

Ten Years Penal Settlement on Norfolk Island
related by William Archer by John F Small Jun
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Ten Years' Penal Servitude on Norfolk Island,

THE
EXPERIENCE AND REMINISCENCES
OF
WILLIAM ARCHER.

[BY JOHN F. SMALL, JUN.]

PREFACE.

In the following true and unvarnished history of convict life, and personal reminiscences, as related by one who has himself undergone the terrible ordeal, the writer will endeavour, as far as practicable to clothe the narrative in the plain yet graphic language of the narrator. Nothing will appear in the following chapters but plain irrefutable facts. Some trivial errors will, no doubt, occur as to dates, but when it is considered that every incident is related from memory alone, it can be readily granted that a man, though possessing (as Archer undoubtedly does) a marvellously retentive one, would require to be endowed with super-natural powers to keep all dates indelibly imprinted on his mind through a long series of years. To spare the feelings of the descendants, relatives and friends of some of those who have been actors in the blood-curdling dramas which I shall have to chronicle, it has been decided to fill in fictitious names in a majority of cases, others, whose actions can be recounted with feelings of pride, even by those near and dear to them, will have their names handed down to posterity, correctly as they deserve. I shall not spare bitter censure where deserved, or withhold lavish praise where it is merited. Though professing only to give an account of convict life on Norfolk Island, it will be necessary to digress slightly in the introductory chapters in order to introduce the narrator and principal actors; I shall then follow him through all the vicissitudes of convict life from the time of his conviction in New South Wales till his return from Norfolk Island, with an honorable and heroically earned pardon, and still onward through an exemplary and upright life amongst the early pioneers of this colony, till we finally take leave of him in the highest position which it is in the power of his fellow-citizens to place him, viz., the honoured mayor and chief magistrate of Grafton, the premier city of the north coast districts of New South Wales. It might be well to anticipate a little, and at once declare that Archer, at the time which this narrative commences, was serving a sentence of transportation; at the same time it should be borne in mind by the reader that in the years preceeding

by the reader that in the years preceeding 1831, what is now considered a trivial offence, and which would be punished by the infliction of a small fine or a few hours' imprisonment was deemed sufficient to justify a man's transportation to Botany Bay. This is not written in justification of Archer's early life in the old country, for that will not be touched upon in any way, but merely that his position may be more easily understood.

CHAPTER I.

Introducing Archer, his employer, and persecutor.
—Convict fare.—A glorious feast.—The cause of trouble, &c.

In the year 1831, William Archer, who was then 25 years of age, was assigned to one William Sparke, of Hexham, on the Hunter River. Sparke was a very poor man, having only a 2000-acre grant from which to make a living; this, though now worth a princely fortune, was in those days a miserable source of income. He had several servants assigned to him, and was scarcely ever able to supply them with the Government regulation rations. It was nothing unusual for them to be a couple of days without food, and, wishing to make a few pounds, he rented Archer to James Hunter, who was at that time superintendent for Mr Walter Scott, of Ash Island, to teach his (Scott's) men how to split timber and erect fences. While thus occupied Archer was allowed to select one man as his mate, and their weekly task was to split 350 rails; for his services Sparke received 8s. per hundred for all they turned out. Archer invariably made it a practice to go home to Sparke's place once a week, usually on Saturday night, returning to his work on Monday.

About this time Hunter bought a piece of ground from Sparke, on the main land, and immediately opposite the upper part of Ash Island, for the purpose of forming a butchering establishment to supply Newcastle with beef; and he purchased fat cattle from Robert and Elinus Scott, of Glendon. Hunter was in the habit of travelling up and down to the station alone, and repeatedly reported to the police at Newcastle that he had been fired at by bushrangers. The police had been pestered with this news so often without finding anything in the shape of bushrangers, that no notice was taken of the reports which were still repeatedly made, and as often disregarded.

As times were hard, and money scarce, Hunter could not afford to erect paddocks for the fat cattle, and a boy was kept to mind them. This lad used to stay at the hut occupied by Archer and his mates at Hexham, and his duty was to watch the road in front of the place along which the cattle would have to pass to get back to the station. Whilst thus occupied, he came in one day and reported to Hunter that Sparke's men had killed either a sheep or a calf, as he had seen Archer frying some of it.

The facts were as follows:—The men were in a state of semi-starvation, and, during Archer's absence, one of them caught a calf, which was at once killed and dressed, and on his return on Saturday afternoon he found the carcass hanging up in the sleeping room of the hut, and no mine of colossal wealth could possibly have been more welcome. He began at once to study the

anatomy of the bovine by dissecting a lot of chops, which were soon on the fire and frying with music more sweet than that from *Zeolian* harp in the hands of a goddess. Whilst sitting by the fire, watching with longing eyes and anticipating epigastric regions for the chops to cook, the boy entered the hut unobserved and unexpected, and, of course, saw the unusual meal in course of preparation. He made no remark but left the place and went straight to his master with the tale; of course the men did not know the boy had laid the information. On Saturday night and during Sunday the unfortunates had a glorious feast on the fast disappearing carcass, which was devoured with considerable gusto, and little thought of future consequences. Monday morning came, and Archer, as usual, went back to work, and immediately he landed on the island received the startling news that Hunter had gone to Newcastle to get warrants for them for killing the calf.

On hearing this Archer went straight to Mrs Hunter and asked her to let him have the boat to go to Newcastle to see if it could not be settled; but this she said she could not think of doing, stating at the same time that her husband had strictly forbidden her to lend the boat for fear he would return and caution the other men; however, this he decided to do at all hazard, and following the track along till he came to the crossing, he stripped off, and tying his clothes in a bundle, which he placed on his head, swam across the river, which, at that part, is some 400 yards wide, and infested with sharks. Getting safely over, he made speedy tracks to the hut, and, delivering the unwelcome news, advised them to at once destroy all traces of the calf and prepare for the worst. Self preservation, the first law of nature, immediately prompted the men to obey, and within half an hour they had everything burnt or planted, and considered themselves secure.

Here it will be necessary to say that according to the assigned convict regulations any man having twelve convicts was empowered to appoint one of them a Farm Constable, and in accordance with this regulation Hunter had appointed one of his men to the coveted position.

On Monday afternoon he went over to the camp accompanied by his Constable and enquired from George Tullock, Sparke's overseer, whether Archer was in the camp; he replied in the affirmative, and was then told, in confidence, that he (Hunter) had come to take him away to have him tried with the other men for cattle-stealing, and asked him to entice Archer into his hut so that he could get the handcuffs on him, threatening Tullock at the same time that if he did not do so he would report him as an accomplice and accessory after the fact. He was going, he said, to the hut of a man named Flannery, which was about three hundred yards away, to get the handcuffs, and that he would expect him to have Archer in the hut and ready to capture by the time he got back. Tullock went, very reluctantly, though dreading the consequences of disobeying, and finding Archer, told him he wished him to go down into his hut as he had a new blanket to give him. Wondering at the unexpected philanthropy of the man, yet never dreaming of treachery, Archer went down at once to the overseer's

quarters, which was an ordinary slab hut of two rooms, one of which was used as a kitchen, dining room, and parlor combined, the other as a bed and store room. In the first combination apartment was a large fireplace, like those usually found in the colony at the present time in the bush; it was built of slabs, and was eight or nine feet wide, and lined inside with stones for a couple or three feet up the sides to protect the slabs from fire. In the room close to the fireplace a cask was standing which was used for steeping the seed wheat in a mixture of brine and lime before sowing, as an antidote for rust. It was a cold, wintry day, and a bright, cheerful fire was burning as Archer walked in and seated himself on the corner of a stone in the fireplace, where we will pause to describe him as he sits calmly looking into the fire, and soliloquising as to his ultimate chances of freedom. Though only just turned twenty-five, hard work, and still harder living, had made him look at least five years older. He is a thick-set, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, muscular man, about five feet ten inches high, with an open, pleasant countenance, clean shaved face, blue eyes, and a broad intellectually shaped forehead, with glossy brown hair of which he was evidently proud, judging by the manner in which it was kept. In all he was a man who would be conspicuous amongst his fellows in any sphere of life; one to be trusted till death as a friend, yet dreaded and shunned as an enemy, fearless and brave,

A mighty man is he

With large and sinewy hands

And the muscles of his brawny arms

Are strong as iron bands.

He had not been long sitting as I have described him when the Farm Constable came in and stood leaning with his back against the cask, in the middle of the room. Being an intimate friend of Archer's, he began to tell him, in a whisper, what was coming, when the door suddenly opened, and Hunter, carrying a pair of handcuffs, stepped into the room followed by Tullock. Casting a contemptuous glance at Archer, he ordered the constable to put the handcuffs on him. That worthy, well knowing with whom he had to deal, still stood with his arms folded by the cask, as immovable as a statue. Stamping his foot with rage, and calling the constable an arrant coward, Hunter advanced towards the fire place to arrest Archer himself; when almost within arms length his courage appeared to fail him, and he stood as though hesitating. Archer now looked up for the first time, and setting his eyes calmly and steadfastly on Hunter, said, without a tremor in his voice, "You must show me your authority before I allow you to handcuff me. If I have done anything wrong my master is the man to take me, not you, sir; and, as sure as the heavens are above me, if you dare to put your hands on me I will make a back log of you, and roast you alive."

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CHAPTER II.

Shot like a dog.—Arrest of Archer and others for cattle-stealing.—Their acquittal.—Re-arrest and committal.—A seat on his coffin.—Hanged to a tree.

WITHOUT answering, Hunter made a rush, and at the same instant Archer sprang to his feet, with a bound like a ravenous tiger, and seizing him by the waist, lifted him off his feet as easily as a cat would a mouse, and threw him over his shoulder on to the stones in front of the fire. In the scuffle the constable was tripped backwards into the cask and was almost smothered before he could scramble out. Archer made for the door, and once outside he commenced to run like a deer towards his master's house, which, by the road, was about two miles off; he was not, however, more than sixty yards away when Hunter reached the door and seizing a gun, which he had left standing outside the house, he fired, without warning, at Archer and lodged a charge of heavy slugs in his back and arms. The shock made him reel for a moment like a drunken man. He tripped and fell forward, but, quickly recovering himself, he rushed on again, maddened with pain, and never stopped or looked back until he got to his destination, where he presented a most sickening and pitiable spectacle. His clothes were saturated with blood, which was still oozing from the gaping wounds; his face was pale and ghastly as a corpse, and he was weak and almost speechless from loss of blood. Under the kind care of sympathetic hands he was soon sufficiently recovered to ask Sparke if he had given Hunter authority to molest and shoot his servants; and said that he would not go away from home to work again upon any consideration, and that if he could not find work for him to do at home he had better re-assign him to Government. "Well!" said Sparke, "it appears to me a very strange piece of business all through, but I believe I can see the drift of it; he evidently thinks his men have learnt enough to do without you, and by getting you to run away he expects to do me out of what he already owes for the work you have done; but," he continued, "if you will go back in the morning I will go with you, and he will then have no excuse to get out of paying me, for Heaven knows I want it bad enough." "Well, sir," said Archer, "I would be very sorry indeed to see you done out of your money, and I will go back with you, let the

