

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Dostoyevsky Smith Willis
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Henry Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Nietzsche
Stockton Turgenev Balzac Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Tolstoy Gogol Busch
Darwin Thoreau Thoreau Twain Plato Scott
Potter Zola Lawrence Lawrence Lawrence Harte
Kant Jowett Stevenson Dickens Hesse Harte
Andersen Andersen Andersen Burton Harte
London Descartes Cervantes Cervantes Cooke
Poe Aristotle Wells Wells Wells Cooke
Hale James Hastings Hastings Hastings Cooke
Bunner Shakespeare Shakespeare Shakespeare Irving
Richter Chambers Chambers Chambers Irving
Doré Chekhov Chekhov Chekhov Alcott
Swift Dante Shaw Shaw Shaw Pushkin
Wodehouse Wodehouse Wodehouse Newton



tredition was established in 2006 by Sandra Latusseck and Soenke Schulz. Based in Hamburg, Germany, tredition offers publishing solutions to authors and publishing houses, combined with worldwide distribution of printed and digital book content. tredition is uniquely positioned to enable authors and publishing houses to create books on their own terms and without conventional manufacturing risks.

For more information please visit: www.tredition.com

TREDITION CLASSICS

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series. The creators of this series are united by passion for literature and driven by the intention of making all public domain books available in printed format again - worldwide. Most TREDITION CLASSICS titles have been out of print and off the bookstore shelves for decades. At tredition we believe that a great book never goes out of style and that its value is eternal. Several mostly non-profit literature projects provide content to tredition. To support their good work, tredition donates a portion of the proceeds from each sold copy. As a reader of a TREDITION CLASSICS book, you support our mission to save many of the amazing works of world literature from oblivion. See all available books at www.tredition.com.



The content for this book has been graciously provided by Project Gutenberg. Project Gutenberg is a non-profit organization founded by Michael Hart in 1971 at the University of Illinois. The mission of Project Gutenberg is simple: To encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks. Project Gutenberg is the first and largest collection of public domain eBooks.

**Rídan The Devil And Other
Stories 1899**

Louis Becke

Imprint

This book is part of TREDITION CLASSICS

Author: Louis Becke

Cover design: Buchgut, Berlin - Germany

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg - Germany

ISBN: 978-3-8472-1969-9

www.tredition.com

www.tredition.de

Copyright:

The content of this book is sourced from the public domain.

The intention of the TREDITION CLASSICS series is to make world literature in the public domain available in printed format. Literary enthusiasts and organizations, such as Project Gutenberg, worldwide have scanned and digitally edited the original texts. tredition has subsequently formatted and redesigned the content into a modern reading layout. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the exact reproduction of the original format of a particular historic edition. Please also note that no modifications have been made to the spelling, therefore it may differ from the orthography used today.

RÍDAN THE DEVIL AND OTHER STORIES

By Louis Becke

Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company 1899

Contents

RÍDAN THE DEVIL
A MEMORY OF 'THE SYSTEM'
 CHAPTER I
 CHAPTER II
 CHAPTER III
A NORTH PACIFIC LAGOON ISLAND
BILGER, OF SYDNEY
THE VISION OF MILLI THE SLAVE
DENISON GETS A BERTH ASHORE
ADDIE RANSOM: A MEMORY OF THE TOKELAUS
IN A NATIVE VILLAGE
MAURICE KINANE
THE 'KILLERS' OF TWOFOLD BAY
DENISON'S SECOND BERTH ASHORE
A FISH DRIVE ON A MICRONESIAN ATOLL
BOBARAN
SEA FISHING IN AUSTRALIA
AN ADVENTURE IN THE NEW HEBRIDES
THE SOUTH SEA BUBBLE OF CHARLES DU BREIL
THE WHITE WIFE AND THE BROWN 'WOMAN'
WITH HOOK AND LINE ON AN AUSTRAL RIVER
THE WRECK OF THE LEONORA: A MEMORY OF 'BULLY'
HAYES
AN OLD COLONIAL MUTINY
A BOATING ADVENTURE IN THE CAROLINES
A CHRISTMAS EVE IN THE FAR SOUTH SEAS

