#### MOONDYNE JOE

THE GOLD MINE OF THE VASSE

X.-CONTINUED THE UPAS-TREE

It was a monotonous and unpleas ant routine, this visiting of the wards. Will Sheridan was glad when they entered the female pentagon, after half an hour's rapid walking. When at last they came to the short ward in which Alice was confined, Sheridan's heart was beating rapidly.

The door of Number Four was open, and one of the nuns was standing in the cell beside Alice, who sat with her work in her lap. Will Sheridan heard the low sound of her voice, as she spoke to her visitor, and it thrilled him like a strain of exquisite music. In after years, he never forgot the subtle pleasure and pain he experienced at the sound of her soft voice in that brief sentence

The governor stood at the doorway, and greeted Sister Cecilia respect-fully, then passed on. Will Sheridan had only for one instant rested his eyes on Alice; but he went away happy, his heart filled with gratitude. The old governor wondered at the earnest warmth of his manner as he thanked him and took his leave.

When Will Sheridan emerged from Millbank Prison, he seemed impatient and yet pleased. He hailed a cab, and drove straight to Mr. Wyville's. He was drawn there by a deep, pleasurable feeling of mingled respect, gratitude and expectation. He felt unaccountably light hearted and joyous. He had no actual thoughts, but only happy perceptions. world was changed. He did He did not know in what the change consisted; but he certainly was a different man from the unhappy stranger who had wandered round Millbank a few

He sprang from the cab in Gros-Square, thinking he would quiet his excitement by walking the remainder of the way. As he turned into Grosvenor Street, his eye was attracted by a low and elegant brougham, driven by a colored coachman, who wore a peculiar oriental dress. driver had caught Sheridan's eye at first, and he was rather surprised when he recognized Mr. Wyville's Australian servant, Ngarra-

In the carriage sat two young girls of extraordinary beauty and similar ity of face and age. They were darkskinned rather than "colored," with intensely black hair and flashing Their faces were of a splendid rich bronze, warmer than the Moorish brown of Spain, and darker than the red bronze of Syria. They were wrapped in soft furs, their faces only They might have been twins; they were certainly sisters.

They were talking and smiling as they spoke, as the brougham slowly passed Sheridan, and drew up at Mr. Wyville's door.

The ladies sprang lightly to the sidewalk, having thrown off their heavier wraps in the carriage. Their dress beneath was still of rich furs, of two or three colors. They walked lightly to the door, which was held open by a black servant, and entered

the house. The incident surprised Sheridan but he was little given to curiosity.
"Those ladies," he thought, "are certainly Australian natives, and yet seems absurd to believe it. But then, it is no stranger than everything connected with this remark.

At Mr. Wyville's he found Lord Somers who had brought a copy of Sir Joshua Hobb's new Prison Bill and Mr. Hamerton. The greeting of all was pleasant, but Sheridan was specially pleased with the almost silent cordiality of Mr. Wyville.

They had been conversing on criminal matters; and the conversation was renewed.

Wyville," said the Secretary, " I wish to ask you a question I have put to many philanthropists, with varying results: Have you ever or rather have you ever found the roots of the criminal upas-

Mr. Wyville had stood facing the he turned toward the secretary, and his impressive was in shade, as he answered, in a low tone.

Yes, my Lord, I have sought for it, and I have found it.'

Then why not announce the dis-Why not lay the axe to the root of this tree of evil, and let the world, or at least England, be freed from the criminal incubus?"

The question was earnestly put and Hamerton and Sheridan, with deep interest, watched the face of Mr. Wyville till the answer came.

Because, my Lord, the tree of evil is a banian—its roots drop from nobleman. above; its blood is not drawn directly from the soil, but pours from heart of the main stem, which you think healthy. Its diseased branches ramify through the admirable limbs, and cannot be separated

with a knife." You are allegorical, Mr. Wyville.

but I presume that you mean-That the criminal principle is rooted in the heart of society, underlies the throne—or let me say, that the throne cannot escape injury if the axe be laid to its base," said

Mr. Wyville, speaking slowly. The nobleman glanced nervously at Hamerton, who was smiling broadly, as if intensely pleased.

