vent to his boiling passion in a torrent of curses. He shrieked imprecations upon Burgess, Troke, and North. He cursed all soldiers for tyrants, all parsons for hypocrites. He blasphemed his God and his Saviour. With a frightful outpouring of obscenity and blasphemy, he called on the earth to gape and swallow his persecutors, for heaven to open and rain fire upon them, for hell to yawn and engulf them quick. It was as though each blow of the cat forced out of him a fresh burst of beast-like rage. He seemed to have abandoned his humanity. He foamed, he

raved, he tugged at his bonds until the strong staves shook again; he writhed himself round upon the triangles and spit impotently at Burgess, who jeered at his toments. North, with his hands to his ears, crouched against the corner of the wall, palsied with horror. It seemed to him that the passions of hell raged around him. He would fain have fled, but a horrible fascination held him back.

In the midst of this—when the cat was hissing its loudest—Burgess laughing his hardest, and the wretch on the triangles filling the air with his cries, North saw Kirkland look at him with what he thought a smile. Was it a smile? He leapt forward, and uttered a cry of dismay so loud that all turned.

"Hullo!" says Troke, running to the heap of clothes, "the young 'un's slipped his wind!"

Kirkland was dead.

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

"Game, aint he?" said one constable to the other, as they pushed him, not ungently, into an empty cell, there to wait for the hospital guard. The body of Kirkland was taken away in silence, and Burgess turned rather pale when he saw North's threatening face.

"It isn't my fault, Mr. North," he said. "I didn't know that the lad was chicken-hearted." But North turned away in disgust, and Macklewain and Burgess pursued their homeward route together.

"Strange that he should drop like that," said the Commandant.

"Yes, unless he had any internal disease," said the surgeon.

"Disease of the heart, for instance," said Burgess.

"I'll *post-mortem* him and see."

"Come in and have a nip, Macklewain. I feel quite qualmish," said Burgess. And the two went into the house amid respectful salutes from either side. Mr. North, in agony of mind at what he considered the consequence of his neglect,

slowly, and with head bowed down, as one bent on a painful errand, went to see the prisoner who had survived. He found him kneeling on the ground, prostrated.

"Rufus Dawes."

At the low tone Rufus Dawes looked up, and seeing who it was, waved him off.

"Don't speak to me," he said, with an imprecation that made North's flesh creep. "I've told you what I think of you—a hypocrite, who stands by while a man is cut to pieces, and then comes and whines religion to him." *MR. NORTH*

North stood in the centre of the cell, with his arms hanging down, and his head bent.

"You are right," he said, in a low tone. "I must seem to you a hypocrite. I a servant of Christ? A besotted beast rather! I am not come to whine religion to you. I am come to—to ask your pardon. I might have saved you from punishment,—saved that poor boy from death. I wanted to save him, God knows! But I have a vice; I am a drunkard, I yielded to my temptation, and—I was too late. I come to you as one sinful man to another, to ask you to forgive me." And North suddenly flung himself down beside the convict, and catching his blood-bespotted hands in his own, cried, "Forgive me, brother!"

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

have been always bad. I think I have heard some good of him somewhere."

"Nonsense," said Frere, rising decisively. "Your fancies mislead you. Let me hear you no more. The man is rebellious, and must be lashed back again to his duty. Come, North, we'll have a nip before you start."

"Mr. North, will not *you* plead for me?" suddenly cried poor Sylvia, her self-possession overthrown. "You have a heart to pity these suffering creatures."

But North, who seemed to have suddenly recalled his soul from some place where it had been wandering, draws himself aside, and with dry lips makes shift to say, "I cannot interfere with your husband, madam," and goes out almost rudely.

"You've made old North quite ill," said Frere, when he by-and-by returns, hoping by bluff ignoring of roughness on his own part to avoid reproach from his wife. "He drank half a bottle of brandy to steady his nerves before he went home, and coming out of the house like one possessed."

But Sylvia, occupied by her own thoughts, did not reply.

CHAPTER VII.

BREAKING A MAN'S SPIRIT.

THE insubordination of which Rufus Dawes had been guilty was, in this instance, insignificant. It was the custom of the newly-fledged constables of Captain Frere to enter the wards at night, armed with cutlasses, tramping about, and making a great noise. Mindful of the report of Pounce, they pulled the men roughly from their hammocks, examined their persons for concealed tobacco, and compelled them to open their mouths to see if any was inside. The men in Dawes's gang—to which Mr. Troke had an especial objection—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. Their sleep broken, and what little self-respect they might yet presume to retain harried out of them, the objects of this incessant persecution were ready to turn upon and kill their tormentors.