RÍDAN THE DEVIL

Rídan lived alone in a little hut on the borders of the big German plantation at Mulifenua, away down at the lee end of Upolu Island, and every one of his brown-skinned fellow-workers either hated or feared him, and smiled when Burton, the American overseer, would knock him down for being a 'sulky brute.' But no one of them cared to let Rídan see him smile. For to them he was a wizard, a devil, who could send death in the night to those he hated. And so when anyone died on the plantation he was blamed, and seemed to like it. Once, when he lay ironed hand and foot in the stifling corrugated iron 'calaboose,' with his blood-shot eyes fixed in sullen rage on Burton's angered face, Tirauro, a Gilbert Island native assistant overseer, struck him on the mouth and called him 'a pig cast up by the ocean.' This was to please the white man. But it did not, for Burton, cruel as he was, called Tirauro a coward and felled him at once. By ill-luck he fell within reach of Rídan, and in another moment the manacled hands had seized his enemy's throat. For five minutes the three men struggled together, the white overseer beating Rídan over the head with the butt of his heavy Colt's pistol, and then when Burton rose to his feet the two brown men were lying motionless together; but Tirauro was dead.

Rídan was sick for a long time after this. A heavy flogging always did make him sick, although he was so big and strong. And so, as he could not work in the fields, he was sent to Apia to do light labour in the cotton-mill there. The next morning he was missing. He had swum to a brig lying at anchor in the harbour and hidden away in the empty forehold. Then he was discovered and taken ashore to the mill again, where the foreman gave him 'a dose of Cameroons medicine' — that is, twenty-five lashes.

'Send him back to the plantation,' said the manager, who was a mere German civilian, and consequently much despised by his foreman, who had served in Africa. 'I'm afraid to keep him here, and I'm not going to punish him if he tries to get away again, poor devil.'

So back he went to Mulifanua. The boat voyage from Apia down the coast inside the reef is not a long one, but the Samoan crew were frightened to have such a man free; so they tied him hand and foot and then lashed him down tightly under the midship thwart with strips of green *fau* bark. Not that they did so with unnecessary cruelty, but ex-Lieutenant Schwartzkoff, the foreman, was looking on, and then, besides that, this big-boned, light-skinned man was a foreigner, and a Samoan hates a foreigner of his own colour if he is poor and friendless. And then he was an *aitu* a devil, and could speak neither Samoan, nor Fijian, nor Tokelau, nor yet any English or German.

Clearly, therefore, he was not a man at all, but a *manu*—a beast, and not to be trusted with free limbs. Did not the foreman say that he was possessed of many devils, and for two years had lived alone on the plantation, working in the field with the gangs of Tokelau and Solomon Island men, but speaking to no one, only muttering in a strange tongue to himself and giving sullen obedience to his taskmasters?

But as they talked and sang, and as the boat sailed along the white line of beach fringed with the swaying palms, Rídan groaned in his agony, and Pulu, the steersman, who was a big strong man and not a coward like his fellows, took pity on the captive.

'Let us give him a drink,' he said; 'he cannot hurt us as he is. Else he may die in the boat and we lose the price of his passage; for the white men at Mulifanua will not pay us for bringing to them a dead man.'

So they cast off the lashings of *fau* bark that bound Rídan to the thwart, and Pulu, lifting him up, gave him a long drink, holding the gourd to his quivering mouth—for his hands were tied behind him.

'Let him rest with his back against the side of the boat,' said Pulu presently; 'and, see, surely we may loosen the thongs around his wrists a little, for they are cutting into the flesh.'

But the others were afraid, and begged him to let well alone. Then Pulu grew angry and called them cowards, for, as they argued, Rídan fell forward on his face in a swoon.

When 'the devil' came to and opened his wearied, blood-shot eyes, Pulu was bathing his forehead with cold water, and his bruised and swollen hands were free. For a minute or so he gasped and stared at the big Samoan, and a heavy sigh broke from his broad naked chest. Then he put his hands to his face—and sobbed.

Pulu drew back in wondering pity—surely no devil could weep—and then, with a defiant glance at the three other Samoans, he stooped down and unbound Rídan's feet.

'Let him lie,' he said, going aft to the tiller. 'We be four strong men—he is but as a child from weakness. See, his bones are like to cut through his skin. He hath been starved.'

