

"It would just have been as well for *him*," rejoined the other, casting a glance at me, "if he had gone back with the soldiers. I am afraid his neck will feel queer soon. Firing upon soldiers is generally paid with a dance to the tune of a muffled drum."

At this remark I inwardly shuddered, but being anxious to ascertain who the speaker was, I raised my eyes a second time for that purpose, when I discovered him to be the constable in whose hut I had passed the night previous to my encounter with the soldiers.

"He's a daring devil," muttered my tormentor, as he was about to proceed down the river, "so you had better keep an eye after him."

"Leave Gallows alone for that," returned my captor, meaning his other companion, the term implying that he had at one time escaped a death by the hands of the public executioner.

Gallows, who did not seem to relish the title, replied, with more feeling and warmth than I thought he possessed, "Why, Jack, you might have spared your breath there. It is not because you did not deserve it that you escaped a *leap*. Besides, you ought to have remembered the promise you made the farmer, not to hurt the prisoner's feelings with jokes of that nature. I have my suspicions, besides, that you could throw some light on the very robbery that this poor fellow was condemned to the chain gang for."

I eagerly waited the reply to this remark, as I imagined life or death rested on the discovery of the really guilty party. I was disappointed, however, as the other merely remarked, in a sort of half-offended tone—

"Why, what are your suspicions worth? I told you before that I knew nothing about it, and I tell you so again. You had better, therefore, mind number one, and not keep poking your fingers into other people's pies, when you know you are not thanked for it. As for hurting that poor fellow's feelings, I did no such thing. It was old Growler, and I am not going to stand out as his bully. Say what you like of him, but don't blame me."

The conversation here closed, and I again relapsed into a moody state, and only became aroused when the boat was within a few yards of our landing-place. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when we landed, and my wound being still of a frightful nature, I was placed under a guard and conducted to the hospital, and put under the care of the surgeon. The hospital being strictly guarded, there was no hope of a second escape; and even if I had seen an opportunity of doing so, with no prospect of reaching some place where I would have been free from pursuit, I do not think I would have attempted it, aware, as I now was, of the dangers by which a runaway is surrounded. I had been in hospital for about a week, my wound rapidly healing, when the keeper entered the room I was confined in, accompanied by my kind-hearted friend the farmer. After being satisfied that I was recovering, he told me he had come to town in order, if possible, to serve me. He had seen Captain W.'s daughter, who evinced much sorrow at my unhappy condition; and to show that her feelings were sincere, she had

accompanied the farmer to the house of one of the gentlemen who belonged to the party engaged with the natives. The farmer received their assurances that whatever could be done to assist me would be done. As soon, therefore, as he parted with them, he had obtained permission to visit me in the hospital. Before he left, he expressed his hope that I would, at all events, escape an ignominious death.

After the farmer took his departure, I was thrown into a new train of ideas. What even if my life were spared? my ultimate destination, from all the accounts I had heard of it, was such a horrid place that I could almost have wished rather to die at once than eke out a miserable existence, half-fed and almost naked, at Macquarie Harbour—subject to the most fierce cruelty that possibly could be exercised to a fellow being. Where, but in the grave, were my sufferings to end! Happy had it been for me, I thought, if my narrow bed had been made in that lonely spot where, with the son, I had laid the heart-broken mother. And yet how strange the feeling which imperceptibly creeps over us at times. "While there is life, there is hope," and dark and cloudy as my position seemed, these words occurred to me. They opened up a new source of reflection. At last I concluded that some chance might occur to carry me from the colony altogether, and enable me at last to end my days, my body being as free as my mind. With these consolations I anxiously waited the day of trial, which was now fast approaching.

At length the eventful day dawned which was to seal my fate. Various conjectures arose in my mind as to the probable result, but nothing certain could I lay hold of. The hour came, and I was summoned to the bar. I left the hospital, where I had remained since my arrival with the constables. Strongly guarded I was taken into court. I looked timidly around to seek for encouragement from some known face, but no one appeared to my wandering gaze. Before me sat the dreaded judge, and, at a table before him, sat the counsel. Alas! counsel I had none. At last my charge was read, and the voice of the judge sunk deep into my heart as he asked whether I was guilty or not guilty. I was charged with having escaped from my guards, and with firing two guns at his Majesty's servants while in pursuit of me. I knew I was guilty, and what could I say? With my head dropping on my breast, I replied that I was guilty. The judge, immediately after, passed upon me the sentence of death. Before I was removed, however, he asked if there was any one I knew who could speak of my previous behaviour. I answered, that the only friend I had was now dead; but, ere the words were finished, a stir was made near the door, and I heard some one call out, "Make way there, quick!" I turned my head towards the spot where the people were pressing back, and the first one whom I saw was the honest farmer, forcing a passage for Miss W., the captain's daughter, and her cousin, one of the young ladies who had accompanied her on the voyage. She was also accompanied by one of the gentlemen. As soon as order had been restored,