result be what it may." Shortly after the interview Archer started back to his hut at Hexham, where he remained during the night, stiff and sore, yet unmolested. In the morning Sparke came down, and in company they started off to the crossing-place opposite the slaughter house and cooyed. In a few minutes Hunter appeared with his Farm Constable and stepping into the boat, was pulled across. Directly it touched the shore he jumped out, with a gun in his hand, and stepping up to Archer, said, tapping it meanwhile ominously with his fingers, "I've got something in her this morning that will bring you up standing before you are much older." Archer, without replying, turned to Sparke and said that he had altered his mind and would not go over to the Island with Hunter, as he was sure it would only lead to bloodshed. Sparke called him aside and said, "I want you to go over for my sake until I see what I can get out of him for your labour." Archer assented, and getting into the boat, was pulled over to the island, without exchanging a word with his ferry-men, and on landing walked leisurely out to the men's hut, where he found the occupants enjoying a holiday, which, they said, Hunter had given them, together with a glass of grog, and extra flour, in honour of the marriage which had been celebrated that morning between Scott's daughter and Dr. Simpson. Hunter, who was playing the part of a double-dyed hypocrite all through the piece, changed his clothes at once and started post haste to Newcastle to ascertain why the police had not been out to search Sparke's place for the remains of the beast, after having received the information sent by him. Finding there was no work to be done that day, Archer, who had heard that Hunter had gone away, yet not knowing where to, went down to Mrs. Hunter (who we may say in passing was highly esteemed and respected by bond and free) and borrowed a boat and pulled back to Hexham, where he stayed for the night. Next morning (Wednesday) he left at daylight, went back and commenced work as usual. Just before dinner the police came out and instituted a rigid but fruitless search. They, however, took Archer, Samuel Edwards, William Ray, and Thomas Coots into custody on a charge of killing a beast, the property of William Sparke. They were escorted to Newcastle the same evening, and on the following day were brought before Lieutenant Warner, Dr. Brooks and another functionary named Reid, commonly known by the cognomen of "Long Reid." At the enquiry Sparke swore positively and distinctly that, so far as he was aware, he had not lost a beast of any description, and as nothing was found in the men's possession to connect them with the charge, and no one could be found to swear they had missed a beast, the prisoners were all acquitted. The men went back to their work and for five or six weeks nothing out of the ordinary routine occurred. One morning, however, about this time, a small hide was found on the road, where it had, apparently, been dragged by dogs from a drain close by. It was shrunken, almost decomposed, and very much torn, but on one of the sound portions the letter S could be distinctly seen. The news spread like fire, and Hunter, who was still insatiably thirsting for a conviction, started

again to Newcastle to inform the police. On the way he met the Rev. Mr. Fullerton, and thinking that, from the manner in which he had been treated over the phantom bush-ranger business, the police would be more likely to hurry out on receiving the information through the minister, he told him what had occurred and asked him to report the matter at once to the police, who again went out and arrested the men. This was in January, 1832. They were brought before the Bench and a man named Skinner, who lived about four miles from Hexham, at a place called Skinner's Hollow, swore that he knew by the brand that the hide had been taken from a beast of his. This was considered sufficient evidence to warrant a committal, and they were accordingly sent to gaol, where they had to lay to await their trial at the ensuing Quarter Sessions, to be held in Maitland the following April. It was customary at the time of which we write to allow men who were committed for any crime to employ lawyers to defend them, provided they had money enough to pay them out of their own pockets; otherwise, no matter how serious the offence, they had to stand their trial without defence, and were often sentenced to death on exceedingly doubtful circumstantial evidence. Archer, who had a considerable sum in the Savings Bank, wrote to a solicitor named Williams, who resided in Sydney, and who had a far-spreading reputation as one of the most eminent lawyers in the colony, to know if he would come to Maitland to defend him. This Williams replied he would not be able to do, but recommended a friend of his named Kerr, who he said would be there, and would undertake the defence. The memorable day arrived at last; memorable, because the first Court of Quarter Sessions ever held in Maitland was held on it; memorable, too, because they were the first men who received a life sentence for cattle-stealing in the colony, and were tried by a Judge without a jury; memorable, also, because Judge Forster, who tried them, came up from Sydney on the morning of the trial in the *Sophia Jane*, the first steamer which came to the colony; and I may here mention a very sad incident in connection with the trip:—A man named Cooney had several assigned servants, amongst whom were two brothers; one of these was engaged stumping, and Cooney on looking round one morning, went to where he was at work and complained that he was not doing enough. One word brought on another, till the man struck at Cooney with a hoe which he was using, and, just missing his head, cut his ear off. For this he was immediately apprehended, sent down to Sydney, tried, and sentenced to death. Cooney made application to the authorities to have him sent back again to his farm to be hanged as a warning to the others. This fiendish request was complied with, and as the *Sophia Jane* steamed up the river he could be seen on deck seated on his coffin. From the ship he was sent to the lock-up, and on the appointed day was taken out in a dray to the farm, and the other men ordered out to witness the tragic scene. The dray was driven under a tree, the rope adjusted and secured to an overhanging limb, and all being ready, the horse was moved on. The condemned man dropped with a groan, and it was at once seen that too much slack had been allowed the rope, as the tips of his

toes were touching the ground. The most hardened criminals present quailed, sickened, and turned their heads away from the revolting spectacle. The unfortunate wretch continued to groan and writhe in the most horrible contortions, with blackened face and protruding eye-balls, in the dire agonies of partial strangulation, when Cooney, apparently unmoved, turned to the culprit's brother and ordered him to take a spade and dig the earth from under his feet. This hell-born, inhuman order the man naturally refused to obey, and said, in tones of mingled anguish and hatred, that he would rather hang by his brother's side than do it. This Cooney threatened to have done, and taking the spade he dug the hole himself, and the doomed man's contortions gradually grew weaker till death released his soul and ended his agony. The scene of this brutal tragedy still bears the appropriate name of "Murdering Cooney's Farm." Kerr, the lawyer who had been recommended to Archer by Williams, came up by the steamer, and at once interviewed him. After a few commonplace remarks he told him that he had ascertained at the bank that the money was all right and asked for his brief; to prepare this Archer was allowed to go up a kind of ladder into a loft, above the Court House, which was not quite finished. The document was not very elaborate, and after a lapse of a few minutes he came down and handed it with hopeful feelings to the man whom he considered would be his saviour. Kerr took the paper with a condescending bow, and walked across the street to an hotel opposite, kept by Mrs. Muir. After a short time he returned and told Archer that he did not think he could be of much service to him, and that his money would do him more good hereafter. The Judge, he said, was in a hurry to get back in the steamer and wanted the case over; and, another thing, he was only just commencing business himself and it would vitiate his reputation to undertake a case in which he felt quite sure his client would not have the slightest chance of being acquitted. As their conviction was evidently a foregone conclusion, the men lost heart and grew sullen and despondent at their impending doom.

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CHAPTER II.

(CONTINUED).

Trial.—Transported for life.—Hanged by the heels.—A horrible prison.—Terrible suffering.—Arrival at Norfolk Island.

In a little while the Court opened and they were duly arraigned on the charge. Skinner was called and, as before, swore the hide bore his brand. Hunter's boy swore he saw the three men, Archer, Edwards, and Coots, cooking either mutton or beef, he was not sure which, but would not swear to Ray, who was then discharged. The Judge considered the case proved against the other three men, and without further preamble sentenced them to be imprisoned for the *term of their natural lives on Norfolk Island*. The trial did not occupy ten minutes from first to last, and the prisoners were removed, the few stragglers who dropped in to hear the trial were dispersed, and the Judge was on his way back to the steamer within the next ten minutes. The following day the prisoners were heavily ironed and marched down to Newcastle under escort, where they were kept for eight or ten days awaiting the arrival of the Government vessel, which was to convey them to the hulk lying in Sydney Cove, which they found, on arrival, occupied by seventy-nine prisoners, who, like themselves, were to be sent on to Norfolk Island in the schooner "Governor Phillips" which was then away on a voyage with another batch. In about a fortnight she arrived and the eighty-two prisoners were transhipped to her. Immediately on being placed on board they were stripped to the shirt, passed down the hold one at a time, and seated side by side in rows on each side of the hold, or, more appropriately we should say, "prison cage"—for it was an apartment built in the centre of the ship of stout planking, and clear of her bottom and sides. Around and under it a careful watch was constantly kept to detect any attempt which the prisoners might make to cut their way out—this a previous lot had

almost succeeded in doing with an old razor, which one of them had managed to secrete, and with which they had also cut a number of their leg irons in halves before they were detected. After they were all down and seated, light chains were run through the centre links in the leg irons of each man, one end of each was fastened to the deck and the other passed around the capstan; this was so arranged that, should the slightest disturbance occur amongst the prisoners, the chains were immediately hauled taut, which, of course, swung the man up by the heels; during the voyage this was done repeatedly, and the men kept standing on their heads sometimes for half-an-hour at a stretch. The reason that they were stripped, was that on the last voyage of the ship, one of the prisoners had, by some unaccountable means, secreted strychnine in the heels of his boots, which had been hollowed out to receive a considerable quantity. It was arranged that one of the two prisoners who were selected to cook for the others on the voyage was to wear the boots, and when an opportunity offered he was to poison the soldiers' coffee, after which the prisoners were to throw the survivors overboard and take the ship. This diabolical project was, however, happily frustrated by one of the prisoners, who wrote the words "Beware of poison in heels of boots" with a piece of blacklead pencil on a slip of paper, and dropped it unseen into the bottom of an empty bucket, from which the prisoners had been supplied with water, where it was found by one of the crew. A vigorous search was at once made, and the strychnine discovered, secreted as described; but we have been drifting from our ship. All being ready she dropped down the harbor, with a pleasant breeze from the West, sailed out through the Heads and on towards the rising sun, with her living freight of hopeless exiles. The "bill of fare" on board was a junk of salt beef and a slice of bread, one day varied with split peas instead of bread with the beef the next. In fine weather this was regularly served out at midday; in rough weather nothing was cooked, so that they were occasionally a day without anything, to still further vary the diet. When the cooks came down into the charnel house they handed each man his slice of bread and beef, or if it were "split peas day" they ladled a pint of them into each man's shirt, which was held up for the purpose, and often a man would lose his day's allowance through the heavy rolling of the vessel; an accident which was always hailed (though fraught with serious consequences to the unfortunate to whom it happened) with uproarious laughter by his more lucky companions. When off Howes Island they encountered a terrific gale, during which the seas broke over the ship from stem to stern, and the water poured down on them in tons with irresistible force; numbers were washed backwards and forwards, gasping, and almost drowned, before it escaped into the bottom of the ship. The hatches were battened down after a while, and the convicts left to their fate for eighteen dreary hours without food or water.