At dusk they ran the boat along the plantation jetty, and Pulu and another man led Rídan up the path to the manager's house. His hands were free, but a stout rope of cinnet was tied around his naked waist and Pulu held the end.

'Ah, you dumb, sulky devil; you've come back to us again, have you?' said Burton, eyeing him savagely. 'I wish Schwartzkoff had kept you up in Apia, you murderous, yellow-hided scoundrel!'

'What's the use of bully-ragging him?' remarked the plantation engineer, with a sarcastic laugh; 'he doesn't understand a word you say. Club-law and the sasa {*} are the only things that appeal to him—and he gets plenty of both on Mulifanua. Hallo, look at that! Why, he's kissing Pulu's toe!'

* Whip.

Burton laughed. 'So he is. Look out, Pulu, perhaps he's a *kai tagata*' (cannibal). 'Take care he doesn't bite it off.'

Pulu shook his mop of yellow hair gravely. A great pity filled his big heart, for as he had turned to go back to the boat Rídan had fallen upon his knees and pressed his lips to the feet of the man who had given him a drink.

That night Burton and the Scotch engineer went to Rídan's hut, taking with them food and a new sleeping-mat. He was sitting cross-legged before a tiny fire of coco-nut shells, gazing at the blue,

leaping jets of flame, and as the two men entered, slowly turned his face to them.

'Here,' said Burton, less roughly than usual, 'here's some *kai kai* for you.'

He took the food from Burton's hand, set it beside him on the ground, and then, supporting himself on his gaunt right arm and hand, gave the overseer one long look of bitter, undying hatred; then his eyes drooped to the fire again.

'And here, Rídan,' said Craik, the engineer, throwing the sleeping-mat upon the ground, 'that'll keep your auld bones frae cutting into the ground. And here is what will do ye mair good still,' and he placed a wooden pipe and a stick of tobacco in 'the devil's' hand. In a moment Rídan was on his knees with his forehead pressed to the ground in gratitude.

The men looked at him in silence for a few moments as he crouched at Craik's feet, with the light of the fire playing upon his tattooed yellow back and masses of tangled black hair.

'Come awa', Burton, leave the puir deevil to himself. And I'm thinking ye might try him on the other tack awhile. Ye *have not* broken the creature's spirit yet, and I wouldna try to if I were you – for my own safety. Sit up Rídan, mon, and smoke your pipe.'

Two years before, Rídan had been brought to Samoa by a German labour-ship, which had picked him up in a canoe at sea, somewhere off the coast of Dutch New Guinea. He was the only survivor of a party of seven, and when lifted on board was in the last stage of exhaustion from thirst and hunger. Where the canoe had sailed from, and whither bound, no one on board the *Iserbrook* could learn, for the stranger spoke a language utterly unknown to anyone of even the *Iserbrook's* polyglot ship's company – men who came from all parts of Polynesia and Micronesia. All that could be learned from him by signs and gestures was that a great storm had overtaken the canoe, many days of hunger and thirst had followed, and then death ended the agonies of all but himself.

In a few weeks, and while the brig was thrashing her way back to Samoa against the south-east trades, Rídan regained his health and strength and became a favourite with all on board, white and

brown. He was quite six feet in height, with a bright yellow skin, bronzed by the sun; and his straight features and long black hair were of the true Malayo-Polynesian type. From the back of his neck two broad stripes of bright blue tattooing ran down the whole length of his muscular back, and thence curved outwards and downwards along the back of his thighs and terminated at each heel. No one on the *Iserbrook* had ever seen similar tattooing, and many were the conjectures as to Rídan's native place. One word, however, he constantly repeated, 'Onêata,' and then would point to the north-west. But no one knew of such a place, though many did of an Oneaka, far to the south-east—an island of the Gilbert Group near the Equator.

The weeks passed, and at last Rídan looked with wondering eyes upon the strange houses of the white men in Apia harbour. By-and-by boats came off to the ship, and the three hundred and odd brown-skinned and black-skinned people from the Solomons and the Admiralties and the countless islands about New Britain and New Ireland were taken ashore to work on the plantations at Vailele and Mulifanua, and Rídan alone was left. He was glad of this, for the white men on board had been kind to him, and he began to hope that he would be taken back to Onêata. But that night he was brought ashore by the captain to a house where many white men were sitting together, smoking and drinking. They all looked curiously at him and addressed him in many island tongues, and Rídan smiled and shook his head and said, 'Me Rídan; me Onêata.'