The Secretary could not give up the point just then, having reached dangerous ground. And as Wyville remained silent, he was forced to

My dear Mr. Wyville," he said "you speak to-day almost asked the nobleman.

like a French Republican, and I fear Mr. Sheridan will conceive a violent prejudice against you. You mean, of that the law dare not attempt to suddenly suppress all crime for fear of exciting revolution ?"

" No, my Lord, that was not my meaning," said Mr. Wyville.

Well, then, I give it up," said the nobleman, laughing, and turning to Hamerton to change the conversation.

Don't you think, Mr. Hamerton, that with all the public and private money spent in charity and religious work in England, the existence great criminal class is a vastly difficult problem, and a monstrous popular ingratitude ?"

"I agree as to the problem," answered Hamerton, becoming grave "but I do not quite see the ingrati-tude. But may I ask Mr. Wyville to read us the riddle of his allegory, or

to continue it further? Pray do, sir," said the Secretary

seeing no escape.
"My Lord," said Mr. Wyville slightly smiling, but yet very earnest in look, "my views are personal, as my researches have been. I have drawn no political dissatisfaction from foreign schools. I have merely sought among the poor and the tempted for the dangerous and the lawless; and I have found them, and lived among them, and have investigated the causes of their state. have followed the main root of the criminal plant till I found it disappear beneath the throne; and its ateral issues run through and under the titled and hereditary circles that ring the monarch."

Mr. Hamerton opened his eyes and locked his hands tightly, as he looked at the speaker; Lord Somers seemed puzzled, and rather dismayed; while Sheridan enjoyed the conversation keenly.

Do the roots spring from the throne and the aristocracy, or enter their crevices from the outside?" asked Hamerton.

"They are born of aristocracy," answered Wyville, impressively. "They spring from the rotting luxuries that fall from the tables of kings and earls and hereditary gentry. They creep from the palaces, where custom and care are too strong for them, and they crawl to the cabins and seize on the hearts of the poor for their prey. The seed of crime is in the flower of aristoc-

You speak in paradoxes now, sir, said Lord Somers, interested in spite

"I take aristocracy as the efflorescence of the social and political evil," said Mr. Wyville, now deeply moved by his theme. "It presup moved by his theme. "It presup poses the morality of hereditary Men would not, in a justly ordered state, be born either to lux ury, poverty, disease, or crime. I do not know where or how mankind began to do the social sum wrong; but I do know, for I see, that the result is appalling — that millions have evil for a heritage, as truly as you, my lord, have your entailed

But how can this be changed or bettered, my dear Mr. Wyville, except by the spread of charity and religion among the wealthy?" asked the peer

"Ah, pardon me; I consider these from another standpoint. things Charity among the rich simply means the propriety of the poor being miserable—that poverty is unfortunate, but not wrong. But God never meant to send the majority of mankind into existence to exercise the charity and religion of the minority. happy and virtuous, if not equal; and men have generated by their own blind and selfish rules."

Surely, Mr. Wyville," interrupted Hamerton, "you do not believe in the American absurdity that men are born equal?

I do not think the Americans mean that in your sense," answered Wyville. "I do believe that every generation of men should have a fair start, and let the best lives win." But it never can be done," said

Lord Somers. "It has never been tried, I think, except by fanatics or philanthropic charity mongers, who have done more harm than good. The good shall not come from the stooping of the rich, but from the raising of the poor; and the poor had better remain poor for another cycle than be raised by charity, and so pauperized and

degraded.' "How would you begin the improvement, had you absolute power? asked Mr. Hamerton.

Mr. Wyville checked himself with an effort, as he was about to speak. "You have led me to utter latent thoughts rather than opinions," he

said, smiling, and looking toward the nobleman. I fear my upas roots have led me out of bounds. Mr. Hamerton seemed annoyed at the check, and strode across the room

impatiently. Confound it, Somers," he cried throw off your official airs, and take an interest in principles, as you used to. Mr. Wyville, I beg of you to continue; you should not only talk freely here, but I wish to Heaven

you could preach these things in Westminster Abbey. Let me recall the question of this excitable person, Mr. Wyville," said his lordship; "he asked how you would begin the reform of soci-

ety, had you absolute power

By burning the law-books." Splendid!" cried Hamerton And then ?" asked Lord Somers.