Let us pause to describe this earthly hades, where human beings are chained like devils amidst fetid horrors, more unbearable and excruciating than would be in the power of

a Dante to describe, or the reigning authorities of hell to invent. Let us imagine ourselves peering cautiously through one of the loopholes; we start back aghast. Suddenly a sickening shudder vibrates from the inmost recesses of our system, we step back again appalled at the pestiferous, malignant stench which permeates from the unremoved alvine discharges. The men who represent, as it were, eighty-two hair-breadth gradations of crime, from the very best to the very worst of them; no doubt, some good, some bad, and some indifferent, are all suffering alike in a sem-inude state. They have had no covering but their shirts, night or day, wet or dry, since they left Sydney Cove. Some are sitting, some are laying like chained dogs; every conceivable attitude of despair is depicted here; with shrunk cheeks and glazed eyes, the majority have evidently abandoned all desire to live. Some are even praying fervently that the ship would sink in the bottomless deep, and thus end their misery; others, with sullen looks and lowering brows, are ominously cursing their fellow-men, their country, and their God, in fiendish ghoul-like tones. We shall not dwell longer on this revolting scene; the storm passed, and the ship rolled and plunged lazily on her weary, monotonous course till on the morning of the thirteenth day out, Norfolk Island was sighted, away to the eastward over the bows, a small speck in the open expanse of the vast Pacific; a verdant oasis in an ever-rolling, boundless, wilderness of water. About midday the ship hove to between Phillip and Norfolk Islands, and the boats came off for the prisoners, who were brought up out of their dungeon ten at a time, and had their irons struck off so that they might be able to get into the boats. They presented a most pitiable sight. They had been so long confined and cramped in the one position in partial darkness, that the light almost blinded them, their lips, too, were numbed and powerless, and on trying to stand they staggered, grasped at everything within their reach, tottered and fell about the deck, like infants learning to walk. The weather was fine, the sea calm, and the ship being steady, they were all embarked and landed safely with comparatively little difficulty.

CHAPTER III.

Norfolk Island.—First experience.—Prison fare.

To enable the reader to understand the incidents hereinafter described, it will be necessary for me to give a brief description of Norfolk Island. It is situated about 900 miles from the east coast of Australia, and comprises an area of 13½ square miles, the greater portion of which is level—Mount Pitt, the highest eminence on the island, rising only 1050 feet above the sea. It is well watered and the soil generally fertile. There are only two landing places, one on the south west and the other on the north east side. The north east, known as the Cascade, being a very dangerous landing except with a south west wind, the opposite side was always used when favorable weather permitted, and on this side the settlement was established. On approaching the island one cannot but admire the beauties of nature there depicted, nor fail to be lastingly impressed with its glorious scenery. From the

very edge of the snow-crested, serf the dark green pines, ironwoods and oaks stand out in bold relief from the stunted, flower-decked undergrowth, forming a picture such as an inspired artist would paint of peace, seclusion and happiness; a resplendant gem sent down for man from the art gallery of God. The convict establishment was built about the centre of the island, near the beach, and was comprised, in different localities, of soldiers' barracks, officials' quarters, gaol, and hospital—occupying in all a space about three quarters of a mile long by half a mile wide. We shall now follow the convicts from their landing, on through years of misery and persecution, which ultimately culminated in the memorable riot of the 15th of January, 1834, and on again to the closing scenes through the dim morning of brighter days, when the glorious sun of liberty shone away out in the distant horizon of the convicts' hope, like the Star of Bethlehem to their semi-exterminated souls. On landing from the ship the men were ranged up in rows for inspection by the Commandant, who formally asked the captain if he had any complaints to make; this question, on the occasion of which I write, being answered in the negative the men were at once conducted to a large room, in which were a number of wooden tubs filled with warm water, and in which the men were ordered to wash themselves to remove the insufferable odour which permeated from every pore of their emaciated bodies, contracted in the charnel house in which they were entombed during their voyage down. After the bath each man was supplied with a suit of prison clothes, on which was branded the letters N.I. No attempt was made by the officials at getting the clothes to fit; but they were allowed to exchange with each other until they got something near the mark—after which each one had the number by which he was afterwards officially distinguished painted on his suit. This part of the programme through, they were conducted by a clerk to their sleeping apartments, and each man shown his hammock. They got nothing to eat the day on which they landed, because it was the rule that nothing should be drawn from the Commissariat for new arrivals till 3 o'clock on the day after landing. The daily rations consisted of half-a-pound of corn meal, made into hominy for breakfast, one pound of salt beef (the majority of which had previously been all through the Peninsular wars), and half a pound of corn meal made into bread for dinner, with the breakfast ration of half a pound of corn meal for supper; an ounce of sugar per day was allowed, to mix as they choose with their famine-doled fares. No tea, milk, vegetables, or anything else edible, was ever tasted by the majority of the prisoners from year's end to year's end, and scurvy and kindred diseases were only kept in check by a man being told off from each gang whose duty it was to collect limes and lemons, which grew wild through the bush in great abundance, the juice of which was mixed with water, and formed the prisoners' principal drink.

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CHAPTER III.

(CONTINUED).

Prison life.—The cat.—Man's inhumanity to man.
—Dreadful suffering.

A FAVORED few for good conduct were allowed three rods of land to grow sweet potatoes in, this, they were expected to work in their own time—that is, during the dinner hour. No tools were allowed them, but the ground being loose and friable, they managed to scratch it over—turkey fashion—with their fingers. Those who held the garden patches were invariably marked men; if they had any prospects of a good crop the overseer of an adjoining gang (who was sure to have a favorite in it), would lay a frivolous complaint, often concocted, against the tenant, whose first punishment would be to forfeit the garden, which would then be transferred, on the ganger's recommendation, to his favorite, under the secretly understood arrangement that he himself was to get the incoming crop for his disinterested (?) share of the business. In round numbers, there were about thirteen hundred convicts on the island; of these about five hundred were told off to work the agricultural portion of the settlement, which was at a place called Long Ridge, one mile and a half from the settlement—to which every man had to return at night to sleep, and walk back to his work by six in the morning, getting meals at the scene of his labours. To be sent to work here was considered additional punishment, for, besides having their allotted tasks to perform, they had to walk the three miles in getting to and from their work. They were drafted out into gangs of ten and twelve men each to break the land up with hoes, fell, stump, clear, burn off, or attend growing crops. The strongest man in the gang was always placed as leader, and whatever amount of work he did the weakest man in the gang was also cruelly compelled to accomplish in the same time—failing which, he was as sure of receiving fifty lashes as he was of seeing the sun go down; and not only receiving the

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fifty lashes at the hands of an unmerciful, callous-souled flogger, but, having to turn to work next morning with his back lacerated, swollen, and bleeding, and if the slightest murmur of complaint was heard from him he was again strapped to the triangles and got another fifty. The hands of many of the new arrivals were as soft as a woman's, never having done any laborious work to harden them. After the first day's work they were invariably blistered and raw as a beef steak, and the unfortunate wretches were often heard crying like children with the excruciating agony they suffered by having their hands wrung and bleeding, and their muscles soft, and weak as an infants. However willing they were, they were physically incapable of performing their tasks, and being unable to drive the hoe down to the required depth, which was tested at regular intervals by a relentless overseer with a sharp-pointed stick, they were told off at night without trial or ceremony to receive their allotted number of lashes; which were ordered regularly every night by the Commandant, and varied according to his caprice or humor, from twenty-five to two hundred, the latter being the most he was empowered to order at one flogging, and often a man's back was in such a state that it was impossible to administer a flogging on it and it was then ordered on the extremities. Repeatedly, pieces of living, quivering flesh flew off under each stroke of the cat from their almost lifeless bodies, like chips from a carpenter's adze, and it was an almost everyday occurrence to see a lifeless corpse unstrapped from the triangles. The overseers in charge of the gangs were appointed from amongst the prisoners themselves, and were rewarded by a ration of 1lb of 10 per cent bread (that is bread made from flour which had had ten pounds of sifting to the hundredweight, taken from the fresh ground meal—this is not allowed in addition to the corn meal but in lieu of it). These men had no hope of liberty whatever, and, failing to exact the required amount of work from their gang, they were themselves liable to be tied up and flogged at any time. They wore a distinguishing dress, consisting of a blue jacket and hat, and had the privilege of carrying a stout stick as a badge of office, and which was also used in self-defence should it be required.

The prisoners not employed as agriculturists were termed settlement hands, and were engaged making roads, digging drains, felling and hauling timber, quarrying limestone, burning lime, and building. Wherever it was practicable all work was done in tasks. The daily task allotted to those engaged in draining being to excavate a piece eleven yards long, five feet wide on top, and three feet in the bottom; the land being composed of a kind of conglomerate, which had to be picked out in small lumps not larger than an orange. The difficulty of performing this task was intensified by absolute starvation; for not only were the rations insufficient to sustain the heavy strain on their systems, but the method in which they were served out to them prevented their being eaten at all, unless compelled by the gnawing pangs of hunger. An instance of how the hominy was served up will be sufficient to give an idea as to how the culinary department was conducted:—An allowance for six men was emptied into a

Chapter 3

Ten Years Penal Settlement on Norfolk Island

The Tweed and Brunswick Advocate

October 23rd 1889

large dish, on top of which a few spoonfuls of fat (skimmed from the water in which the salt beef had been boiled), was poured; each man was provided with a spoon and seated round in a circle they all ate from the one dish,—men sound and healthy sitting side by side with men suffering from every conceivable form of contagious disease, men with faces made hideous by the deadly ravages of cancer, men whose every feature show signs of terrible disorders, external and internal, curable and incurable. What wonder that treatment such as this would so warp and demoralise men's minds that the majority were in a reckless, despondent state bordering on insanity; looking forward, no ray of hope shone, even in the remote future. The most sanguine could conceive nothing but a continuation of the treatment which had already brutalized some of the men to such an extent that they were often seen to froth at the mouth like mad dogs when contemplating their position. Nothing could be hoped for from good conduct, no remission of sentence, no indulgences, no possible chance of bettering their position, all ahead seemed a world of trouble—one continuous round of exquisite torture. When old age and infirmity came in the natural course of life, the same tasks were to be exacted, the same course of starvation pursued, the same amount of tyranny exercised by the officers and under-strappers, the same number of lashes to lay bare the living tissues, the same monotonous hell-born outlook, till death, always kind and ever welcome, released them from mortal suffering and placed them beyond the power of earthly fiends in human form. It is a strange fact that not one spec of humanity or Christian forbearance was ever exhibited by an official on the island up to the time of which I write; some, of course, were more vindictive and heartless than others, one especially, a police runner called Aaron Price, who stood alone in brutish barbarity a head and shoulders above his compeers in devilish cunning and hardened ferocity; a double-dyed scoundrel, whose duty it was to act as police detective. This man was serving a life sentence on Norfolk Island for being one of a gang of bushrangers at Maitland, called the "Irish Brigade." The gang consisted of Price, Clarey, Lynch, Moss and another. They were captured, placed in the lockup at Maitland, from whence they escaped; were retaken, sent to Sydney, tried, and cast for death. They were laying in the condemned cells when Governor Darling arrived in the colony and having been convicted of robbery without murder, his first official act in the colony, was to grant a reprieve to them and sentence them to life on Norfolk Island. This was, as regarded Price, one of the most fatal mistakes of his life, for had the original sentence been carried out it would have saved the infliction of thousands of lashes and a number of lives, all better by far than his own, and it is more than probable that the mutiny of 1834 would never have been attempted. Price, by his plausible, cringing manners, succeeded in initiating himself into the good graces of there Colonel Morrisett, from whom he received his appointment. When on duty he was

allowed to roam about at will amongst the prisoners, by whom he was detested and despised; men were continually being flogged and ordered into solitary confinement upon fabrications concocted by him to ingratiate himself into the favor of those in power. It was he who first suggested the idea of a mutiny to one of the prisoners, and pretended to assist in working up the details; which, once in going order, he communicated to the Commandant, giving him sensational particulars as to how it was proposed to work out the plot. The prisoners had, he said, agreed to mutiny on the first of January, ensuing, whilst the prison clothes were being served out, as on that day it was known that all the men would be out at once, and by concerted action, have a better chance of overpowering the soldiers and officials and getting possession of the island. Being forewarned, instead of allowing all the men out together they were drafted out in batches of one hundred each, and were marched from, and to their cells under a double guard of soldiers. Finding that they had been checkmated, no attempt was made to carry out their plans, but the idea was not abandoned and fresh plans were soon matured by which a desperate struggle for liberty was to take place on the 15th of the same month. Leaders were secretly appointed from each gang who were to act as members of a secret committee to work out the mode of attack, and so well was the secret kept that no suspicion whatever was aroused and all seemed quiet and undisturbed as a mortuary. To the initiated, however, matters were at fever heat; animated discussions were carried on clandestinely, with bated breath and painful anxiety, till the mutineers finally decided on the following course of action.

