## MOONDYNE JOE

BOOK FIFTH

THE VALLEY OF THE VASSE

VIII THE BUSH-FIRE

It was the afternoon of a day of oppressive heat on which Mr. Wyville and Hamerton started from Perth to ride to the mountains of the Vasse They were lightly equipped, carrying with them the few necessaries for the primitive life of the bush.

For weeks before, the air had been filled with an irritating smoke, that clung to the earth all day, and was blown far inland by the sea-breeze

at night. As the horsemen were leaving Perth, they met a travel-stained trooper, carrying the mail police southern districts. the recognized the Comptroller-General, and saluted respectfully as he passed Where is the fire, trooper ?" asked

Mr. Wyville. 'In the Bunbury district, sir, and moving toward the Vasse Road. has burnt on the plains inside the sea-hills for three weeks, and in a day or two will reach the heavy bush

on the uplands." They rode at a steady and rapid pace, conversing little, like men bent on a long and tedious journey. The evening closed on them when they were crossing the Darling Range. From the desolate mountain-road, as they descended, they saw the sun standing, large and red on the horizon. Before them, at the foot of the range, stretched a waste of white sand, far as the eye could reach, over

which their road lay.

The setting of the sun on such a scene has an awfulness hard to be described. The whiteness of the sand seems to increase until it becomes ghastly, while every low ridge casts a black shadow. During this time of twilight the sand plain has a weirdly sombre aspect. When the night comes in its black shroud or silvery moonlight, the supernatural

effect is dispelled. As the travellers rode down toward the plain, impressed by this ghostly hour, Mr. Wyville called Hamerton's attention to two dark objects moving on the sand at a distance

Hamerton unslung his field-glass, and looked at the objects.

man and a woman," he said ; "they are going ahead, and the woman carries a load like the natives.

Soon after, the sun went down beyond the desert, and the plain was dark. The horsemen spurred on, oppressed by the level monotony before them. They had forgotten the travellers who were crossing the

weary waste on foot. Suddenly Hamerton's swerved, and a voice in the darkness ahead shouted something. It was a command from the man on foot, addressed to the woman, who, in her weariness and with her burden, had not been able to keep pace with him, and had fallen behind.

Come along, curse you! or I'll be

The speaker had not seen nor heard the horsemen, whose advance was hidden by the night and the soft sand. They rode close behind the woman, and heard her labored breathing as she increased her speed.

sense of acute sorrow struck at once the hearts of the riders. They had recognized the voice as that of Draper—they knew that the miserbeing who followed him and received his curses was his wife.

They rode silently behind her, and her again as she approached.

am very tired, Samuel," they heard her say in a low, uncomplainand I fear I'm not as strong as I thought I was." She stood for a moment as she

spoke, as if relieved by the moment's

breathing space.
"Look here," he said in a hard voice, meant to convey the brutal threat to her soul; "if you can't keep up, you can stay behind. I'll stop no more for you; so you can come or stay. Do you hear?

"O, Samuel, you wouldn't leave me in this terrible place alone Have pity on me, and speak kindly to me, and I will keep up-indeed I'll not delay you any more to-night.

"Have pity on you!" he hissed between his teeth; "you brought me to this, and I'm to have pity on you!" He turned and strode on in the dark. She had heard, but made no reply. She struggled forward, though her steps even now were

Mr. Wyville, having first attracted her attention by a slight sound, so that she would not be frightened, rode up to her and spoke in a low

I am the Comptroller-Generaldo not speak. Give me your burden. You will find it when you arrive at the inn at Pinjarra.'

She looked up and recognized Mr. Wyville; and without a word she slipped her arms from the straps of heavy load, and let him lift it

"God bless you, sir!" she whispered tremulously: "I can walk easily now.

'Here," said Hamerton, handing her his wine flask, "keep this for yourself, and use it if you feel your strength failing."

Where is your husband going?" asked Mr. Wyville. "He is going to the Vasse, sir.

whale ship has come in there, and he thinks she will take us off." They rode on, and soon overtook

Draper. Mr. Wyville addressed him in a stern voice Hamerton, astonished.