By burning the title-deeds. Magnificent!" ejaculated Hamer-

"Could society exist without law?

" Not just yet; but it could have a better existence with better laws. At present the laws of civilization especially of England, are based on and framed by property-a depraved and unjust foundation. Human law should be founded on God's law and human right, and not on the narrow interests of land and gold.'

'What do you propose to effect by such law?" asked Lord Somers.

"To raise all men above insecurity which is the hot-bed of lawlessness, answered Mr. Wyville. "But by what means can law make

poor men rich?" asked the nobleman. "By allowing no one to hold unproductive land while a single man is hungry. By encouraging small farmers, till every acre of land in England is teeming with food."

"But men do not live by bread alone. Englishmen cannot all be What then ?"

"By developing a system of technical education, that would enable the town and city populations to manufacture to advantage the produce of the fields and mines."

Admirable!" cried Hamerton But this is revolution," said the nobleman.

"I know not what it may be called my lord," responded Mr. Wyville impressively; "but it is lawful and right. This can all be achieved by egal reform—ay, even under present

Let me not misunderstand you, Mr. Wyville," said the nobleman ser 'Would you propose that the estates of wealthy men be wrested from them by law?"

Not without compensation, and not at all unless they refused to cultivate the soil or to pay the heavy tax necessary to insure cultivation. I would do no wrong to make a right. No inherited nor purchased land should be taken for the benefit of the people without giving a fair recompense to the aristocrat.

Well, and having done all this, where should we be?" asked Lord

At the starting-point," answered Mr. Wyville, with a sad smile; "only at the starting-point. At present, level of society is insecurity, poverty, misery, from which spring ar, ignorance, disease, and crime. Under a better system, the lowest would be at least sufficiency, enough for all the human beings in the country; and this, in time, would eradicate much of the evil, perhaps

'Do you think, if there were enough for all, there would not still be some who would steal?" asked Hamerton.

For a time there would be, answered Wyville, gravely; perhaps ly. for a thousand years or more we should have remnants of common crime. Men have been thousands of and lie; at least give them one thousand to unlearn.

"But if it take so long," said Lord Somers, laughing, "we may as well go on as we are.'

"Not so, my Lord," answered Wyville, and as he spoke, his face was lighted with an exaltation of spirit that made it marvellously beautiful and powerful; "no man who sees the truth, however distant, can conscientiously go on as if it were not there. Thousands of years are vast periods; but the love of human liberty and happiness shall reach out and cling to the eternal. every man who believes, faithfully do his share, sow the seed that he has received, and in God's time the He sent them all into the world to be glorious harvest will come of a pure and truthful people, whose aristo-crats shall be elevated by intelligence and virtue, and the love of humanity and not by accident of birth and superiority in vice and pride."

The three who heard were deeply moved by the earnestness of the speaker, whose whole being seemed filled with the splendid prophecy Lord Somers was the first to speak, returning to the subject of the Penal

'And yet, Mr. Wyville, with all your enthusiasm for social reform, you have given us a bill which is filled with practical attention to existing institutions.'

Ah, it is too soon to begin; and the beginning will not be at that point," said Mr. Wyville. "The real evil is outside the prison, and at present our legal morality calls it good. Until society is changed by the new common sense of abstract justice, we must temporize with our

criminal codes." There was a pause; no one seemed willing to break the floating possibilities of the future.

"You are going to Australia with the next convict ship, are you not?' Mr. Hamerton at length asked Mr.

Mr. Wyville. Yes; I wish to see the machinery of the new system put in motion. Besides, I have personal matters to attend to in the Colony.'