'Leave him with me, Kühne,' said Burton to the captain of the brig. 'He's the best and biggest man of the lot you've brought this trip. I'll marry him to one of my wife's servants, and he'll live in clover down at Mulifanua.'

So early next morning Rídan was put in a boat with many other new 'boys,' and he smiled with joy, thinking he was going back to the ship—and Onêata. But when the boat sailed round Mulinu's Point, and the spars of the *Iserbrook* were suddenly hidden by the intervening line of palm trees, a cry of terror burst from him, and he sprang overboard. He was soon caught, though he dived and swam like a fish. And then two wild-eyed Gilbert Islanders held him by

the arms, and laughed as he wept and kept repeating, 'Onëata, Onëata.'

From that day began his martyrdom. He worked hard under his overseer, but ran away again and again, only to be brought back and tied up. Sometimes, as he toiled, he would look longingly across the narrow strait of sunlit water at the bright green island of Manono, six miles away; and twice he stole down to the shore at night, launched a canoe and paddled over towards it. But each time the plantation guard-boat brought him back; and then Burton put him in irons. Once he swam the whole distance, braving the sharks, and, reaching the island, hid in a taro swamp till the next night. He meant to steal food and a canoe — and seek for Onëata. But the Manono people found him, and, though he fought desperately, they overcame and bound him, and the women cursed him for a Tāfito{*} devil, a thieving beast, and beat and pelted him as the men carried him back to the plantation, tied up like a wild boar, to get their ten dollars reward for him from the manager. And Burton gave him thirty lashes as a corrective.

* The Samoans apply the term 'Tāfito' to all natives of the Gilbert Group and other equatorial islands. The word is an abbreviation of Taputeauea (Drummond's Island), and 'Tāfito' is synonymous for 'savage' — in some senses.

Then came long, long months of unceasing toil, broken only by attempts to escape, recapture, irons and more lashes. The rest of the native labourers so hated and persecuted him that at last the man's nature changed, and he became desperate and dangerous. No one but Burton dared strike him now, for he would spring at an enemy's throat like a madman, and half strangle him ere he could be dragged away stunned, bruised and bleeding. When his day's slavery was over he would go to his hut, eat his scanty meal of rice, biscuit and yam in sullen silence, and brood and mutter to himself. But from the day of his first flogging no word ever escaped his set lips. All these things he told afterwards to Von Hammer, the supercargo of the *Mindora*, when she came to Mulifanua with a cargo of new 'boys.'{*}

* Polynesian labourers are generally termed 'boys.'

Von Hammer had been everywhere in the North Pacific, so Burton took him to Rídan's hut, and called to the 'sulky devil' to come out. He came, and sullenly followed the two men into the manager's big sitting-room, and sat down cross-legged on the floor. The bright lamplight shone full on his nude figure and the tangle of black hair that fell about his now sun-darkened back and shoulders. And, as on that other evening long before, when he sat crouching over his fire, his eyes sought Burton's face with a look of implacable hatred.

'See if you can find out where the d—d brute comes from,' said Burton.

Von Hammer looked at Rídan intently for a minute, and then said one or two words to him in a tongue that the overseer had never before heard.

With trembling limbs and a joyful wonder shining in his dark eyes, Rídan crept up to the supercargo, and then, in a voice of whispered sobs, he told his two years' tale of bitter misery.

'Very well,' said Burton, an hour later, to Von Hammer, 'you can take him. I don't want the brute here. But he is a dangerous devil, mind. Where do you say he comes from?'

'Onêata—Saint David's Island—a little bit of a sandy atoll, as big as Manono over there, and much like it, too. I know the place well—lived there once when I was pearling, ten years ago. I don't think the natives there see a white man more than once in five years. It's a very isolated spot, off the north-east coast of New Guinea. "Bully" Hayes used to call there once. However, let me have him. The *Mindora* may go to Manila next year; if so, I'll land him at Onêata on our way there. Anyway, he's no good to you. And he told me just now that he has been waiting his chance to murder you.'