(To be Continued.)

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Ten Years' Penal Servitude on Norfolk Island,

THE
EXPERIENCE AND REMINISCENCES
OF
WILLIAM ARCHER.

[BY JOHN F. SMALL, JUN.]

CHAPTER IV.

The mutiny. — Failure. — Starvation. — Torture. —
Trial by jury. — Condemned to death.

ALL who could possibly manage it were to endeavour to get into the gaol gang, the men in which had to work in the lime quarries in irons, and were guarded by soldiers who followed them to and from their work. It was customary after being marched out of the room to rank the men in rows in front of the gaol and allow any who felt sick to fall out and go to the hospital for physic and advice, and this morning it was wondered why so many fell out, but not the slightest suspicion of the intended mutiny dawned on the soldiers. In front of the hospital and about one hundred yards from it, there was an old wall about ten feet high, part of which had been removed to allow carts and men to pass through to build a new gaol within the enclosure. It was mutually agreed that the iron gang in going to the quarry should walk close by the opening, and those who had feigned sickness should lay in ambush, under cover of the wall, and immediately the soldiers got past the opening they were to rush out behind them; those in front were then to turn and immediately closing on the soldiers back and front it was thought they would be thus easily disarmed and their arms used against those on duty elsewhere. On the successful issue of this struggle the success of the whole plot was known to depend, and immediately it commenced at this point all the prisoners on the island were to rush to the settlement armed with whatever tools or implements they were using at the time; scouts were posted within earshot of each other, all along the road to Long Ridge, where about three hundred men were at work.

It was pointed out by the leaders that when once the soldiers and officials were secured it would be an easy matter to compel Colonel Morrisett to give them the private signal for the first vessel coming in. This signal, I may explain, was always previously arranged with the captains of vessels trading to the Island, and if it was not seen flying when the vessel hove to in the offing it was known that the Island was in a disturbed state, and was a warning to allow no boats alongside, and to stand out to sea. Once in pos-

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session of this signal they could easily have secured the vessels, in which it was intended all should escape—where to they did not know, nor did they care, as long as they got away from the living death they were suffering. The morning of the 15th broke clear and beautiful; nothing was noted out of the common course, or, if the civilians had had the slightest doubt that anything was wrong they must have noticed that some desperate scheme was about to be consummated. The features of men usually sullen and despondent were changed as if by the wand of a magician. The inspired hope of liberty could be seen permeating from every feature. For once in many long weary years, the convict turned out with a smile to their work; their hearts palpitated in fond anticipation of the coming conflict. They knew some must die; they knew before the sun went down that some of them would be laying desperately perhaps mortally wounded. But what of that? They might escape; they might get away to some distant land where a flag more humane than the Union Jack would float over them. If the worst came to the worst and they were defeated, they would at any rate get a merciful release at the hands of the hangman; in either case they would be happy. Fate was, however, as far as freedom went, against them; for, as the iron gang marched past the opening in the wall those in waiting from the hospital, who were to attack them in the rear, became impatient and rushed just a moment too soon, and instead of being behind the soldiers they found themselves in front of them, and were at once shot down and bayoneted like dogs. Several of the soldiers were killed, and a number wounded, but their deadly lead and steel soon ended the unequal contest, and the mutineers fell back beaten and sued for mercy. The signals having been sent on to Long Ridge, the convicts came rushing down yelling and gesticulating like fiends let loose from Hades; all were armed with picks, axes, shovels or stones, and expecting to find the soldiers who were over the iron gang shot or secured and their comrades in possession of their arms to attack the others with; instead of which they found the soldiers victorious, and all drawn up in line on the flat waiting with fixed bayonets to receive the charge. This caused them to hesitate in their headlong rush, but only for a moment, for they charged again in sheer desperation to certain death or renewed captivity. They soon found, however, that they had undertaken a hopeless task, and retreated, panic-stricken, to the bush, where they secreted themselves in the ravines for several days until they were either captured or starved out, and came in to give themselves up. The failure of the mutiny did not by any means crush all hope from the hearts of the mutineers. They had anticipated that failure might possibly accrue, and in the event of defeat they expected to be sent up to Sydney for trial, and imagined that they would be allowed to subpoena a number of the prisoners who had not taken part in the fray, as witnesses, and on the voyage up an attempt to get possession of the vessel was to be made; this failing, a final and desperate endeavour to regain their freedom was to be made in Sydney on the way from the ship to the gaol. They were,

however, doomed to disappointment in both these schemes, for the authorities, foreseeing the danger of taking so many desperate characters over a long sea voyage, determined to send a judge and jury from Sydney and have them tried at Norfolk Island. When all the men had been recaptured, which occupied several days, they were counted off into squads of fifty each, and each squad locked off into separate rooms, and here an unprecedented system of persecution and sickening torture commenced. The man Price, with several others who had turned King's evidence, went from room to room and ordered out those who were considered ringleaders; in all, one hundred and thirty men were singled out and passed away into a room specially prepared for their reception, and in which they had to remain until their trial without blankets or bedding. On the morning following the day on which they were drafted off they were ordered out one at a time and had their leg irons riveted on them, after which they were placed in a line and a long chain passed from a ring bolt in the ceiling through each of their leg irons and out over the wall and round a windlass on the outside, so that they could be hoisted up by the heels at a moment's notice should any disturbance occur. From this position they were only released about once a week, when they were ordered out by the doctor, avowedly to exercise, but actually to be still further tortured, and their sufferings made still more unbearable. For this so-called exercise they were marched down to the beach under an armed guard, still wearing the heavy leg irons with the connecting chain previously mentioned. Here they were put through a series of exercises (?) by a prisoner named Carter; these consisted of having to remove their shirts and trousers alternately, and then, beneath an almost tropical sun, with the heat radiating from the white sand with an almost unbearable intensity, they were compelled to hold their hands high above their heads until the stoutest of them groaned in agony with the exertion. Treatment unrivalled in barbarism, worthy only in its design of American Indians, who are world-famed adepts in torture; the only wonder being that they did not emulate them and satiate their blood-thirsty desires by scalping their living victims and pouring boiling water over their bleeding skulls, or flaying their bodies with knives and placing coals of living fire in the gaping wounds. Second only to this was the next course of exercise (?) given immediately after the foregoing. This consisted of being marched up and down a steep sand hill, leading to Long Ridge, and being denied the use of the pad, which was in all other cases allowed to prevent the heavy leg irons from cutting into the flesh. This so cut and lacerated their ankles that the trial of the gang could be distinctly seen by the blood which streamed from the ghastly wounds, and in many cases their limbs were so blackened and swollen that the relentless, rigid iron circle was completely hidden in the semi-putrid, festering flesh. The stench from the uncleaned dungeon in which they were confined was so horrible that it is simply miraculous how any of them lived through the ordeal to require a trial before an earthly tribunal. As soon as the despatches concerning the mutiny reached Sydney, the Governor, Sir Richard Bourke,

sent the following proclamation down, copies of which were posted in all conspicuous places to which the prisoners had access:—
 "The Governor, having viewed with feelings of abhorrence, an account of the atrocities meditated by some of the prisoners at Norfolk Island, whose intentions evidently were to murder the military and civil establishment and take the settlement, the other men are hereby warned not to allow themselves to be led away by the evil machinations of the individuals alluded to, who will not be satisfied until they have induced them to steep their hands in the blood of their fellow-creatures, as they have already done, and be thus reduced to the same terrible situation as themselves."
 (Signed) Bourke. The judge (whose name Archer was not certain of, was either Burton or Purifoy) did not arrive at Norfolk till the beginning of 1835. Immediately on landing he inspected the place fitted up as a Court House, and on the following morning the trial commenced. It was thought advisable, in the interests of all concerned, to try the prisoners in lots of ten each. The first detachment were accordingly placed in the dock and the Judge, having taken his seat on the bench, first pointed out to the prisoners the heinousness of the crime with which they stood charged, and said that although they were charged in the indictment with both mutiny and murder he would only try them on the former count, which was punishable by death, and would, he said, require any evidence against them to be substantiated by at least one free witness in each case, failing which he would order their acquittal. As the prisoners were asked to plead, some of them, in a defiant bombastic manner, pleaded guilty, adding that they preferred death a thousand times over to life in a living hell like Norfolk Island. The trial lasted several days, and as the prisoners were acquitted they were conducted back to the ordinary barracks, whilst those found guilty were sent to the room from which they were taken and the irons readjusted. At the conclusion of the trial it was found that thirty-one had been cast for death.

(To be Continued.)

Ten Years' Penal Servitude on Norfolk Island,

THE
EXPERIENCE AND REMINISCENCES
OF

WILLIAM ARCHER.

[BY JOHN F. SMALL, JUN.]

CHAPTER V.

Tried, convicted and sentenced to death.—A respite granted.—In the condemned cell.—Reprieves.—Death preferred.—Thirteen executed.—Reforming.—On the treadmill.—Strapped to the triangles.