Sheridan had started so sudden at the question, that now all three their eyes on him. I have thought," he said, looking

at Lord Somers, "that I also should like to return to Australia on that Would you not prefer to go in my

yacht, Mr. Sheridan?" asked Mr. Wyville. "She will sail for Australia about the same time, and you shall command her for the voyage. "I should prefer the ship," said Sheridan. Then, thinking he had rudely refused, "he added: "I desire very keenly to have this

experience. "You shall have your wish, sir," said the Secretary, "and I envy you the companionship of your voyage. TO BE CONTINUED

FATHER MICHAEL

By John Barnett

Through the tangled wilderness of West African forest a little party was pushing its slow way. It consisted of four native carriers, a white trader and his gigantic Negro body servant. Carson, the trader, was long and lean, with narrow shoulbut a general suggestion of tough, wiry strength. His lined and craggy face was distinctly plain, but the rather sleepy eyes were honest and kindly, and the firm mouth was above the average in quality. red hair had been faded by scorching sunshine, and fever and privation had robbed his gaunt body of every ounce of superfluous flesh The condition of his garments, to a critical eye, left much to be

desired. They were stained and green with the half-dried filth of swamps, and ragged from the thorns of countless thickets. The forest seemed to take toll of its invaders at every step. The going was cruelly rough and trying. From trunk to trunk of the great trees there swept a network of tough, fleshy creepers to offer a barrier tiresome and end-Far and far above the tangled leaves and branches formed a roof well-nigh impenetrable to light. The little party struggled on in a perpetual gloom, save when an occasional vivid bar of sunshine, piercing the matted foliage, struck down like a naked sword. The heavy air of the forest was over-All freshness seemed to have like. been baked from it in those close, silent depths, and a cool breeze was a gift of the gods not to be looked for. Carson's thin, ragged clothes were sticking maddeningly even to his tough, gaunt frame, and the upon the hard. sweat gleamed muscular bodies of his servants. So they ploughed on, with every nerve and sinew crying out for rest, and a sudden check came as a relief to the grim monotony of that heartbreaking march.

The native carriers in advance had halted and were chattering to gether.

'What's up, Imbono?" Carson Imbono went forward to investigate if need be with vivid blasphemy, and his master leaned thank for a moment with closed eyes against a giant tree. His head was splitting and his eyeballs felt red hot. A recent bout of fever had sapped even his tough, seasoned

strength. Imbono returned all too soon with

his report. Leopard trap, sar, and some one lib for fall inside it," he said wooden-

Carson roused himself, and a few paces took him to where a ragged opening yawned in the layer of earth years learning to steal, and cringe, and branches strewed above a deepdug pit. From the depth there came a low, monotonous murmur which puzzled Carson. He bent above the

opening. 'Hullo, down there!" he called. Are you hurt ?" From below a voice answered

speaking in perfect English, but with a marked foreign accent:
"A spike has pierced my leg. shall be a thousand times obliged by buzzing like a wasp's nest.

your assistance. They cleared away the earth and branches, and in the gloom of the could distinguish a small, darkclad figure huddled in a strained position and the gleam of a white face. Imbono unwound a cord from his waist, and Carson was lowered into the pit. It was as the victim of the trap had said, a blunt spike had pierced the muscles of his right calf, on unable to free himself. He lay twisted as he

fallen. "I'm afraid I shall have to hurt Carson said.

The wounded man laughed faintly. "Do not fear, sir; I shall be only grateful. And it is a fact that I am

now in some little pain."
"My word, yes. I'll bet you are!" Carson answered, and proceeded with firm but gentle hands to free the pierced limb. The operation, painful as it must have been, wrung no sound save a faint gasp from the

You've got pluck," muttered admiringly. The other man laughed once more,

en more faintly. "Indeed, I can lay claim to little courage," he murmured.

We must get you up before we can see to it," Carson said.

He made fast the cord, and assisted from below as the men hauled from above Then he himself was pulled him as a dangerous rival. to the surface. And for the first time he realized that the man whom he about his death by torture. It was ad rescued was a priest.