The *Mindora* returned to Apia to take in stores, and Von Hammer took Rídan with him, clothed in a suit of blue serge, and with silent happiness illumining his face. For his heart was leaping within him at the thought of Onêata, and of those who numbered him with the dead; and when he clambered up the ship's side and saw Pulu, the big Samoan, working on deck with the other native sailors, he flung

his arms around him and gave him a mighty hug, and laughed like a pleased child when Von Hammer told him that Pulu would be his shipmate till he saw the green land and white beach of Onêata once more.

Six months out from Samoa the *Mindora* was hove-to off Choiseul Island, in the Solomon Group, waiting for her boat. Von Hammer and four hands had gone ashore to land supplies for a trader, and the brig was awaiting his return. There was a heavy sea running on the reef as the boat pushed off from the beach in the fast-gathering darkness; but who minds such things with a native crew? So thought Von Hammer as he grasped the long, swaying steer oar, and swung the whale-boat's head to the white line of surf. 'Give it to her, boys; now's our chance—there's a bit of a lull now, eh, Pulu? Bend to it, Rídan, my lad.'

Out shot the boat, Pulu pulling stroke, Rídan bow-oar, and two sturdy, square-built Savage Islanders amidships. Surge after surge roared and hissed past in the darkness, and never a drop of water wetted their naked backs; and then, with a wild cry from the crew and a shouting laugh from the steersman, she swept over and down the edge of the reef and gained the deep water—a second too late! Ere she could rise from the blackened trough a great curling roller towered high over, and then with a bursting roar fell upon and smothered her. When she rose to the surface Von Hammer was fifty feet away, clinging to the steer-oar. A quick glance showed him that none of the crew were missing—they were all holding on to the swamped boat and 'swimming' her out away from the reef, and shouting loudly for him to come alongside. Pushing the steer-oar before him, he soon reached the boat, and, despite his own unwillingness, his crew insisted on his getting in. Then, each still grasping the gunwale with one hand, they worked the boat out yard by yard, swaying her fore and aft whenever a lull in the seas came, and jerking the water out of her by degrees till the two Savage Islanders were able to clamber in and bale out with the wooden bucket slung under the after-thwart, while the white man kept her head to the sea. But the current was setting them steadily along, parallel with the reef, and every now and then a sea would tumble aboard and nearly fill her again. At last, however, the Savage Islanders got her somewhat free of water, and called to Pulu and Rídan to get in—

there were plenty of spare canoe-paddles secured along the sides in case of an emergency such as this.

'Get in, Pulu, get in,' said Rfdan to the Samoan, in English; 'get in quickly.'

But Pulu refused. He was a bigger and a heavier man than Rfdan, he said, and the boat was not yet able to bear the weight of a fourth man. This was true, and the supercargo, though he knew the awful risk the men ran, and urged them to jump in and paddle, yet knew that the additional weight of two such heavy men as Rfdan and Pulu meant death to all, for every now and then a leaping sea would again fill the boat to the thwarts.

And then suddenly, amid the crashing sound of the thundering rollers on the reef, Rídan raised his voice in an awful shriek.

'*Quick! Pulu, quick!* Some shark hav' come. Get in, get in first,' he said in his broken English. And as he spoke he grasped the gunwale with both hands and raised his head and broad shoulders high out of the water, and a bubbling, groan-like sound issued from his lips.

In an instant the big Samoan swung himself into the boat, and Von Hammer called to Rídan to get in also.

'Nay, oh, white man!' he answered, in a strange choking voice, 'let me stay here and hold to the boat. We are not yet safe from the reef. But paddle, paddle... quickly!'

In another minute or two the boat was out of danger, and then Rídan's voice was heard.

'Lift me in,' he said quietly, 'my strength is spent.'

The two Savage Islanders sprang to his aid, drew him up over the side, and tumbled him into the boat. Then, without a further look, they seized their paddles and plunged them into the water. Rídan lay in a huddled-up heap on the bottom boards.

'Exhausted, poor devil!' said Von Hammer to himself, bending down and peering at the motionless figure through the darkness. Then something warm flowed over his naked foot as the boat rolled, and he looked closer at Rídan, and —

'Oh, my God!' burst from him—both of Rídan's legs were gone—bitten off just above the knees.