THE earnestness and patience of the Judge was so marked that it aroused feelings in the breasts of the prisoners, which had laid dormant from childhood. As each lot were disposed of they related to their companions how frequently during the trial the tears had been seen gushing from his pitying eyes, as the witnesses, in turn, described the atrocious treatment to which they had been subjected, and which had goaded them on to mutiny. They concluded that in him they had at least found a fellow-being with a human heart in his breast, and who would be the means of making their grievances known to the civilised world, and cause the penal system to be investigated and re-adjusted, so that it might be administered without the tyranny now perpetrated with the acquiescence of relentless despots. At the conclusion of the trial the thirty-one who were found guilty were brought out, and the Judge, in a few feeling words, passed the sentence of death on them, and announced that the first seven were to be executed on the following Friday. The reader may form a slight idea of the light in which these unfortunate wretches viewed their sentence when I say that from the time they were returned to the condemned cells their emaciated faces were wreathed in joyous smiles, and they showed by every possible means that they were delighted at the prospects of a speedy release from their sufferings. Their fond anticipations were not realised as speedily as they wished, for, through the intermission of the Commandant's wife, they were granted a respite in order that a regular hangman might be sent down from Sydney to execute them. For this act of charitable intervention, the good lady was revered by every prisoner on the island, with perhaps the exception of the condemned men, who received the news sullenly and unthankfully, and wished for

the date to be shortened instead of prolonged—a feeling we might reasonably expect to emanate from the treatment they were even then subjected to—chained as they were in a darkened den, sixteen feet by fourteen, reeking with the pestiferous odour of accumulated filth, and served with niggardly rations which were barely sufficient to keep body and soul together. Even the lemons, which were usually served to the other prisoners with the rind on, had the rind removed before they got them, lest they should assist to appease their hunger. As soon as it was known that the thirty-one men were to die, and before it was decided to get the Sydney hangman down, a flogger, called Morris Marooney, who was acknowledged to be one of the most brutal men in the settlement, applied for the job of hanging them. His application was granted and he was provided with the necessary rope, and several bars of soap, to carry out his sickening contract. These ill-omened articles he secreted beneath his bed, which was adjoining Archer's, who, by chance, found them, and asked Marooney what they were for. He replied that he had turned washerwoman, and the rope was to hang the clothes on to dry; but Archer, divining his mission, communicated it to the others, and all, simultaneously, objected to him occupying the same quarters with them, the outcome of which was that he and his instruments of death were transferred to isolated quarters. Price called Archer to one side and told him that they had been respited, and the Sydney hangman had been sent for. This soon after came to Marooney's ears, and he was evidently much disappointed, and openly cursed his fate by being, as he termed it, done out of the job. The hangman arrived in due course, and the news of their immediate execution was received by the doomed men with transcendent delight; but on being told that the Governor had reprieved eighteen of their number, and ordered them to be imprisoned in irons for the term of their natural lives on Norfolk Island, they became suddenly sullen and despondent, and as the names of the thirteen who were to die were read out, those who found they were reprieved swore bitterly at the Governor for his clemency, and asked in woeful terms why this injustice had been done them, or what they had done to merit this punishment when they were only equally guilty with the favoured thirteen. On the following morning twenty-five prisoners were selected from different gangs, and were ordered out to witness the executions. They were drawn up in a line about three hundred yards from the gallows, presumably to prevent the condemned men from addressing them. A guard of soldiers was posted around the gallows, and then seven of the condemned men were pinioned and led out by warders to the place of execution. From external observation one would have concluded that they were far and away the seven happiest men in that solemn assembly. They almost ran up the steps and on to the trap of the vehicle of death, and smiled, as though congratulating each other, while the ropes were being adjusted. Next morning the remaining six were taken out with the same surroundings. All looked as happy as

but what the words were the narrator does not know, but certain it is they courted death and were launched into the presence of the Almighty with beaming faces and joyous hearts. No Minister of the Gospel was there to administer words of comfort and consolation; no kind and sorrowing friends to take their dying messages to those near and dear to them; but they needed none; they knew that if hell existed its torments would be paradise to their sufferings on earth, and they went out cheerfully to a welcome death, and met it as brave men should, without a pang of remorse, without a thought of conflicting creeds or ecclesiastical dogmas, trusting their souls to the mercy of an all-wise and ever-just God. The absence of any spiritual advisers for the men being noticed by the Judge, he recommended that two should be appointed, and the Commandant, acting on the recommendation, appointed a prisoner called Robert Taylor, who had been educated for the Church of England, to conduct services and act in all spiritual matters for the Protestants; while another was appointed for those who professed to be Roman Catholics. The latter soon went over to the Opposition and joined the ranks of Satan, doing penance at the triangles on more than one occasion. Taylor, too, though an able and eloquent speaker, was at heart a thorough reprobate; knowing which his sermons had no beneficial influence whatever with his fellow prisoners, who did not see the force of his favourite precept: "Do as I say, not as I do." He was usually listened to with marked attention by the officers and civilians. Soon after these appointments, two quakers, Messrs Backhouse and Walker, received permission from the authorities in Sydney to visit the island and report on spiritual matters in connection with it. They found everything in a hopeless, dejected state, and reported that, though the sermons preached were no doubt strictly in accordance with the laws of the Churches to which the convict parsons professed to belong, yet no benefits were at all like to accrue from their ministrations, as they were looked upon by the prisoners as despicable hypocrites, who, unlike their ordained prototypes, had not discretion enough to hide their faults. The convicts had, to a man, been driven to a state of adamantine recklessness by a continued course of uncalled for and undeserved oppression. They knew that no ultimate good could, under any circumstances, accrue from good conduct. From the time the first shipment of prisoners were landed on Norfolk, to the time of which I write, some ten years, only two prisoners had ever received any mitigation of sentence; both these men were serving life sentences. One of them had already served thirteen and the other fifteen years on Norfolk and elsewhere, and by continued good conduct during the whole of these terms the authorities had graciously (?) commuted their sentences to fourteen years each from the date of remission, providing that nothing happened during the term mentioned to vitiate their present conduct; thus one man had his life sentence reduced to twenty-nine, and the other to twenty-seven years, providing always that no relapse of good conduct occurred. Knowing this, the convicts had no inducement to reform; it was immateria

what they did, their future was still a weary void, with nothing but increasing torture with advancing age. In an establishment containing thirteen hundred prisoners, it is a certainty that men of every conceivable class were represented; some who had had criminals of the darkest dye for parents on both sides and perhaps also criminal antecedents as well, born and reared in an atmosphere of infamy and corruption, with heads and systems so shaped and constituted that it was absolutely impossible for them to develop anything but criminal propensities, if even surrounded from their infancy with every safeguard to induce morality. Nothing could reclaim or alter their natural instincts, being especially designed by nature to act as Satan's representatives on earth, always existing in the lowest strata of vice, mere human-dross, despised, debased, depreciated. Others were there who had been born in luxury, of virtuous parents, reared in Christian homes, and sent out into life with untarnished reputations and brilliant hopes. Some were there who had been convicted of crimes atrociously revolting, and from these down through, as it were, innumerable hair-breadth gradations of flagitious crimes to those who had been convicted of some trivial indiscretion which would now be only punished with a five shilling penalty; all were here under the same iron-bound rules, without sympathy and without hope—the principal antidote which keeps our hearts from bursting under the pressure of evils, that gives us a prospect of brighter days, succeeding present tribulations! All were here abandoned to despair. What wonder then that it paralysed their minds? We find it truly written that "Despair is the cap-stone of human anguish, which freezes the mental powers with indifference; ossifies the heart with melancholy, and shrouds the soul in a cloud of gloom, a state undefined and undefinable, a paralysation of all the sensibilities that render a man's life happy." Time to them could work no change, death alone could break the dreary monotony. Each succeeding day was only welcomed as being a step nearer the grave, though it invariably revealed some new instrument or method of torture; the latest addition to which was the erection of a four crank mill for grinding meal (which had been done by water power previous to the mutiny), made to be worked by thirty-two men, eight on each crank. These men had a daily task of a certain number of bushels to grind, which could only be accomplished by unceasing and long-continued exertion. The men working at this could be easily distinguished by their haggard appearance. They worked with nothing on but their trousers, yet before they had been grinding half an hour the floor on which they stood was always flooded with perspiration, which ran from them like rain. To be sent to this was considered worse than being flogged, but from this it did not exempt them, for, failing to get through the task they were often ordered from one to two hundred lashes, or when their backs were too sore to flog they were given a month's solitary confinement; nor did even this satiate the fiendish thirst for torture, which was grafted into the Commandant's innermost, gloating, ghoul-like nature, for after being released the same tasks were

again exacted, which being physically unable to perform, they were again ordered to the triangles, with the skin healed but still tender, to receive another taste of the dreaded cat. Up to the present I have shown that the convicts were treated with the grossest and most damnable tyranny which it was possible for the men in charge of them to conceive, men whose every thought appeared to be concentrated in endeavouring to make the lives of the convicts a continual and never ceasing round of misery; men who gloried in out-doing each other in untried systems of contemptible meanness, and gloried in luring the convicts into committing some petty action which could be made the ground work of an accusation; men who boasted to each other of every conviction which they succeeded in obtaining; men who would look on with a diabolical smile of satisfaction at the writhings and uncontrollable contortions of an unlucky wretch undergoing the penalty of two hundred slowly-administered lashes from the hands of four ice-berg-hearted floggers; men who could look on with a smile and see a fellow-being's back scored and bleeding, and the blackened masses of blood and flesh flying from the quivering shoulders under each stroke of the merciless cat without evincing the slightest pang of remorse; men who showed most unmistakably by their actions that they neither knew or cared whether there was a heaven above or a hell beneath them; men whose only care was to devise for each occasion some more excruciating means of torture than had previously been tried, or to patent some new theory by which the sufferings of the triangle could be made still more unbearable and agonising. It was an uncontroversial fact that the men who were tried and acquitted for the mutiny, were especially marked as fit subjects for tyrannical oppression and barbarous punishment. For the most trivial offences they were consigned to the paternal care of the floggers, and if they attempted to remonstrate or argue that the punishment they were to receive was altogether undeserved and uncalled for, the reply would invariably be: "Now then! that will do! You got off when tried for the mutiny although you were as guilty as those who were hung, and we will make things red-hot for you now, to make up for it." In fulfilling this threat the men never went up for less than one hundred lashes, and frequently got two hundred, seldom for more than what the officers were pleased to call insubordination; which being translated, simply means that they attempted to show that the charges against them were false and groundless.

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CHAPTER VI.

Increased severity.—300 lashes.—Flogged to death
—A noble resolve.

To prove that this picture is not overdrawn and that those I have painted were as black and remorseless as hell itself, I may state that at the period of which I write the authorities at Norfolk Island wrote to those in Sydney stating that they wished the number of lashes which they were at that time empowered to give increased to three hundred; their previous limit being two hundred, which, they said, was not sufficiently severe to meet the demands of justice. This philanthropic request was, of course, readily granted, and the officials at Norfolk Island longed for an opportunity to treat themselves to an exhibition by which the efficacy of the additional century could be tested; as may be easily conceived without an undue stretch of the imagination. This opportunity soon presented itself as follows: The prisoners were allowed to go where they liked during the dinner hour, providing they were back again when the bell rang to fall in. It was reported that some green tobacco (which had been planted by some shepherds) was growing in a gully about a mile out from the settlement, four of the convicts ran over as soon as they had swallowed their dinner to find it. This they did not succeed in doing as readily as they anticipated. Two of them returned and were back in the gang a few minutes after they had commenced work, but the others remained searching for it till they heard the bell ring, and knowing that they would not then be allowed to go to work they thought it as well to risk the consequences and try to find the tobacco. The report soon spread that two prisoners were absent from the gang, and Price, the police runner, was despatched to look for them. Their errand being known, he soon found them and brought them back to the settlement, where they, with the two who had returned, were lodged in gaol, and all charged with bush-ranging. On the following morning Price

gave evidence which was considered conclusive, and they were sentenced to receive three hundred lashes each the following morning. About 9 o'clock next day 200 of the convicts were marched down to the triangles and the four condemned men brought out. The first one was tied up and four powerful floggers took it in turns to give fifty lashes each. The men bore the punishment without a groan; one of them, a little delicate fellow called Allen, had a bullet in his mouth and after the flogging it was found that he had flattened it out like a shilling between his teeth. After about fifty lashes the tails of the cats became clogged with blood, and the floggers were compelled to draw them through their fingers after each stroke to clear them. The ground where the triangles were erected was composed of sand and gravel, and the cats, after passing through the flogger's fingers, were trailed back and lapped up the small stones which were buried in the victim's flesh, deeper and deeper by each stroke. One of the convict spectators, called Watt, gave vent to his pent-up feelings by calling out that the officials were cowardly dogs, and asking why they did not put a bag under the cats; this was taken no notice of, except that after it was over the doctor tried to find out who spoke, but no one would turn traitor, and he luckily escaped getting three hundred for his

