

with his left hand, and then almost simultaneously with his right presented the Colts' revolver within a few inches of his chest.

I shall ever remember the first acquaintance I made with a murderer: he was in a cell in the gaol. A colonial gaol is rough accommodation: that at Fort Yale was a log hut, with cells partitioned off from a common centre chamber by boards, which had shrunk with the heat, and so left gaps, which were the only apertures for light or air to the prisoners. The constable threw open the cell door,—it was dusk of evening,—and there on a blanket lay Dr. Pfifer's murderer. I crawled into the gloom, and he crawled forward to meet me, growling at being molested, very much like the wild beast he looked when I spoke to him. For a time he was sullen, and my frequent visits only gradually told upon him; but, after a time, strange to say, the man in the whole place with whom I was most one, and for whom I felt most brotherly love, was that same murderer. He responded to a faithful outspoken Gospel, and God's Word found out his conscience, if not his heart. Every day I was with him. I see him now, as the gaoler unbarred his cell, coming out, a large-built man, with his blue eyes beaming with welcome; he had no shoes on, only blue woollen socks, a blue-striped shirt, no coat or waistcoat, and a way of his own of shuffling out, holding his leg-irons in his hands. He took up his place always on a rude form, leaning his right arm on a rolled-up mattress, and I on a three-legged stool opposite. With meekness he received the engrafted Word, and said little; his receptive manner speaking more than words. He was tried, and of course found guilty, and sentenced to die; and McHagan to seven years' penal servitude. I wrote to Governor Douglas, detailing the case, and showing how helpless a victim Wall was in the hands of a villain infinitely worse than himself, and begging for a commutation of the sentence to anything short of death. The steamer, which ought to have arrived early in the morning of the day preceding that fixed for the execution, was delayed by the rapid water; and all day long our dreadful anxiety was unrewarded. As I was leaving the gaol for the last time that night, I passed the American carpenter, a good-hearted man, who had erected the gallows, and was then fitting a lid to the coffin. He said to me (on my saying, "So you are making the poor man's coffin"), "Waal, now, Mr. Crickmer, I tell you, I'm not comfortable about