He had apparently collapsed, and

vas lying at the foot of a great tree. His black robe was stained and frayed and torn. He was a very small man, with tiny hands and feet, and lean almost to emaciation. His wrinkled face was the color of old ivory, and was lit by a pair of big, eyes. It was an ugly face, dark judged by ordinary standards. Its features were commonplace and features were commonplace and irregular, and the mouth was wide sion of a most potent charm could quaint gesture of his tiny yellow crooked. The nose, which have thwarted their enmity for so could never have been Grecian or long. They hungered to win that little. It is to be remembered that imposing, had received permanent injury from a cruel blow. But had gone his way entirely careless looked at in another way the face of all peril. His adventures and was beautiful. For if ever simple humor and patient faith and bound-

haggard face of that little priest. Carson knelt beside him, and was

stitches. 'I shall be most grateful," the little man answered. other I must be-what would you I am bound say ?-patched up.

upon an errand of importance. 'I am afraid you will have to delay it," Carson said, rather dryly, and filled a pipe. taking a little case from his pocket. Ah, no; my errand brooks no

'But if you can't walk," Carson

lony sinewy fingers. "If I must go upon my hands and neglected the knees, I must fulfill my errand," the many hours. little priest said very simply.

It seemed no moment for argument. Carson cleansed the wound and then stitched it up to the best of his ability. As he had said, he had some little experience of rough surgery, but he was well aware that his want of skill must render the operation exceedingly painful. the little priest bore it in stoical silence, forcing his pale lips to smile. When the bandage had been adjusted he spoke faintly, but with characteristic courtesy.

"I do not know how to thank you sir. I have interrupted your march by my misfortune-

There is no need of thanks." Carson answered brusquely. It is a pleasure to help a man with your

priest raised a deprecating The His yellow face was very Grit? That is courage, is serious. it not? But, sir, you are indeed mistaken. I am not brave at all—" His head drooped forward and he

fainted away. "Just like me," Carson muttered with annoyance. Standing by like a never thinking that the poor little devil would collapse. He can't be very strong, for all his gameness. Where's the brandy,

The small patient swiftly revived. He sat up with just a suggestion of color in his ivory cheeks. You see I am weak and cowardly,

he murmured. Carson shrugged his shoulders. You've been through tortures, I than it needs to go eastward. fancy, in that beastly pit. I've come near to falling in one myself once or

twice. "The time did seem long," the little man admitted simply. occupied myself by going through my office for the day. It helped me to forget the pain."

"Ah, that was what I heard," Carson said. "I wondered what you were saying to yourself down there. Well, it might be worse." I am most "Indeed it might. thankful. With an hour or two of

rest I can renew my journey. But you, sir; I must not add to my obligation by keeping you." 'I'm going to camp here for the night," Carson answered. "But you talk of renewing your journey. You talk of renewing your journey. were making for the coast I sup-

pose, and we might go together—"But, no," the priest answered. "I am journeying eastward." "I was going Carson whistled. inland myself, but I judged it advisable to turn back. I suppose you are not aware that the natives are out' all along the river. They mean bad mischief. Every village is You

can't go forward, sir, even if you were fit to travel." "I can and I must," the priest

answered placidly. "I think you do not realize the danger," Carson persisted, and the little man smiled gently.
"I am not without experience of

this country and its perils," he said. Carson looked at him curiously "Are you, by any chance, Father The priest bowed. "That is my

he answered. "And yours

Carson told him. "If you are Father Michael, it is not for me to presume to advise you," he added. "But here is Imbono with supper. We can talk later about your journey."

As they ate their simple meal Carson could not refrain from a curious study of his guest. They had never chanced to meet before, but by reputation Father Michael was well known to him. For far and wide the little priest was famous. The flock to which he ministered was scattered throughout a vast and savage district. From lonely store to store he journeyed, welcomed by every white man, whatever his religion or its lack, and hated with superstitious fury by most natives. The witch doctors to a man regarded innumerable had been laid to bring not only his death that they desired. His courage was indisputable, beyond all question, and the heart and brain of a man of undoubted valor are invaluable for certain pur-

poses of ju-ju. Death had walked closely Father Michael's side for many year, but he seemed to possess a charmed life. That was, indeed, the witch doctors' own explanation of charm. But so far the little priest But had gone his way entirely careless great. escapes, the moments when he had Carson said very earnestly. "Is your outfaced death by a display of cool

filled a lengthy book. But Father received with a feeble smile. He Michael seldom spoke of his ventur "I've had some little experience of wounds," he said. "If you will which he subjected his law for the same and the subjected his law for the same and the same an ings. He did not appear to treat eyes were twinkling. "If you will which he subjected his lean, frail assistance, for hospitality and for

allow me, I had better put in a few body. It was his habit to joke mildly at the shortcomings of his It was only own physique. 'Somehow or people's lives and bodies that he took

seriously. Father Michael fumbled for his snuff-box and extended it to his host. Carson excused himself smilingly