"If your wife does not reach Pinjarra tonight in safety, I shall hold you accountable. I overheard

your late speech to her." The surprised caitiff made no reply, and the horsemen passed on. They arrived at the little town of Pinjarra two hours later. Next morning, they found that

Draper had arrived. Mr. Wyville arranged with the innkeeper and his wife for Harriet's good treatment, and also that a stockman's team, which was going to Bunbury, should offer to take them so far on their

It was a long and fatiguing ride for the horsemen that day, but as the night fell they saw before them, across an arm of the sea, the lights of

"That is Bunbury," said Mr. Wyville, "the scene of our friend Sheridan's sandalwood enterprise."

They stopped in Bunbury two days, Mr. Wyville spending his time in the prison depot, instructing the chief warder in the new system. They found Ngarra-jil there, with fresh horses. He was to ride with them

next day towards the Vasse. As they were leaving the town, on the afternoon of the third day, they met a gang of wood-cutters, carrying on their backs, coming in from the bush.

"Are you going to the Vasse?" asked one of the wood-cutters, who was resting by the roadside.

"Well, keep to the eastward of the Koagulup Swamp and the salt marshes. The fire is all along the other side. We've been burnt out up that way."

They thanked him, and rode on.

Presently, another man shouted after them.

'There's a man and woman gone on before you, and if they take the road to the right of the swamp they'll be in danger."

They rode rapidly, striking in on a broad, straight road, which had been cleared by the convicts many years before. Mr. Wyville was silent and preoccupied. Once or twice Hameron made some passing remark, but he did not hear.

The atmosphere was dense with

the low-lying smoke, and the heat was almost intolerable.

A few miles south of Bunbury, the road cut clear across a hill. From the summit, they caught their first Five sight of the fire. Mr. Wyville reined hishorse, and Hamerton and the bush man followed his example. Before them stretched a vast sea

of smoke, level, dense, and grayishwhite, unbroken, save here and there by the topmost branches of tall trees that rose clear above the rolling cloud that covered all below.

"This is Bunbury race course," d Mr. Wyville; "the light seasaid Mr. Wyville; "the light sea-breeze keeps the smoke down, and rolls it away to the eastward. This fire is extensive." Where is our road now?" asked

Hamerton. not yet reached the plain. See: it is just seizing the trees yonder as it omes from the valley.

Hamerton looked far to the westward, and saw the sheeted fiame, fierce red with ghastly streaks of vellow, hungrily leaping among the trees in waves of For the first time in his life he realized the dreadful power of the element. It appalled him, as if he were looking on a living and sentinent destroyer.
"We must ride swiftly here," said

Mr. Wyville, beginning the descent; but the plain is only three miles

In a minute they had plunged into halted noiselessly as slie came up with her husband. He growled at drove their horses into a hard gallop. But the animals understood, and needed little pressing. With ears laid back, as if stricken with terror,

they flew, swift-footed. The air was not so deadly as the first breath suggested. The dense thickest overhead smoke was beneath was a stratum of semi-pure air. The heat was far more dangerous than the fumes.

At last they reached the rising ground again, and filled their lungs with a sense of profound relief. The prospect was now changed, and for the better.

only on the right of the road. It and was driving them forward with stretched in a straight line as far as appalling fury. they could see, burning the tall forest with a dreadful noise, like the sea on a rocky shore, or like the combined roar of wild beasts. wall of flame ran parallel with the

road, and about a mile distant. ad, and about a fine distance of a saltmarsh," said Mr. Wyville; ends some miles in our front.

"Koagulup there," said Ngarra-jil, meaning that where the marsh ended the great swamp began. The woodcutters had warned them to keep to the left of the swamp.

We must surely overtake those travellers," said Mr. Wyville to Hamerton, "and before they reach the swamp. They might take the road to the right, and be lost."

They galloped forward again, and as they rode, in the falling dusk of night, the fire on the right increased to a glare of terrific intensity. felt its hot breath on their faces as if it panted a few yards away.

