

MOONDYNE JOE

BOOK FIFTH

THE VALLEY OF THE VASSE

III.

WALKING IN THE SHADOW

There was nothing apparent in the possibilities of Alice Walmesley's new life to disturb the calm flow of her returning happiness. Even her wise and watchful friend, Sister Cecilia, smiled hopefully as she ventured to glance into the future.

But when the sky was clearest, the cloud came up on the horizon, though at first it was no larger than a man's hand.

The visits of Mr. Wyville to Farmer Little's pleasant house were frequent and continuous. Mr. Little's colonial title was Farmer; but he was a gentleman of taste, and had a demesne and residence as extensive as an English duke. He was hospitable, as all rich Australians are; and he was proud to entertain so distinguished a man as Mr. Wyville.

Gravely and quietly, from his first visit, Mr. Wyville had devoted his attention to Alice Walmesley, and in such a manner that his purpose should not be misunderstood by Mr. Little or his wife. Indeed, it was quite plain to them long before it was dreamt of by Alice herself.

From the first, she had been treated as a friend by these estimable people; but after a while she began to observe something in their manner that puzzled her. They were no less kind than formerly; but they grew a little strange, as if they had not quite understood her position in the world.

Alice could discover no reason for any change; so she went on quietly from day to day. Mr. Wyville always drew her into conversation when he came there; and with him she found herself as invariably talking on subjects which no one else touched, and which she understood perfectly.

It seemed as if he held a key to her mind, and instinctively knew the lines of reflection she had followed during her years of intense solitude. Alice herself would have forgotten these reflections, had they not been brought to her recollection. Now, they recurred to her pleasantly, there are so few persons who have any stock of individual thought to draw upon.

She took a ready and deep interest in every plan of Mr. Wyville for the benefit of the convicts; and he, seeing this, made his purposes, even for many years ahead, known to her, and advised with her often on changes that might here and there be made.

One evening, just at twilight, when the ladies of the family were sitting under the wide veranda, looking down on the darkened river, Mrs. Little pleasantly but slyly said something that made Alice's cheeks flame. Alice raised her face with a pained and reproachful look.

"There now, Alice," said the lady, coming to her with a kind caress; "you mustn't think it strange. We can't help seeing it, you know."

"What do you see?" asked Alice in bewilderment.

"Mr. Wyville's devotion, dear. We are all delighted to think of your marriage with so good and eminent a man."

Alice sank back in her chair, utterly nerveless. It was so dark they did not see her sudden paleness. She held the arms of her chair with each hand, and was silent for so long a time that Mrs. Little feared she had wounded her.

"Forgive me if I have pained you, Alice," she said kindly.

"O, no, no," said Alice, with quivering lips; "I thank you with all my heart. I did not know—I did not think—"

She did not finish the sentence. Mrs. Little, seeing that her rallying had had quite another effect from that intended, came to Alice's aid by a sudden exclamation about the beauty of the rising moon. This was successful; for ten minutes every eye was turned on the lovely crescent that rose, as bright as burnished silver, above the dark line of forest. In the midst of this admiration, Alice slipped away from the happy group, and spent the evening alone in her own room.

Alice's face became blank with disappointment; her hands sank on her knees.

"O, do not say that it was left there by accident or by careless hands. I cannot think of that. I have drawn so much comfort from the belief that your kind heart had read my unhappiness, and had discovered such a sweet means of sending comfort. Do not break down my fancies now. If you did not give it to me, you prompted the act? You knew of it, Sister, surely you did?"

"No, I did not know of it until it was done. I should never have thought of it. It was thought of by one whose whole life seems devoted to others and to the Divine Master. Do not fear that careless hands put the flower in your cell, Alice. It was placed there by Mr. Wyville."

"By Mr. Wyville?"

"Yes, dear; it was Mr. Wyville's own plan to win you back to the beautiful world. I thought you knew it all the time."

"It was nearly five years ago; how could Mr. Wyville have known?" There was a new earnestness in Alice's face as she spoke.

"He had learned your history in Milbank from the governor and the books; and he became deeply interested. It was he who first said you were innocent, long before he proved it; and it was he who first asked me to visit you in your cell."

Alice did not speak; but she listened with a look almost of sadness, yet with close interest.

"He was your friend, Alice, when you had no other friend in the world," continued Sister Cecilia, not looking at Alice's face, or she would have hesitated; "for four years he watched your case, until at last he found her whose punishment you had borne so long."

"Where did he find her?" Alice asked, after a pause.

"He found her in the jail of your native village, Walton-le-Dale."

"Walton-le-Dale?" repeated Alice in surprise; "he took much trouble, then, to prove that I was innocent?"

"Yes; and he did it alone."

"Mr. Sheridan, perhaps, could have assisted him. He was born in Walton," said Alice, in a very low voice.

"Yes, Mr. Sheridan told me so when he gave me the package for you at Portland; but he was here in Australia all the years Mr. Wyville was searching for poor wretched Harriet. But come now, Alice, we will leave that gloomy old time behind us in England. Let us always keep it there, as our Australian day looks backward and sees the English night."