Twenty minutes later, as the boat came alongside the *Mindora*, Rídan 'the devil' died in the arms of the man who had once given him a drink.

A MEMORY OF 'THE SYSTEM'

CHAPTER I

The house in which I lived from my birth till I was twelve years of age stood on the green-grassed slopes of a treeless bluff which overlooked the blue waters of the sunlit Pacific. Except for a cluster of five or six little weatherboard cottages perched on the verge of the headland, half a mile away, and occupied by the crew of the Government pilot boat, there were no other dwellings near, for the 'town,' as it was called, lay out of sight, on the low, flat banks of a tidal river, whose upper waters were the haunt and breeding places of the black swan, the wild duck and the pelican.

My father was the principal civil official in the place, which was called Bar Harbour, one of the smaller penal settlements in Australia, founded for what were called 'the better class' of convicts, many of whom, having received their emancipation papers, had settled in the vicinity, and had become prosperous and, in a measure, respected settlers, though my father, who had a somewhat bitter tongue, said that no ex-convict could ever be respected in the colony until he had lent money to one or other of the many retired military or civil officers who held large Crown grants of land in the district and worked them with convict labour; for, while numbers of the emancipists thrived and became almost wealthy, despite the many cruel and harassing restrictions imposed upon them by the unwritten laws of society (which yet academically held them to be purged of

their offences), the grand military gentlemen and their huge estates generally went to ruin—mostly through their own improvidence, though such misfortunes, our minister, the Reverend Mr Sampson, said, in the sermons he preached in our hideous, red-brick church, were caused by an 'inscrutable Providence'—their dwellings and store houses were burnt, their cattle and sheep disappeared, and their 'assigned' labourers took to the bush, and either perished of starvation or became bushrangers and went to the gallows in due course.

My mother, who was a gentle, tender-hearted woman, and seemed to live and move and have her being only for the purpose of making happy those around her, was, being English-born (she was of a Devonshire family), a constant church-goer, not for the sake of appearances, for her intelligence was too great for her to be bound by such a shallow reason, but because she was a simple, good and pure-minded woman, and sought by her example to make a protest against the scandalous and degraded lives led by many of the soldier officers and officials with whom she and her children were brought in almost daily contact, for my father, being an all too generous man, kept open house. But although she was always sweet-tempered and sometimes merry with the hard-drinking old Peninsular veterans, and the noisy and swaggering subalterns of the ill-famed 102nd Regiment (or New South Wales Corps), she always shuddered and looked pale and ill at ease when she saw among my father's guests the coarse, stern face of the minister, and her dislike of the clergyman was shared by all we children, especially by my elder brother Harry (then sixteen years of age), who called him 'the flogging parson' and the 'Reverend Diabolical Howl.' This latter nickname stuck, and greatly tickled Major Trenton, who repeated it to the other officers, and one day young Mr Moore of the 102nd, who was clever at such things, made a sketch of the cleric as he appeared when preaching, which set them all a-laughing immoderately.

'God alive!' cried old Major Trenton, holding the picture in his left hand, and bringing down his right upon the table with a thump that set all the glasses jingling, 'tis a perfect likeness of him, and yet, Moore, if ye had but given him a judge's wig and robes instead of a cassock, he would be the double of damned old hanging Norbury

up there,' pointing to the picture of an Irish judge which hung on the wall. 'Come,' he added, 'Mrs Egerton must see this. I know our hostess loves the gentle parson.'

So three or four of them, still laughing boisterously, left the table to look for my mother, whom they found sitting on the latticed-in verandah, which on hot summer days was used as a drawing-room. She, too, laughed heartily at the sketch, and said 'twas wonderfully drawn, and then my brother Harry asked Mr Moore to give it to him. This the young lieutenant did, though my mother begged him to destroy it, lest Mr Sampson should hear of the matter and take offence. But my brother promised her not to let it go out of his keeping, and there the thing ended—so we thought.

Yet, in some way, my mother's convict and free servants came to hear of the picture—they had already bandied about the parson's nickname—and every one of them, on some cunning excuse, had come to my brother's room and laughed at the drawing; and very often when they saw the clergyman riding past the house, attended by his convict orderly, they would say, with an added curse, 'There goes "Diabolical Howl,"' for they all hated the man, because, being a magistrate as well as a minister, he had sentenced many a prisoner to a dreadful flogging and had watched it being administered.