The little priest inhaled a huge pinch of snuff with simple enjoyment. He had eaten sparingly, but the meal appeared to have restored objected, threading a needle with his strength miraculously. Carson shrewdly that guessed neglected the needs of his body for

"And now about your journey father," he said, "It is really out of the question. I know, of course, from what I have heard of you——" Father Michael smiled with the simplicity of a child.

'Have you indeed heard of me?'' asked. "Now I wonder what it is he asked. that you have heard? There are some, I believe, who are kind enough speak well of my poor singing. Have men spoken to you of that, my

Carson shook his head. "It was of your rashness that I have heard, father," he went on. "They say that no danger will turn you back from your duty.

Then men must speak too well of me, far too well." Father Michael "It is my lasting shame said soberly. that I am at heart but a sorry

coward And it was obvious that he believed

his own words. "Well, you manage to hide it pretty well," Carson said dryly. "I happen to have heard men speak you as the bravest man in West Africa. But never mind we'll admit that they are mistaken if you wish. What I'm getting at is that it will be simple madness for you to go east

ward just now.' Father Michael permitted himself

another pinch of snuff. "It is a promise," he said. "And such a promise as I dare not break. Ah, Mr. Carson, it would take more courage to break that promise for sake of my own wretched safety let me tell you of my errand. Do you know Fernandez's store on the river some thirty miles from here? "Yes. I know it." Carson answered

"Fernandez married, didn't he, not

long ago?' "Yes. Juanita is her name. is only a girl, all unfitted for these wilds, frail and delicate, like a sweet dark flower. All her life she has lived in towns until Fernandez met her. They love, Mr. Carson, in a fashion that it is good to see, but she has not been very happy, that little Juanita. The great river, the stink ing swamps, the wild forest and the wild dark men have terrified her. Fernandez scarcely knew what he was doing when he brought her to these wilds. And yet—they love each other. I was there two months ago; and I could see how things She has been often ill; she longs for other white faces; she is terrified when she must be left alone. It had all worn her to a shadow. Fernandez—he is a good fellow, but he did not quite understand. There are many men who do not quite understand, but it is only because they are very young and strong and

me, who has always been something of a coward, can see more clearly. Father Michael took snuff once more. His face was very earnest, but there was, as ever, a flicker of humor in his old dark eyes. The heat of the day was past, and the fire by which they sat was pleasant enough. Through a ragged opening in the tangled leaves far overhead a white star flashed from

full of courage. An old man like

velvety blackness. "Yes," agreed Carson very gravely, "I am something of a coward myself, and sometimes we cowardly people can understand."

"She spoke to me. I took it as a high compliment that she spoke, for she is one who makes no com-plaints. But she knew that I would not condemn any weakness, being so weak myself. She had no thought of failing Fernandez, although she knew that he would take her back to the town if that would be for her happiness. But she would not think of that. As I have said, they love each other, those two young people. But she had one great fear. lest she should be really ill here in these wilds with no woman, not even a priest, to aid. And so I made her a solemn promise that I would come to her, if it were in my power, when she had need of me. And two days ago word came to me down the river that her need was grave. I started at once, and I would have been with her by dawn, it may be, but for the mis-

fortune of that leopard trap. Carson shrugged his shoulders. Perhaps it was good fortune in disguise. I gravely doubt if you would have reached Fernandez's the dawn. It may well be that you would have gone upon a longer journey by a path of some little Father Michael laughed very soft-

Juanita is young and her need is "It is but going to certain death,"

life not of some value to many less courage found expression in a courage that appealed to superstition human countenance, it was in the as the divinity of madness—an Father Michael drew from his as the divinity of madness — an account of these matters would have shabby robe a handkerchief of quite surprising delicacy and dusted his slender fingers with dainty care. His

'My son, I have to thank you for

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