humanity. After the flogging, these men, as was the custom with all the others, were led into a small room adjoining the gaol, and were there placed on their backs on a long stone flag, when a man was ordered to sit on their chests, and pressing backwards and forwards with a see-saw motion he worked all the congealed blood out of their wounds, so that the process of healing might be accelerated and the men be enabled to resume their tasks; but in the cases under notice great difficulty was experienced in healing the wounds, owing to the number of small flinty stones which were embedded in the flesh. I will give yet another instance of the atrocities committed under the civilising influence of British laws less than half a century ago; atrocities which will be handed down to posterity as a blood-stained page in the history of England; atrocities which will make every son born of British parents for centuries to come, blush with shame when recited to him; atrocities which being to our mind's events far away back in the dark ages of the world's history, when our forefathers suffered as martyrs of the inquisition, the bare perusal of which almost curdles our blood, and every blood-stained page we turn to fills us with commingled horror and indignation, and comes up revoltingly before our mind's eye "like sheeted ghosts doomed for a term to walk the night, and for the day condemned to fast in fires, till their foul deeds done in their days of nature are burnt and purged away." But to return to our narrative and continue the thread of our story I must tell you, gentle reader, that, about the time when matters looked at their worst, in fact, the time of the "darkness which might be felt" which preceded the brightening of the dawn of the humane treatment, a poor decrepit old man known amongst his fellows by the cognomen of "Sheepskin" (so named from his emaciated and withered appearance) was laying in one of the wards suffering from

a severe attack of dysentery for which he had been up to the doctor, whose name was Arnot, for treatment, and he, thinking the man was only feigning illness, gruffly ordered him away to his work. All that night, Archer, prompted by feelings of humanity, attended to the poor old fellow and attempted to alleviate his sufferings by such kindly acts and means as suggested themselves to him. Next morning he went up to the doctor and told him that old Sheepskin, who slept in the next hammock to him, was in a bad state, and asked him if nothing could be done for him. The doctor assumed a dignified attitude, and told him that he would not be dictated to as to what was his duty, and that if Archer considered he was better qualified to treat the patients he had better take his place; but calming down a little when Archer explained that he only followed the dictates of humanity in acting as he had done, he condescended to inform him that he might consider himself lucky that he did not order him into court and get him one hundred lashes for his interference, and that as sure as Sheepskin came again he would have him flogged for his impertinence. The result of the interview was communicated to Sheepskin, who seemed to lose heart, and failing rapidly he continued to get worse till on the second morning after Archer's interview he said he would be compelled to go up to see the doctor and risk the consequences, as he felt sure he was dying. He crawled up, and on presenting himself the doctor turned on him like a bull dog, and, without asking a question, ordered him to be taken to the Court House, when he followed and complained that the prisoner was attempting to take advantage of his judgment by feigning illness to shirk his task. The trial (?) resulted in his being ordered to receive fifty lashes. The following morning the old man tottered out with feeble steps to the place of punishment, was tied up, and after receiving thirty-six he was ordered down by the doctor, who had him carried to the hospital, where he died within a few hours. In the evening of this tragic event, Archer was walking up to the soldiers' offices to let Captain Best know the state of the bar, when he saw the Rev. Mr. Atkins, a Presbyterian minister who had been recently sent down, walking under his verandah, and being always in the habit of having a friendly chat when circumstances permitted, he was hailed over, and after the customary greeting he said "Well Archer! What news have you from the settlement?" "Oh! not much," he replied, "only poor old Sheepskin died in the hospital a little after they flogged him." The Minister seemed very much concerned, and asked Archer to accompany him to the hospital, where, on being admitted, they saw the body lying on a few old boards, and the sight brought the tears in continuous streams from the eyes of the kind-hearted minister. He clasped his hands together and stood as if spellbound, contemplating the ghastly sight. "Well! Well! Well!" he exclaimed, "at last." "I should think, by his appearance, that the poor old man must have been suffering for a considerable time, and it is a wonder I did not hear of it." Then, turning to the warder in attendance, he said calmly, "Turn the body over!" This was done, and a sight presented which would

have made the stoutest heart quail. There was the immediate cause of death plainly, horribly visible. The marks of the death-dealing cords were traced, in blackened lines, over the fleshless shoulders, and in his case the flogging had been given over a greater surface than was usual, no doubt owing to the swaying of the victim from weakness. The blood had run down below the waist, and was dried and peeling away in loose sickening flakes. The minister stood immovable as a statue, and continued to weep in silence. When he recovered sufficiently to speak, he exclaimed, in a voice firm yet almost smothered with emotion, "My God! My God! Do the Sydney authorities know of these things? Does the British Government sanction these outrages on human beings? If they do not know they shall know. I will demand and force an investigation into this, and, failing to receive entire satisfaction, I will leave the island and demand it in the colonies, and then place the facts before the Queen herself." Then, falling on his knees beside the corpse, he prayed long and earnestly that God might grant him strength to be made the instrument by which the prisoners of Norfolk Island might be released from their state of cruel bondage, and rising, he went directly to the Commandant and demanded an inquest on the body. It is not known whether this took place, but on the following Sunday, when preaching to the prisoners, the Minister told them that he had finally decided to leave the island by the first vessel which came, to lay the facts before the Governor in Sydney, and then go direct to England and enlighten the minds of the people as to the system of convict management under which they were serving; which, instead of reforming them and holding out hopes of better times for good conduct, was tending most unmistakably and undeniably to brutalise them and so sear their minds that all their humanity was warped and extinguished till they were goaded on to recklessness and desperation by the very men whose duty it was to endeavour to reclaim them from vice and immorality and seek their redemption by appealing to their better natures to return to their original habits of honesty and industry.

(To be Continued.)

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Ten Years' Penal Servitude on Norfolk Island,

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EXPERIENCE AND REMINISCENCES

OF
WILLIAM ARCHER.

[BY JOHN F. SMALL, JUN.]

CHAPTER VII.

Medical treatment.—A speedy cure.—Burnt to death.—Raving lunatics.—Self-inflicted torture.—Departure and death of a friend.—A gleam of hope.—A courageous act.

To say that there was not a redeeming feature in the doctor's treatment of prisoners, or that they never attempted to work up a case on him to get a few days' spell in the hospital would be an error. His treatment of poor old Sheepskin was worse than scandalous, yet, I admit, he had some curious specimens of the human race to encounter, as the sequel will show.

There were two convicts named Leonard, not related but both cripples—at least one was and the other pretended to be. The fellow who was acting was invariably seen hobbling about bent two-double, and when within hearing of anyone he was continually moaning piteously and complaining of excruciating pains in his back, which prevented his stooping to do any kind of work. This business went on very well until one morning when he attended the doctor's room worse than ever. The doctor, who had always a small fire burning in the grate, placed a flat iron on it and made it almost red hot. He then told Leonard to take off his shirt, turn round, and point to the exact spot where he felt the most pain. Of course he obeyed, groaning and whining without intermission; the doctor meanwhile had taken the iron from the fire and was standing in readiness, and directly Leonard pointed to the seat of the pain in his back he clapped the red-hot iron exactly and quickly on the spot. Leonard, who of course, never expected this treatment, directly he felt the iron gave an agonizing yell and made a bound which for height and distance cleared would have excelled the best efforts of a startled deer; and rushing from the room as quickly as his now lithsome limbs would carry him he never stopped or looked back till he reached the barracks. This was always looked upon as one of the most speedy and effective cures on the doctor's record. A few days after the other man put in an appearance; he was really ill and stooped almost to the ground with disease, the lower portion of his body being completely paralysed. He

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or his body being completely paralysed. He was ordered to strip, and the iron was made ready as in the preceding case. The man half suspected that he was to be served as the other, yet, thinking and knowing he was even worse than he said, he scarcely believed that such an inhuman act was to be perpetrated on him; however, he was sadly mistaken, for the doctor rushed the iron on, expecting to see the patient clear from his presence with a bound, perfectly cured, as in the former case. He was, however, greatly disappointed, for the man stood immovable as a mountain while the iron burnt surely and slowly into his flesh; not a muscle of his face quivered, his iron will being steadfast as adamant through the fearful ordeal. The doctor continued to bury the hot iron deeper and deeper into the seething tissues, and sickening odours of roasting flesh pervaded the atmosphere of the room, and, passing out on the calm morning air, was borne away down the flat to the barracks and private houses, whose inmates shuddered and wondered from whence it came. At last he desisted and the man laid hold of his crutches and, without speaking a syllable, dragged his dying limbs back to his quarters, where he laid a martyr to the doctor's terrible caprice for many weary weeks.

In the next case a convict called Jimmy Downs scored a win against the doctor. This man was noted for never having been seen out of irons. He was usually sent to work getting timber in the bush, and one day when wandering through the ranges he came across a plant, not unlike a potato top, with a fruit on it also resembling the potato apple, and known as the stramonium plant. Curiosity tempted him to taste one of the apples, or rather several of the seeds, for it contained little else. This almost set his tongue on fire and the pain was intense. Next morning his mouth was as dry as a lime kiln, and his tongue covered with a fur-like coating exactly similar to that of patients suffering from severe fever. The idea struck him instantly that here was a discovery worth to him more than the mines of Golconda. He decided to checkmate the doctor, and succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations. The next day he bit twenty seeds, and the following morning, after a night of misery pure and unadulterated, he turned up at the doctor's for advice, and after examination he was ordered into the hospital. The deciple of Esculapius admitted that he was not quite sure what the malady was, but thought it something that required urgent attention. Downs was knocked off work and for the present in clover. After a day or two he recovered, or rather the effects wore off, and he was ordered out again. Fully decided to prosecute his discovery further, and studying how to test the effects of swallowing some without himself risking the chance of being poisoned, he determined to administer a dose to a little dog called Prinny, belonging to one of the officers. This he had no sooner done than poor Prinny showed most unmistakable symptoms of hydrophobia and forfeited his life to the experimentalist, as his owner ordered him to be shot. This was considered satisfactory by Downs. He bit twenty seeds, and swallowed ten, and no sooner had he done so than his eyes began to start from their sockets, his mind to