But perhaps it was not altogether on account of the floggings in which he so believed for which he was so detested—for floggings were common enough for even small breaches of the regulations of the System—but for the spiritual admonition with which he dosed them afterwards, while their backs were still black and bloody from the cat. Once, when an old convict named Callaghan was detected stealing some sugar belonging to one of the pilot boat's crew, my mother went to Dr Parsons, who, with the Reverend Mr Sampson, was to hear the charge against Callaghan on the following morning, and begged him not to have the man flogged; and Tom King, the man from whom the sugar was stolen, went with her and joined his pleadings to hers.

'Now, come, doctor,' said my mother, placing her hand on the old officer's arm and smiling into his face, 'you *must* grant me this favour. The man is far too old to be flogged. And then he was a sol-

dier himself once—he was a drummer boy, so he once told me, in the 4th Buffs.'

'The most rascally regiment in the service, madam. Every one of them deserved hanging. But,' and here his tone changed from good-humoured banter into sincerity, 'I honour you, Mrs Egerton, for your humanity. The man is over sixty, and I promise you that he shall not be flogged. Why, he is scarce recovered yet from the punishment inflicted on him for stealing Major Innes's goose. But yet he is a terrible old rascal.'

'Never mind that,' said my mother, laughing. 'Major Innes should keep his geese from straying about at night-time. And then, doctor, you must remember that poor Callaghan said that he mistook the bird for a pelican—it being dark when he killed it.'

'Ha, ha,' laughed the doctor, 'and no doubt Mr Patrick Callaghan only discovered his mistake when he was cooking his pelican, and noticed its remarkably short bill.'

My mother left, well pleased, but on the following morning, while we were at our mid-day meal, she was much distressed to hear that old Callaghan had received fifty lashes after all—the good doctor had been thrown from his horse and so much hurt that he was unable to attend the court, and another magistrate—a creature of Mr Sampson's—had taken his place. The news was brought to us by Thomas King, and my mother's pale face flushed with anger as, bidding King to go into the kitchen and get some dinner, she turned to my father (who took but little heed of such a simple thing as the flogging of a convict), and said hotly,—

'Tis shameful that such cruelty can be perpetrated! I shall write to the Governor himself—he is a just and humane man—oh, it is wicked, wicked,' and then she covered her face with her hands and sobbed aloud.

My father was silent. He detested the parson most heartily, but was too cautious a man, in regard to his own interest, to give open expression to his opinions, so beyond muttering something to my brother Harry about Thomas King having no business to distress her, he was about to rise from the table, when a servant announced that the Reverend Mr Sampson wished to see him.

The mention of the clergyman's name seemed to transform my mother into another woman. Quickly, but gently, putting aside my sister Frances, whose loving arms were clasped around her waist, she rose, and fire flashed in her eyes as she said to the servant, —

'Denham, tell Mr Sampson that I desire to speak with him as soon as he has finished his business with Mr Egerton.'

My father went out to the drawing-room, where the clergyman awaited him, and for the next ten minutes or so my mother walked quickly to and fro in the dining-room, bidding us remain seated, and in a harsh, unnatural tone to one so sweet and gentle, she told the servants who waited to withdraw.

'Mr Sampson is at your service, madam,' said Denham, opening the door.

'Show him in here,' said my mother, sharply, and her always pale face grew paler still.

The clergyman entered, and extended his fat, white hand to her; she drew back and bowed coldly.

'I do not desire to shake hands with you, sir.'

Mr Sampson's red face flushed purple.

'I do not understand you, madam. Is this a jest — or do you forget who I am?'

'I shall try to make you understand me, Mr Sampson, in as few words as possible. I do not jest, and I do not forget who you are. I have a request to make.'

'Indeed! I feel honoured, madam,' and the corners of the clergyman's thick lips turned contemptuously down — 'and that is —?'

'That you will cease your visits to this house. It would be painful indeed to me to receive you as a guest from this time forth, for this very day it is my intention to write to the Governor and acquaint him with the shocking act of cruelty committed this morning — 'twas a shameful, cruel deed to flog an old man so cruelly.'

Mr Sampson's face was now livid with the rage he could not suppress.