The great aim of Troke was to catch Dawes tripping, but the

leader of the "King" was too wary. In vain had Troke, eager to sustain his reputation for sharpness, burst in upon the convict at all times and seasons. He had found nothing. In vain had he laid traps for him; in vain had he "planted" figs of tobacco, and attaching long threads to them, waited in a bush hard by, until the pluck at the end of his line should give token that the fish had bitten. The experienced "old hand" was too acute for him. Filled with disgust and ambition, he determined upon an ingenious little trick. He was certain that Dawes possessed tobacco; the thing was to find it upon him. 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. Perhaps this oddly-assorted friendship was brought about by two causes—one, that Mooney was the only man on the island who knew more of the horrors of convictism than the leader of the Ring; the other, that Mooney was blind, and, to a moody, sullen man, subject to violent fits of passion and a constant suspicion of all his fellow-creatures, a blind companion was more congenial than a sharp-eyed one.

Mooney was one of the "First Fleeters." He had arrived in Sydney fifty-seven years before, in the year 1789, and when he was transported he was fourteen years old. He had been through the whole round of servitude, had worked as a bondsman, had married, and been "up country," had been again sentenced, and was a sort of dismal patriarch of Norfolk Island, having been there at its former settlement. He had no friends. His wife was long since dead, and he stated, without contradiction, that his master, having taken a fancy to her, had despatched the uncomplaisant husband to imprisonment. Such cases were not uncommon.

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 on repeating his request, Troke felt something put into his hand. He grasped Dawes's 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 low 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 in-coming convict. A desperate struggle took place, at the end of which, the convict, overpowered by numbers, was borne senseless to the cells, gagged, and chained 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 ordered by Troke the next morning.

"Hal! hal! 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 Freere. "Well see how you'll feel then!"

The fifty were duly administered, and the Commandant called the next day. The rebel was still mute.

"Give him fifty more, Mr. Troke. We'll see what he's made of." One hundred and twenty lashes were inflicted in the course of the morning, but still the sullen convict refused to speak. He was then treated to fourteen days' solitary confinement in one of the new cells. On being brought out and confronted with his tormentor, he merely laughed. For this he was sent back for another fourteen days; and still remaining obdurate, was flogged again, and got fourteen days more. Had the chaplain then stated him, he might have found him open to consolation, but the chaplain—so it was stated—was sick. When brought out at the conclusion of his third confinement, he was found to be in so exhausted a condition, that the doctor ordered him to hospital. As soon as he was sufficiently recovered, Freere visited him, and finding his "spirit" not yet "broken," ordered that he should be put to grind maize. Dawes declined to work. So they chained his hand to one arm of the grindstone, and placed another prisoner at the other arm. As the second prisoner turned, the hand of Dawes of course revolved.

"You're not such a pebble as folks seemed to think," grinned Freere, pointing to the turning wheel.

Upon which the indomitable poor devil straightened his sorely-tryed muscles, and prevented the wheel from turning at all. 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.

"For God's sake, 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."

When he was in hospital, North visited him.

"I would have come to see you before," said the clergyman, "but I have been very ill."

In truth he looked so. He had had a fever; it seemed, and they had shaved his beard, and cropped his hair. Dawes could see that the haggard, wasted man had passed through some agony almost as great as his own. 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."

The clergyman spoke to him of hope, of release, of repentance, and redemption. The prisoner laughed. "Who's to redeem me?" he said, expressing his thoughts in phraseology that to ordinary folks might seem blasphemous. "It would take a Christ to die again to save such as I."

North spoke to him of immortality. "There is another life," said he. "Do not risk your chance of happiness in it. You have a future to live for, man."

"I hope not," said the victim of the "system." "I want to rest—to rest, and never to be disturbed again."

His "spirit" was broken enough by this time. Yet he had resolution enough to refuse Frere's repeated offers. "I'll never 'jump' it," he said to North, "if they cut me in half first."

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?"

Dawes, on his part, seeing how different from other black men was this priest—at once so ardent and so gloomy, so stern and so tender—began to speculate on the cause of his monitor's swollen cheeks, fiery eyes, and pre-occupied manner, to wonder what grief inspired those agonized prayers, those eloquent and daring supplications, which were daily poured out over his rude bed. So between these two—the priest and the sinner—was a sort of sympathetic bond.

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 returned 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.

mateship