wander, and in half an hour he was a raving lunatic and was taken under escort to the hospital, where he laid in a semi-conscious state for about ten days. On becoming convalescent he began to realise the value of his discovery. The thought of getting ten days' heaven-sent freedom in that land of tyranny and oppression, that land of oft commingled blood and tears was to him a fore taste of paradise itself. Not being of a selfish disposition, he confided the secret to first one and then another of his compeers, who all followed his instructions implicitly, and soon half the prisoners on the island were raving maniacs. The doctor was completely befogged. He admitted that in all his experience he had never seen a disease of this kind, and sent down for the army doctor, who was in charge of the soldiers, to come up for a consultation; the result of which was that they decided to give one of the lunatics (?) an emetic to try and discover if the disorder was not the outcome of something self-administered. This was accordingly done and a quantity of stramonium seeds were disgorged from his epigastric regions and the murder was out. Men were at once sent to cut down all the bushes to be found on the island, and sanity and sorrow soon again reigned supreme. All hands were now at their wit's end to discover another "Angel of Mercy," when someone by accident got a wound on the leg, and was recommended to put a plaster of lime and soap on it to irritate the wound and create a sore which would exempt him from work. This was kept on all night, and it can be easily imagined that with such a powerful caustic as lime the scientist suffered a martyrdom; when the plaster was removed the wound looked as though mortification had already commenced the issue of his death warrant. The doctor was interviewed with woeful lamentations, and ordered first one remedy and then another without success. Poultices were tried, but the sore still kept sloughing and eating away like a ravenous cancer. Immediately it began to heal a poultice of the "patent liberator" was again applied, and the worst symptoms again predominated. This was now found to be almost as great a success as the stramonium. The hospital was full to the doors within a fortnight, and the doctor powerless. The secret was kept with masonic-like reticence for many months, till a Judas turned up and gave a hint of the origin of the innumerable, mysterious, leprous-like spots. The next day all the afflicted (?) who showed up had their sores dressed with pure bluestone, which almost drove them mad, and the new cure being worse than the disease the doctor's services were no longer required. It would be only natural to conclude that with such scant recourse no other remedy would be found available; but by some means it was discovered that the gum from a tree, found growing on the bank of a small rivulet, if rubbed into the eyes caused them to swell and fester until total blindness ensued. This was another mystery, and the means employed, or the cause of the disorder, was for some considerable time unintelligible and unrevealed; but it leaked out through getting into too many hands, and all the trees were soon exterminated by the authorities. I think I have given sufficient instances of

self-inflicted torture to prove that the convicts must have been driven to the dismal verge of insanity when they would inflict such excruciating, racking pains on themselves to get a few days' respite from the demoniacal tortures to which they were perpetually condemned with unrelenting vigor.

About the end of the year 1836 the Rev. Mr. Atkins left the island for the purpose of fulfilling the pledge made the Sunday following the death of Sheepskin, and having implicit faith in his ability to serve them, the prisoners hoped that tardy justice was at length to be meted out to them, and that the God of Mercy would yet look down upon them and lighten their earthly burdens. This ray of hope was kept flickering by an investigation held some time after touching the death of Sheepskin, which it was rightly concluded would have been hushed up with the other iniquities of the earthly pandemonium but for the complaints laid in Sydney by the man whom they now looked upon as their saviour, and to whom the only prayers ever offered up by them were addressed. Soon after the enquiry the doctor was discharged and the vigorous discipline and heavy tasks hitherto enforced were somewhat relaxed. It was rumoured that their reverend friend did not get sufficient satisfaction to please him in Sydney, and in fulfilment of his word he sailed for England and, unfortunately for them, died on the voyage. But true to his promise, when he found his health falling, he wrote his experiences of despotism and graphic details of the prison routine, and confided them to a friend on board to deliver personally to the Minister for Justice in England; also giving him instructions verbally to instruct leading men of his acquaintance to force an investigation. If these representations bore fruit it was very slow in ripening, for it was not till the early part of 1838 that hope was again awakened by the arrival of a member of the Royal Engineers, named Langard, whose mission was to report on the advisability of building a breakwater for the purpose of facilitating the landing and embarkation of goods and passengers. An incident which occurred in landing the engineer showed that something was required to facilitate transhipment. When crossing the bar a tremendous wave broke over the boat and swept everything portable into the sea, including Mr. Langard's hat and sword. These Archer recovered by jumping overboard and diving to the bottom, where they could be seen distinctly through the crystal-like water. This feat gained him more indulgences than if he had saved the lives of half the boat's crew.

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CHAPTER IX.

Rescued.—A shooting party.—A quarrel.—Parted in wrath, to meet no more.—At the mercy of the waves.—Heroic conduct.—The value of human life.

By a considerable amount of writhing and twisting one of the captives managed to get loose and untied the others; when three fires were lighted as the signal that they were in distress; which soon brought a boat off from the settlement to their rescue. After this it was some time before the Commandant would allow the boat to go over to the island; but one day Captain Best, who was down with his regiment, told Archer he wanted to go over to the island, and asked him how the bar was. He replied that he thought it was too rough to go out with safety and advised Best to wait till next day. This was agreed to, and the following morning Captain Best, Mr Grimes, Mr McLean, superintendent of agriculture, Mr Turner, assistant commissary general, Lieutenant Stapleton and another young officer started across. This was on Wednesday, and after landing the boat was ordered back, with instructions to return on the Saturday with rations for the officers. Saturday came and the sea was rolling in mountains high. A conference was held as to the advisability of taking the boat across, and as they thought the officers might be without provisions they decided to risk it. The whaleboat called the Victoria was chosen as the best sea boat on the island, and with a picked crew they started for the bar, which they crossed with considerable difficulty, and got safely over to the island. On landing they were met by Captain Best, Mr Grimes and Mr McLean. The former said to Archer, "Get into the boat and let us go in." He was evidently in a very bad temper, and it was explained by one of them that they had shot Lieutenant Stapleton's little dog thinking it was a rabbit, and a quarrel occurred, the result being that the other four would not go back in the same boat with them. Archer said to Captain Best, "We had better stay here and go fishing the sea

is rising very fast and is already breaking over the Wolf Rock." (This I may say was always the sign that the bar was not crossable.) Captain Best replied gruffly, "We'll go in at once! Damn the fish." "Well," said Archer, "No boat in the world can live in such a sea, but I suppose we must go, yet I know as sure as I live that we shall never all land alive."

His advice was unheeded and they started in. The wind had now risen to a perfect hurricane, and a nasty cross-sea, caused by the ground swell and the heavy tide running in, was beginning to break around them in huge mountains of seething foam. As they cleared the reef, some three hundred yards from the shore, Archer took off his boots and advised all to prepare for the worst. It was now self-evident that no boat could live in such a frightful surf. Not a word was spoken, and with clenched teeth and bated breath they neared the reef—it was a moment of painful suspense. In an instant more they were on the bar and encountered the full force of the drawback, which, despite the almost superhuman efforts of the gallant crew, held the boat as though she were rivetted in the clutch of some mighty octopus of the deep. When the next sea came thundering in upon them with relentless, towering fury, it turned the boat completely over, landing her stern in the position an instant before occupied by her bows. All were now struggling for life amidst floating boards, oars, buckets and stretchers. Archer took in the situation at once, having been capsized times without number, but never in such a sea as was then raging. McLean was near him, and said, "For God's sake Archer, save me! and I will give you all I have in the world." Archer was turning towards him, but seeing him grasp an oar he struck out to get hold of Captain Best, who was struggling to keep above water, and being literally dragged under by a very heavy overcoat he was wearing. Archer, with a heart as brave as ever beat in a human breast, seized him by the arm and said to him, "Now Captain, keep your courage up, and when we meet a wave, dive, and swim as far as you can under water." This he took no notice of, and appeared to make up his mind to die; he never attempted to swim and would not even hold his head above water. For the first few minutes he tried persistently to get hold of Archer, who had to let him go several times to get clear of him.

By this time the beach was lined by some 400 eager spectators anxiously watching the men struggling for life without being able to render the slightest assistance. Nearly three hundred yards of raging surf was between Archer and the shore, one instant he was rushed in with lightning-like rapidity for fully fifty yards, and then swept back (still clinging to his almost lifeless burden) by the rush of the receding water. Not one in ten thousand would or could have battled against almost certain death as our hero did. The man he clung to weighed fully 16 stone, and he found that after being fully half an hour struggling, as often beneath as above the waves, he was not half way to the shore, but still his lion heart gave him hope and he struggled frantically to keep his hold of the now lifeless body and get it to shore for burial. Just about an hour

from the time the boat capsized Archer reached a coral rock and clung to it till a boat came out and picked them up. It was then seen that Captain Best was quite dead (though as a forlorn hope efforts were made for a couple of hours to restore animation), and Archer was found to be gashed by the coral as though he had been flayed with a knife. His reception on landing can be more easily imagined than described. Sullen sin-hardened criminals wept like children while ringing cheers were wafted to the etherial realms in honor of the man who had proved himself worthy as any man, living or dead, of being decorated by his Queen with the Victoria Cross. In their anxiety to restore animation in Captain Best, who was a general favourite, little attention was paid to Archer, who was in a very critical state, until the doctors relaxed their efforts, when Archer was found to have swallowed large quantities of sea water, from which he was suffering intense pain. An emetic was administered which soon relieved him, his wounds were then dressed and he soon appeared little the worse for his superhuman struggles.

Lieutenant Grimes and five out of the seven men who formed the boat's crew, had providentially reached the shore, but M'Lean the much-hated and despised superintendent of agriculture, was still seen clinging to the oar, at one moment disappearing in the trough of a sea as though engulfed in a mighty maelstrom, and the next moment borne aloft on the crest of a towering wave, helpless as an infant amidst the seething turbulent tons of snow-crested fury. Numbers of the men waded out into a dangerous position on a flat rock under the reef to leeward of M'Lean, as it was imagined he was drifting towards it. From this they were continually washed and dashed on to the cruel coral, the branches of which cut as keenly as a Saracen's sword. Finding they could do no good they were forbidden to go out again, and a meeting of the officers held, to which Archer was invited, and being coxswain of the pilot boat he was questioned as to the best means of rescuing M'Lean, who was now drifting towards the dreaded Blowhole, into a surf that no boat could possibly live in. Archer replied that if they gave him the whaleboat known as the "Blue Groper," with those of his crew who had saved themselves, and allow him to pick two more to take the places of those who were drowned, he would make an attempt to save him if it cost him his life. Being asked how he proposed to act, he explained that he would take a light line about one hundred yards in length and go out as near as it was possible to get with the boat, then fasten one end round his waist and swim to the drowning man, and if he succeeded in reaching him those in the boat could haul them alongside and pull them aboard. After consideration, they admitted that this was the most feasible plan, but at the same time, considering the terrible sea which was running, they declined to allow the attempt to be made, holding that it was better that M'Lean should perish than that Archer and his seven brave compeers should be sent out to meet almost certain death. For at least an hour after this M'Lean could be distinctly seen on the oar amidst the raging foam, when he was sud-

denly seen to relax his hold, apparently from sheer exhaustion, and sink to rise no more. Very little sympathy was expressed at his tragic fate, as he was a severe merciless task-master in the early days, and had been the means of having more men flogged than any man on the island excepting Price. His body was washed up on to the rocks two days afterwards when it was found by Archer, and interred the following day.