Suddenly, when they had ridden about two miles, Mr. Wyville drew rein, looked fixedly into the bush, and then dismounted. He walked straight to a tall tuad-tree by the roadside, and stooped at its base, as if searching for something.

with a hook on one end.

"I did not see it," he answered quietly: "I knew it was there. I brambles floated and fell on man and once knew a man to be chained to horse. that tree.

neck, and mounted without more save. Nearer and nearer he drew; words. From that moment he and he shouted, as best he could, to seemed to have only one thoughtto overtake and warn those in front. Half an hour later, they drew rein

where the roads divided, one going to the right, the other to the left of the swamp. The travellers were not

Which road have they taken ?"

asked Hamerton.
Ngarra jil had leaped from his horse, and was running along the a disappointed air and struck in on the other road. In half a minute he stopped, and cried out some gutteral

Mr. Wyville looked at Hamerton, and there were tears in his eyes. He rode to him, and caught him by the

'Take the other road, with Ngarrajil, and I will meet you at the farther end of the swamp. It is only twelve miles, and I know this bush thoroughly.

Hamerton answered with an indig-

nant glance. "Do not delay, dear friend," and Wyville's voice was broken as he "for my sake, and for those whose rights are in your hands, as I say. Take that road, and ride on till we meet."

'I shall not do it," said Hamerton. firmly, and striking his horse. "Come on! if there is danger, I must face it with you."

His horse flew wildly forward, terrified by the tremendous light of the conflagration. Wyville soon overtook him, and they rode abreast, the faithful bushman a horse's length

behind. On their left, a quarter of a mile distant, stretched the gloomy swamp, at this season a deadly slouch of black mud, with shallow pools of water. On their right, a mile off, the conflagration leaped and howled and crashed its falling trees, as if furious at the barrier of marsh that balked it of its prey. The bush etween the swamp and the fire was brighter than day, and the horsemen drove ahead in the white glare.

They saw the road for miles before There was no one in sight. Five, seven, nine of the twelve miles of swamp were passed. Still the road ahead was clear for miles,

and still no travellers. As they neared the end of the ride, a portentous change came over the aspect of the fire. Heretofore it had burned high among the gum-trees, its red tongues licking the upper air. There was literally a wall of fire along the farther side of the salt-Now, the tree-tops grew marsh. dark, while the flame leaped along the ground, and raced like a wild

thing straight toward the swamp. "The fire has leaped the marsh!" merton.

Through the smoke; the fire has

asked said Mr. Wyville. The whole air and earth seemed instantly to swarm with fear and horror. Flocks of parrots and smaller birds whirled Flocks of screaming, striking blindly against the horsemen as they flew. With thunderous leaps, herds of kangaroo plunged across the road, and dashed into the deadly alternative of the swamp. The earth was alive with and reptile life, fleeing insect instinctively from the fiery death toward the water, while timid bandi-

Great snakes, with upraised heads, held their way, hissing in terror, coot and wallaby leaped over their mortal enemies in the horrid panic. The horses quivered with terror, and tried to dash wildly in the dir-

ection of the swamp.
"Hold on, for your life!" shouted Wyville to Hamerton. "Do not leave the road.

As they spurred onward, their eyes on the advancing fire, their hearts stood still one moment at a piercing sound from their rear. It was a woman's shriek—the agonized cry reached them above all the horror of

Hamerton did not know what to do; but he saw Mr. Wyville rein up, and he did so also. They looked back, and a mile behind saw the two unfortunates they had come to warn. They had strayed from the road, and the riders had passed them. The The fire in their front appeared fire had now closed in behind them,

For God's sake, ride on !" shouted Mr. Wyville to Hamerton, his voice barely heard in the savage roar of the conflagration.

"And you?" cried the other with a knitted brow. "I am going back for these — I must go back. God bless you!"

He struck his spurs into his horse, and the animal sprang to the front.
But next instant he was flung back on his haunches by Ngarra jil, dismounted, who had seized the bridle. The bushman's eyes blazed, and his

face was set in determination. "No! no!" he cried in his own language; "you shall not! you shall not! It is death, Moondyne! It is

death Wyville bent forward, broke the man's grasp, speaking rapidly to him. His words moved the faithful heart deeply, and he stood aside, with raised hands of affliction, and let him ride forward.

