

wresting his gun from him. He then flew towards me, throwing his arms around my body. I at last got my right arm loose. I drew my pistol from my bosom, but, while endeavouring to discharge it, I was stunned by a blow from behind with the butt-end of his companion's gun. I staggered backwards; the blood began to flow from my head; but, retaining some little recollection of what I had been about to do, I fired the pistol at random, and again fell to the earth in a state of insensibility.

When consciousness again returned, I found that my hands had been firmly secured. My head was severely cut by the blow, and pained me exceedingly. The pain of the wound, however, was nothing to the anguish that burned within me. All hope of freedom was now gone. If not guilty at first, I had rendered myself amenable to the laws of the colony for having attempted my escape. I felt confident that if my life was spared for this, yet for having fired the guns at the soldiers who pursued me, I could expect nothing short of the sentence of death being passed upon me, and it required a stronger and higher influence than many convicts possessed to keep the law from taking its full course, or moving the governor to commute the sentence to banishment for life to the worst settlement under his jurisdiction. These thoughts, it may naturally be supposed, affected me, and rendered me altogether careless of my future fate. The first signs I exhibited of recovery were taken advantage of by the bush constables to urge me to try and walk, assuring me that there was a house at a short distance where I would be allowed to rest and have my wound dressed. To this I made no reply farther than looking them in the face. Knowing that if I did not endeavour to try my strength ulterior measures would be used to force me, I got up, with their assistance, and made the best of my way with them to the house spoken of.

When we reached the house, it was dark. I was immediately ushered into the presence of the master. The farmer—for such he was—looked at me earnestly for some minutes, and then inquired if I had not been in the service of Captain W. I returned his gaze, in order to ascertain, if I could, who the querist was, but I could not call to mind ever having seen him before. Being too weak from the loss of blood to speak, I merely answered him by a nod of assent. The blood still continued at intervals to trickle from the wound; and the farmer, seeing my distressed state and ghastly appearance, gave orders that I should be immediately put to bed, and the wound washed and dressed. This being accomplished, I was then left to my own reflections. I lay a considerable time in a very distracted state, occasioned both from pain and a knowledge of my forlorn and hopeless condition. I tried to close my eyes in sleep, but the attempt was unavailing; nor can I at all describe the agony of my feelings throughout the long, long hours of that sad night. I endeavoured to think of home, and those who mourned my absence, and in imagination I summoned up the spirit of my dear mother weeping the degradation and loss of a loved but unworthy child. Then again would my

thoughts wander in search for the future; my trial, condemnation, and fearful end flitted before me, till the scene became too awful to contemplate, and I was only relieved by a flood of tears. At length the day began to dawn; and ere the sun had advanced an hour on its journey, I was visited by the humane farmer. After kindly asking how I felt, and evincing a degree of interest in my helpless position, he put several questions to me concerning what had induced me to run off. I told him as fully as my weakness would permit the whole of my history, and of my innocence of the crime I had been sentenced to the chain-gang to expiate. He looked hard in my face when I finished, and replied that, from the character he had received of me from my deceased benefactor, Captain W., he believed I told the truth. He also expressed his determination to assist me as far as he could. It was only now I was made aware of the fact, that in discharging the pistol I had wounded one of my captors in the side, but fortunately not dangerously. He told me he had made the man promise not to mention this circumstance on my trial; he also added, that whatever influence he could command would be exerted to save me from dying on a scaffold. I could only thank him for his kindness, when he retired, and I was once more left for a little to my own reflections.

For three days my wound would not permit of my being removed. I did not regret this, as I was shown every attention by the kind-hearted farmer. Knowing, too, that as soon as I reached Hobart Town, the walls of a prison, and the harsh discipline exercised within their precincts, would be a sad contrast to the comfortable house and warm bed I now occupied, I wished to remain as long as circumstances would permit. It was impossible, however, to allow me to abide longer at the farm-house than secured me from the danger of being attacked by fever, with which, for the first two days, I was threatened. As soon as the constables became aware that all fear on this head had disappeared, they announced their intention of removing me on the fourth morning. This communication, although I had been expecting it earlier, came like a shock upon me. Surrounded as I had been with danger while ranging the mountains, still I was at liberty, and although I had, since my capture, been under their guardianship, yet I had been treated with every kindness. All this was now to come to an end, and the clear sky and the forest were now to be abandoned for the felon's cell. It is not natural for man to contemplate such a change unmoved and unaffected, nor had the Great Creator made me an exception in this particular. My first burst of grief over, I became somewhat reconciled, and saw their preparations to depart going on, with a sort of stoical indifference.

On the evening before my departure to town, I was informed that four dogs had arrived at the house, nor could they be prevailed upon to depart, although every effort had been made to drive them away. The farmer hearing of the circumstance, came to me and inquired if I had not been followed by dogs. I then related to him the whole story of how I fell in with them, and