It was not until the third day after the accident that the sea had gone down enough for the boat to cross over the bar to bring over the four officers who had been left on Phillip Island. As the Victoria had been smashed to atoms and the crew had lost all their clothes, they were provided with another boat and new suits. Knowing that the officers would notice something wrong, and that if they were told what had happened it would intimidate them crossing the bar, the Commandant cautioned the crew against saying a word about the casualty, and threatened that if they did he would have every man flogged when they returned. The conjecture proved correct, for no sooner had they got within speaking distance than they wished to know the result of the last trip, to which they received evasive replies. The return trip was made without difficulty till the bar was reached, when it was discovered that the "stand off" signal was flying. A consultation was held as to whether they should risk crossing or obey the signal, when it was decided to make an effort to cross in, although the sea was very high. The decision once arrived at, no time was lost in facing the boat for the bar, which they succeeded in crossing safely and were soon on the beach in high spirits over their return after enforced exile. Their spirits soon took a retrograde turn on learning the fate of their comrades, and the slight disagreement they had when parting tended to make matters infinitely worse. Archer's heroic acts were now household topics with bond and free on the island. On such a dangerous bar accidents were occurring almost daily with the boats, and members of the convict crew were repeatedly saved from watery graves by their lion-hearted coxswain, but these meritorious actions were always passed over unrecorded and almost unthought of, as the life of a prisoner was considered as of far less value than that of a favourite dog, and whenever one was drowned his seat was immediately filled from the overcrowded ranks on shore. In fact the boat's crew were looked upon as those most likely to have the means of distinguishing themselves afforded them, and those who filled the dangerous posts were invariably looked upon with envious eyes.

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CHAPTER X.

ANOTHER chance soon presented itself for Archer to add more laurels to his reputation. A ship came in with a batch of convicts, and the Hon. Mr Pery (who was secretary to the Commandant) went out in the pilot boat to board her for despatches. This was safely accomplished, but the sea, which had been rising very fast, was now a seething mass of foam miles out from the beach, with the wind blowing a perfect hurricane from the east. All the way in the boat shipped sea after sea, and it was only by incessant bailing that she was kept afloat. It was known to the initiated that a capsizing on the bar was almost inevitable, and everyone prepared to do their utmost to avert the catastrophe, but mentally deciding to save himself if it occurred. When almost on the bar a towering wave curled over with a deafening roar, and breaking on board, swamped the boat in one act. It was now a case of life or death to all the occupants; all but Archer struck out for the shore, and he, with a superhuman anxiety to save life, swam round the boat to see that all were safe, when he found Mr Pery, who was encumbered by heavy clothes, struggling to keep afloat. He swam up to him, took him by the shoulder, and making for the boat pulled him on to the keel, to which both men held on, but a moment after a huge wave came in which shot the boat forward with lightning-like rapidity into a yawning gulph of water, where she rolled over and over like a log. Archer got hold again and found that Mr Pery had disappeared. He immediately dived under her and found him clinging in an exhausted state to one of the thwart. Getting him out and once more to the surface he decided to try for the shore. The man was now almost drowned and would not even attempt to keep

his head above water, but despite this overwhelming handicap, Archer struggled manfully on, and in the course of half an hour he succeeded in hauling the now almost lifeless body close in under the side of the reef, when lines were thrown from the shore, and by this means both men were rescued from what appeared to those on shore to be almost certain death. On the usual remedies being applied, Mr Pery gradually regained consciousness, and his first act was to fall on his knees before Archer, and after thanking him with clasped hands for saving his life, he called heaven to witness that nothing on this earth should take precedence of his efforts to procure a free pardon for the man to whom he undoubtedly owed his existence. As night came on the wind increased so rapidly that the Norval had to stand out to sea for safety. Next morning she bore in again, and the boats were ordered out to land the passengers, amongst whom was the late Mr. William Robertson, of Dovedale, one of the pioneers of the Clarence River, and a Miss Lambie, who were both placed with their luggage in the boat commanded by Archer, and, with a "God speed you" from those on board, she shied clear and headed in for the bar.

Mr. Robertson was in brilliant form, as his mission to Norfolk Island was to marry a young lady who resided there, and whom his fancy pictured as gazing on him in transports of delight through a spy-glass from her drawing-room window. As he neared the bar his spirits sank below zero when he heard of the dangers which had to be encountered and of the lives which had been lost amidst the seething surf, which could now be plainly seen alternately tossing, rising, and receding over the treacherous coral reef with a bellowing, dismal roar, like the sound of an active volcano. As soon as the boat reached the first line of breakers the crew knew that she could not possibly live through them; and almost before they had time to consider their situation a sea broke on board and turned the boat over and over like a floating spar. All the crew but Archer now made for shore to meet the rescue boat, which was seen coming out to meet them; he alone remained to assist the drowning passengers. On looking round he saw the sinking form of Mr. Robertson, and immediately dived, brought him to the surface, and held him above water until the boat came up and took them on board. On getting into the boat Archer's attention was directed to a floating parcel which was supposed to contain despatches, and while reaching over to secure it he noticed something on the bottom which he thought was the body of a man, and without a moment's consideration he was overboard and descending like a meteor to the rescue. In a moment he was on the surface with what appeared to be the lifeless body of Miss Lambie, who, in the commotion, had not been missed. They were both pulled on board and the usual steps taken to restore animation to the apparently lifeless body. Meantime the boat was headed for the shore, and it was fully a quarter of an hour before any signs of returning life were shown, and was several days before she thoroughly recovered.

(To be Continued.)

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Ten Years' Penal Servitude on Norfolk Island,

THE
EXPERIENCE AND REMINISCENCES
OF
WILLIAM ARCHER.

[BY JOHN F. SMALL, JUN.]

CHAPTER XI.

ABOUT a fortnight afterwards Archer was sent on a message to the residence of the Rev. Mr. Sharp, where Miss Lambie was living, and as soon as she heard his voice she called to him to come into the room, as she was not yet able to get about, and, graciously asking him to take a seat, she thanked him most sincerely for having saved her life, saying "My dear Mr. Archer, to you I owe my life, to your bravery alone I owe my existence. I regret for your sake that I am poor, so poor, indeed, that I cannot offer you a substantial reward as a memento of your marvellous bravery in saving life, but you may take my word that should it please God to spare us to reach Sydney, Mr. Robertson, my sister and myself will implore the Governor on our bended knees to grant you a free pardon, for you are far too good and brave to be kept in bondage here."

During the stay of this lady and Mr. Robertson on the island they sought by every means in their power to show their gratitude to Archer for saving their lives, by extending to him as much kindness and consideration as the strict discipline of the island would allow, and they renewed their promises again and again of doing all they could to secure his liberty. This, together with the fact that the Hon. Mr. Pery had also promised to do his best for him for having saved his life, and said that he would, after obtaining his liberty, make him his aide-de-camp and place him beyond the possibility of want, aroused new hopes in the breast of Archer. His hardships now were more imaginary than real, as a bright beacon of hope shone daily away out in the west on the breast of the heaving Pacific, but it can be easily understood that a man whose sympathetic heart had repeatedly prompted him to risk his life, with more than reckless bravery, to save that of others, must naturally feel the dreadful sufferings of his fellow-prisoners very keenly.

The Robertsons remained on the island some four or five months, and then embarked for Sydney. They renewed their promises before they left and told Archer they were sure of obtaining his liberty. About a month after their departure Archer was very much

delighted one morning on receiving the welcome news that he had the dual appointment of nurse to Mrs. Pery's baby, and orderly to Mr. Pery. Soon after his appointment a picnic was arranged to Mt. Pitt, which is the highest point on the island, and the first land visible from ships coming in. To this Archer's duty took him, and his first responsibility commenced by having charge of the baby during the absence of Mrs. Pery when climbing the pinnacle. He was proud indeed of the honour, and no mother ever pampered and fondled an offspring with more tender hearted kindness than did this convict nurse. For several months he continued to receive many little marks of gratitude and consideration from his patrons, and they were evidently jealous lest any one should be found doing more for him than they.

He looked forward anxiously to every ship's arrival for news of a pardon and was as often disappointed by not receiving it. At last a ship came down and when the mail was opened Archer was summoned before the Governor, who extended his hand with a courteous bow and said that it was his very pleasant duty to acquaint him with the fact that the authorities in Sydney had sent him down a free pardon for his numerous acts of bravery in saving life on the perilous coast of Norfolk Island, and general good conduct throughout his term of exile.

The Governor then asked Archer if he would nominate a good man from the boat's crew to take charge of the launch which was used in discharging cargo from the ships. This he did, and his nominee proved a skillful, reliable man, and performed his duties without hitch or complaint for a little over twelve months—this being to the arrival of the Governor Phillip in 1843, and the launch crew, consisting of eight men and a coxswain, were sent off to her to discharge cargo as she laid to off the Cascade. Towards night the breeze freshened up, and taking the launch in tow she stood off the land with the intention of laying to till daylight. The launch crew, together with the two soldiers in charge of them, were taken on board, and not dreaming of any treachery on the part of the crew the soldiers and ship's officers went down to tea, when the convicts immediately rushed to the companion armed with capstan bars and other available means of defence, and called upon those below to surrender and deliver up their weapons, failing which, they threatened, with blood-curdling oaths, to scald them with boiling water from the coppers, which were filled and all in readiness in the galley to carry out their diabolical threats should the order to surrender not be complied with. One of the convicts named Joss Moss had taken the wheel, and not knowing anything of the management of a ship soon had her what seamen call "in irons," that is, that her sails were working so against each other that she carried no headway. Captain Boyle at this stage got his rifle levelled at Moss through the skylight, and taking deadly aim fired and sent the ball crashing through the unfortunate man's skull. He dropped dead behind the wheel, which so startled his comrades that they all rushed towards him, and those below taking immediate advantage of the panic rushed on deck and covered the men with their guns. Those, finding the cause hopeless, surrendered at once, but during the confusion one of them seized a soldier in his

arms and jumped overboard into the sea with him. The soldier was drowned but the convict swam back to the launch and was picked up. They were all tried and sentenced to death, and executed in Archer's presence in Sydney some time afterwards, and one of them just before the drop fell kicked his boots off and said he did this to make a liar of his mother, who always told him he would some day be hanged with his boots on.

It is only necessary to say in conclusion that Archer turned up in Sydney on board the Governor Phillip a free and honoured man, and was at once offered a responsible situation with Dr. Gregory, Vicar-General of Sydney, and was placed in charge of the workmen who were engaged in building the Cloister of St. Mary's Cathedral. After he had been nearly two years in this service, Dr. Gregory received a letter from the Hon. Mr. Pery stating that his father had died and that he was heir to the estates and would succeed to the title of Earl of Limerick, and wished him to convey the news to Archer and ask him to hold himself in readiness to accompany him to England, when he would make such provision for him as would insure him against want for the rest of his life. By the next ship Pery arrived from Norfolk and at once renewed his promises and took Archer under his patronage. All matters were now arranged in connection with the trip, and Archer was sent to Balmain to pack up the things required on the voyage. When he got back to Sydney next morning he met the hon. gentlemen at the General Post Office, when he frankly told him that monetary matters prevented his taking him with him, and that he would probably also have to leave Mrs. Pery (who was then in delicate health) to follow as soon as he got funds from the estate. Then, in the presence of Mr Raymond, the Postmaster-General, he gave a formal promise that he would convey to Archer a property called Newtown Pery, in the county of Limerick, as soon as he had the estates transferred to him. This promise Pery never fulfilled nor did he ever write an explanation.

Finding his hopes in this quarter blighted, Archer accepted an offer made by Mr Robertson, whose life the reader will remember he saved at Norfolk, to come up to his station on the Clarence River. This he accepted, and remained in his employ a number of years, when thinking to strike out on his own account, he purchassd some land in the town of Grafton, where he soon identified himself with every movement for the advancement of the district; and when the town was incorporated he was elected as an alderman, and finally became mayor, which honourable position he filled with credit to himself and to those who showed their confidence in his integrity by electing him. Archer is still alive, and resides with his son in Grafton.

(Finis.)