Hamerton did not follow; but he would not try to escape. He sat in his saddle, with streaming eyes following the splendid heroism of the man he loved dearest of all the world.

It was a ride that could only be th a hook on one end.

"You have keen sight, sir," said which Wyville rode. The leaves on the trees overhead shrivelled and olic News.

But the rider only saw before He tied the chain on his horse's him the human beings he meant to cheer them; but they did not hear.

He saw with straining eyes the man throw up his hands and the earth; and he saw the woman, faithful to the last, bending over him, holding the wine flask to his parched lips. He saw her, too, reach out her arms, as if to shield the fallen one from the cruel flame that had seized them. Then she breathed the air of flame, and sank down. road to the left. He came back with Next moment, Wyville leaped from his horse beside them.

It was too late. The woman had fallen in front of the flame, as if to keep it from the face of the man who had deserved so little of her devotion; and still the hand of the faithful dead held to his lips the draught that might have saved her

One moment, with quivering face, the strong man bent above her, while his lips moved. Then he raised his head, and faced his own danger.

Already the fire had cut him off out it was only the advanced line of the conflagration that had reached the water. It was possible to dash back, by the edge of the swamp.

The awful peril of the moment flashed on him as he rode. The horse bounded wildly ahead; and the skilled hand guided him for the But, as he flew, other scenes rose before the rider even brighter than that before him. The present was filled with horror; but the past overtook him and swept over his heart like a great wave of peace.

A tree crashed to the earth across ais path. He was forced to drive his horse into the fire to get round the obstacle. The poor animal reared and screamed, but dashed through the fire, with eyes scorched and blinded by the flame, now sorely dependent on the hand of its guide The rider felt the suffering animal's pain, and recorded it in his heart with sympathy.

It was that heart's last record, and it was worthy of the broad manhood that had graved it there. He had of an early recognition on the part given his life for men—he could pity of her ancestors of what she had been

a dumb animal as he died. By the side of the swamp he was stricken from the saddle branch of a falling tree. His body fell in the water, his head resting on the tangled rushes of the swamp.

Once, before he died, his opened eves were raised, and he looked above him into the sea and forest of But he would not accept that; but upward, with the splendid faith of his old manhood, went the glazing eyes till they rested firmly on the ternal calmness of the sky. As he looked, there came to him, like a vision he had once before dimly seen, a great Thought from the deep sky, and held his soul in rapt communion. But the former dimness

closing peacefully in upon him. Then the man's head sank peace heart stopped its labors. He was dead.

They found his body next day, unscathed by the fire, preserved by the water in which he had fallen. Reverent hands lifted the burden and bore it into the dim recesses of bush, followed by numerous

dusky mourners. daim higher than theirs. Above the bring about this vindication dead stood the white-haired Chief Te mana-roa, bowed in silent grief.
A spearwood litter was made, and womanhood, and equipped by nature the body placed on it. It was raised by the bushmen, who stood awaiting

the old chief's orders. Te-mana-roa turned to Hamerton. who alone of all the assembly belonged to the dead man's race. The old chief read profound grief in his face, and drew closer to him.

"This man belonged to us," he said, laying his dark finger on the wide brow of the dead; "he was true to my people, and they understood and loved him better than his own. We shall bury him in the Vasse.

The litter bearers moved slowly forward, the old chief took his place behind the dead, and the bushmen with trailed spears followed in sad

Hamerton's heart went strongly with the mourners; but he could not question their right. Two strange pearmen stood near him, to guide safely through the bush. The faithful Ngarra jil was gone nourn by the lonely grave of the Moondyne.

