

risen to a pitch beyond his power to allay, and must have ended in his destruction.

If ever there was a time when I would have run the risk of escaping, even to undergo all and more than I had previously done, it was during my sorrowful sojourn in this dreadful spot. We had no opportunity of conversing together, but there was a language in the eye that told each other's self-communings—a language not to be misunderstood by those who bear an accumulated weight of sorrow and trouble: it, too, was the language of truth, for it came glancing forth pure from the heart, and as we met each other's gaze, the sentiment expressed by all was, "I wish for liberty."

At length the day opened upon us which laid the foundation of this wish being granted. Orders had arrived that the prisoners were all to be removed, and Macquarie Harbour evacuated. On the 12th of January 1834, we received orders to prepare for leaving—nine years, within two months, of what I may call my captivity, for captive I had been latterly. What were the feelings of myself and miserable companions, at this unexpected intelligence, can scarcely be described; but this much I may state, we cared not whither we were taken, as we knew our condition could not be altered for the worse. Still there was a feeling within, of brighter days—a hope that we might escape. This hope became so strong, that those whose hearts had for long been strangers to every thing else but sorrow, now possessed a spark of pleasure. Countenances long formed to speak despair, were now lighted up with a glimpse of animation and liveliness. To a universal feeling of this kind which seemed to enter and pervade all the prisoners, am I indebted for the liberty I now enjoy. But I must return to the manner in which we effected our perilous escape.

The day previous to our embarkation was employed in collecting together all the government stores, carrying them on board a small brig intended to convey us we knew not where. In the discharge of this duty, we had no guard placed over us, the soldiers being stationed at convenient distances between the shore and the works to see that every thing was done in order. At first we only glanced at one another, as opportunity offered, then we whispered, and at last a leading spirit or two might be seen, screened by some intervening object, engaged in close conversation.—The nature of these conversations was only known at the time to the parties themselves, but the rest saw sufficient to convince them there was something of importance going forward, and that the subject of our whisperings was likely to become an affair that all would be necessarily engaged in.

In this state matters continued till the darkness and the voices of our guards called us from labour, to experience a night of extreme suspense—at least if I may be allowed to judge of the feelings of those who were my companions from the state of my own mind. Dark and gloomy as the scene around had been, there was a gleam of sunshine, as it were, before me afar off. I hoped the master spirits of the convict colony might be able, if assisted by the others, and opportunity of-

fering, to work out our release, and that soon I would be able to place my foot on some other shore in liberty, without the fear of being hunted down, and that by honest endeavours I might yet live to enjoy a freedom long unknown to me, in being allowed to follow the dictates of my own conscience in earning a subsistence by whatever means was in my power. Such thoughts as these were busy with my brain during the whole of that night, and although narrowly watched and strongly guarded, I yet hoped that some fortunate circumstance would occur to bring our tyrannical rulers to a sense of the cruelty we had experienced, and also enable us to bid them farewell.

On the following morning we were aroused to a renewal of our labours, and by mid-day all was ready for our going on board. Previous to this order we were all marshalled in the same style as we had been the morning I left Hobart Town. Every one being found at his post, we proceeded on board the vessel with our hard task-master, the pilot, as captain. Towards night we made the Heads at the entrance to the harbour, but the surf was so heavy, beating violently over the bar, that he did not venture to cross it. Orders were consequently given for making all snug for the night. In order to accomplish this, the prisoners were left pretty much at liberty, as they had to assist in working the vessel. To secure her from being driven from her anchor, the brig had to be moored head and stern on, as the current was at the time running at the rate of seven knots an hour. When this was accomplished, all hands, with the exception of a guard and the anchor watch, retired to rest, in order either to dream of present misery or coming freedom.

On the following morning at five o'clock, all hands were called up. The surf still continued beating over the bar as violently as ever. There was therefore little hope of our proceeding immediately to sea. From the hurried manner we had been ordered from the colony, our small portion of clothes, or rather rags, which only half covered us, were in a very filthy state. The captain thought the time the vessel lay at anchor could not be better employed than in sending us ashore to wash our rags. A boat was therefore ordered off with a party of prisoners to perform this necessary piece of work. Fortunately, I was of the number, and no sooner were we landed and left to ourselves, than the means of our escape became the subject of conversation. One of the leaders in the conversation of the previous day opened the subject by observing, that it was shameful for so many men to suffer, as we had been compelled to do, by the orders of one man.

"You mean that monster, the pilot, I suppose," said another. "It is not only shameful, but degrading even to us; and I, for one, say, if there is a means to get rid of him and the red-coats, why, let me understand it, and my hand will not be backward in doing its share of the work."

"Here's another," eagerly cried the whole of the party at once.

"Easy, brothers," said I. "There is no one present would be more willing to join in such a scheme, were