THE END

WHERE THE IRISH NAME IS AT HOME

Some time ago a man named

Murphy died and left a large sum of money to Harvard to found a scholarship for the education of youths of his own name. Up to date, says the Boston Pilot, no Murphy has sought the scholarship. It is a tribute to the Murphys, who realize that they ought to seek their education under Catholic auspices. ought to be a hint to any other Irishman that feels like helping to educate those of his own family When he rose and came back, he had in his hand a long rusty chain, colleges where the Irish name is at home—the Catholic colleges—Cath-

## THE WATERS OF CONTRADICTION

BY ANNA C. MINOGUE Author of "Cardome," "Borrowed From the Night"

CHAPTER II

"Lil'l Miss" was inspired by none of the motives that actuated her parents their relations with their neighbors. With the pure democracy of childhood she mingled among them as freely as she had been accustomed doing with the children of the little Eastern town, and promptly characterized as snobs all who resented her friendliness.

Everything considered, a district school is the most complete social lever we possess. Often a stranger to them, and usually sent into the profession by the necessity of earning a livelihood or by a wish to escape the drudgery that falls to the lot of the daughter of the small farmer, the teacher recognizes no distinction among her pupils; and favoritism, when it exists, is generally shown to the best scholar and not to the child of the most influential parents.

For several terms the little frame school that stood on the slope over looking the white road, in which Lucy was destined to begin the weaving of the web of her destiny, as well as make her short flights toward the mount of knowledge, had been taught by one of the daughters of the people. A descendant of the pioneers, a con-science, inherited from some Puritan ancestor, had in the Kentucky branch of the family, expressed itself in an utter abhorrence for the possession of human beings as property; and in consequence, while his companions on the frontier laid the foundation future wealth and greatness for their prosperity, the Austins fought the long dull fight against poverty, and worn out before their time by the conflict, left it to be continued by their children.

However other members of the family, past, present and to come, might regard this principle and its effects on their material position, Miss Cora gloried in it. More to her than the blue blood of the Cavaliers or the wealth of the commercial prince, was this precious inheritance permitted to see declared a grievous wrong against God and humanity.

Murmuring, doubtless, she had often heard among her people against this action of their fathers in refusing to grasp opportunities as they presented themselves, because of a straightlaced notion. Customs were laws, declared these malcontents in the little company of the righteous, and laws were right. And such was their perversity, when the stability of the year, men and women of superior qualifications were not often counted among the teachers. those laws was to be decided by the sword, many of her kindred, her only brother included, had not hesitated to line themselves up on the defense.

Miss Cora confidently expected some dire punishment would befall them because of their betrayal of inwas gone; he saw it clearly now for one instant, while all things were enough not one of them was missing when the army of the Lost Cause in protecting their interests during was dissolved, although each had his absence. Even when, as it befel fully to its couch, the limbs stretched fought gallantly throughout the long in the course of time, he placed the out for their long rest, the strong campaign. Had they been slain or wounded, she would have seen in it the dispensing hand of justice; their safety she attributed to a desire on the part of the justice they had outraged to vindicate herself. She would show these repudiators of a owner had sacrificed, in order to holy heritage that it carried with it material as well as moral value, and while the possessions of the ungodly would melt away, that of the just dusky mourners.

One white man stood among the children of the forest; but he had no chosen instrument of this justice to she told herself, by their father's

The cessation of hostilities found and study for the work she felt had been allotted unto her. While her brother had been fighting against her conviction, she had been managing the little business in the village, which had been bequeathed to the two children by their father and a bachelor uncle. On account of her Confederate brother and cousins, it had suffered severely from the depre dations of the Federal soldiers; but Miss Cora had always been able to retrieve her fortune after each cruel visitation. When her brother returned she placed it in his hands in better condition than it was when he had thrust it upon her, to ride off with Morgan and his gallant men to join the Confederate forces at Bowl-

ing Green. As may be supposed, the avocation of the dispenser of staple groceries in a town the size of Beechwood at that period left ample time for any aside one might care to engage in Miss Cora, recognizing the possibility of the return of her brother, and foreseeing, in such an event, the relegation of the business into his hands, deeply considered her future position. She might, of course, remain with him as superintendent of his home, but being aware that a rather pretty neighboring girl was looking with shy eyes upon place, Miss Cora realized that the time would come when she would be called upon to relinquish that also.

Moreover her taste of personal freedom seemed to render it impossible for her to accept a place dependence, and she determined to prevent the possibility of this being forced upon her by necessity or her own short-comings. Not many openings presented themselves for these worthy pioneers of the New Woman movement. The one that appeared most desirable to Miss Cora was that of teaching, and immediately she began to supplement her slight store

of knowledge by a course of study which was gradually enlarged until it embraced branches known only by name to many of the country's most

successful teachers. The year after the war beheld Miss Cora installed as teacher in one of the less important district schools, for trustees were averse to bestowing the pitiful public funds, then paid to instructors, upon one, who, they remembered, had no experience, and they doubted if much knowledge. Miss Cora quelled her feelings, and took up her work with the zeal of the enthusiast. She had a double stimulant now to inspire it, and ere long she began to be heard of beyond the limits of her district.

The Superintendent, in his report, found Miss Cora's the most perfectly disciplined school in the country, while the little backwoods pupils would have held their own with the pupils of the town school, he asserted. As, however, he had no jurisdiction over the latter, and was consequently not in a position to judge of the merits of its students, his second tribute to the young teacher did not carry much weight. The cynical remembered that Miss Cora was a comely girl and the Superintendent a young man in the impressionable period of life, and did not hesitate to affirm that admiration for the woman had assisted in dictating his report concerning the teacher.

Gossip travels rapidly in small communities, and Cora's brother laughingly regaled her with the comments of the cynics, when the next Friday night found her under his The warm blood swept up to her pale intellectual beyond this expression of displeasure, he received no answer. For long days, however, the words rankled in Miss Cora's breast, causing her, when next she met him, to treat the Superintendent with such coldness that his admiration, which needed only time and encouragement develop into a deeper feeling, froze at its source, while Miss Cora repeated her vow to convince the people interested in education of her superior talents.

This was not difficult to do, as she would have realized had she per mitted herself to mingle more freely with the teachers, for, with all its other institutions, education in the South suffered sorely in the years immediately following the Great Division. The fund was insufficient and had to be increased by the parents of the pupils, and, as these were badly crippled in fortune, when not reduced to poverty, little private aid could be given, and, as the schools were open only a few months

The salary she received, small as it was, was scrupulously saved by Miss Cora, and the fund was steadily increased by teaching private schools during the long vacations public necessity afforded her. Her living expenses were provided for by her in protecting their interests during shy girl in his home as his wife, Cora suffered nothing by the change in his domestic affairs. Rather did she gain in importance, when her first carefully hoarded \$500 were invested in a good town house which its join the great Western Exodus. pair of sturdy boys and a fair haired girl now called the energetic teacher Aunt, and in the three children Miss When they were and hers grown, the changes that time brings would afford them great opportuni-ties to increase that wealth; and while the children of the slave holders would be working for their daily bread, the children of the men who had preferred poverty and shame and repudiation for the sake of a holy principle, would hold the place of prominence in the community. Verily it were worth any sacrifice to bring about this supreme triumph of ustice, to vindicate the truth that

had inspired those brave old pioneers. Such was the woman who presided over the little school house, standing it might be said, almost in the shadow of Stanton Hall. When the son of the first Stanton had built his new brick house among the oaks that stood well back from the waters of Dalton Run, he held counsel with his two neighbors, and at a point where the three plantations joined, they cut off a triangular piece of land, which they devoted to educational purposes, and erected a small frame building for a school.

It was the second school built in he country, and, while it was for many years attended only by the children of the three planters, in time, the plantations being divided and again sub-divided and many of the sub-divisions sold, the school lost its private character and was finally appropriated entirely for public purposes. But being the foundation of their ancestors, the Stantons always took a deeper interest in the school than any one else in the neighborhood, and, until now, when the Hall had no longer a master, a Stanton was always one the trustees. They took a pardonable pride in the school, and it not infrequently happened that applications were received from other districts, such was the fame for efficiency it had acquired. Hence, the highest ambition of the county teachers was to secure the Stanton school.

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