Soon after, Alice started to return to her bed. She lingered a long time by the placid river, the particular she had heard recurring to her and much disturbing her peace. In the midst of her reflections she heard her name called, and looking toward the road, saw Mr. Wyville. She did not move, and he approached.

"Guilty!" she said—in a strange voice.

"Miss Walmesley, I am deeply grieved at having introduced this subject. But I thought you knew—Mr. Sheridan, I thought, intimated as much. The woman he loved is the unhappy one for whom you suffered. Her husband is still alive, and in this country. I brought him here, to give him, when she is released, a chance of atonement."

A light burst on Alice's mind as Mr. Wyville spoke, and she with difficulty kept from sinking. She reached for the low branch again; but she did not find it in the dark. To preserve her control, she walked on toward the house, though her steps were hurried and irregular.

Mr. Wyville, thinking that her emotion was caused by painful recollections, accompanied her without a word. He was profoundly sorry that he had given her pain. Alice knew, as well as if he had spoken his thought, what was passing in his mind.

As one travelling in the dark will see a whole valley in one flash of lightning, Alice had seen the error under which Mr. Wyville labored, and all its causes, in that one moment of illumination. Then, too, she read his heart, filled with deep feeling, and unconscious of the grief before it; and the knowledge flooded her with sorrow.

At the door of the house, Mrs. Little met them with an air of bustle.

"Why, Alice!" she exclaimed, "two gentlemen coming to dinner, and one of them an old friend, and you loitering by the river like a school-girl. Mr. Wyville, I believe you kept Alice till she has barely time to put a ribbon in her hair."

Mr. Wyville, with some easy turn of the subject, covered Alice's disquiet, and then took his leave, going to Perth, to return later with Sheridan and Hamerton.

"Dear Mrs. Little," said Alice, when his horse's hoofs sounded on the road, "you must not ask me to dine with you to-night. Let me go to the children."

There was something in her voice and face that touched the kind matron, and she at once assented, only saying she was sorry for Alice's sake.

"But you will see Mr. Sheridan?" she said. "Mr. Little says he was very particular in asking for you."

"I will see him tomorrow," said Alice; "indeed, I am not able to see any one to-night."

An hour later, when the guests arrived, Alice sat in her unlighted room, and heard their voices; and one voice, that she remembered as from yesterday, mentioned her name, and then remained silent.

TO BE CONTINUED

FIRST INSTALLMENT

High Mass was finished at Larnon and the organist played a solemn march as the good country-folk and fishermen moved slowly out of the little church. The strong sunlight dazzled their eyes; the salt tang of the sea was in the air. Not far away the great blue waves danced and splashed merrily in the wind and sunlight. Some of the people paused to look out on the restless, heaving sea; others left somewhat hurriedly. There was great confusion. Little boys and girls were darting here and there among the backing, stamping horses, and everywhere there were sounds of pleasant laughter and of turning weans.

Martin Elkin saw that his wife and daughter were comfortably seated in the wagon; then, as they drove off, he went to the door of the sacristy and stood waiting. Father Kerr had sent for him.

The old man felt somewhat nervous on being thus summoned, so many distressing things had befallen him during the past few years that he now regarded all such calls as foreboding trouble. He hoped his son Charlie was well at the seminary. Perhaps—but he shook his head by way of dispelling his fears and closed his jaws firmly.

A quick step sounded; then the priest came out through the door. He was a young man with a bright, friendly face, a kind smile shadowing his eyes. He shook the hand of the older man warmly, then opened a breviary and took out a faded paper, smiling away the old man's fears as he slipped the book under his arm in order to read the telegram more easily.

Never had such good news come to the old father. The telegram was from the Bishop and it read thus: "Prepare for ordination of Charles Elkin within the month." The old man bowed his head, but said nothing. The priest gave him the telegram and passed on to the presbytery. Old Martin gazed after him, the yellow paper fluttering in his trembling hand. Then he went back into the church and knelt down before the Tabernacle, in tearful gratitude. The past few years, with their burden of trials and failures, had stooped his shoulders, but they had brought his heart very near to God.

He left the church and walked, hat in hand, towards home. His head felt a little dazed, for it was a long time since he had received good news. The great February thaw of four years before had spoiled tons and tons of fish which he had bought to ship, depending on the usual cold weather to keep them in good condition. This was the beginning of a series of disappointments and failures. Before this he had lived in comfort; but ever since it had been very hard to keep the lad in the seminary. However,

he had managed to pay for his education, though, as a result, many frugal meals were eaten in the little house by the sea. And often in the long winter evenings, when father and mother and daughter sat before the fire in the little sitting room, the talk turned low to save the oil, they talked of still greater sacrifices they might make in order that Charlie might have the books he needed to complete his course. And away in the Convent of the Ursulines, Mary, known as Sister St. Francis, passed many a silent vigil under the sanctuaries, praying to God to help her parents, so that her brother might finish his course.

In vacation time, when the lad was home, many little strategies were used to hide their poverty from him, in order that he might not learn how great sacrifices they were obliged to make for him. They succeeded fairly well; though he guessed things were not so prosperous as they seemed. And often when he was back again at the seminary, and when the wind blew about the solid walls of stone, would think of the three in the little white house which trembled under the force of the roaring winds from the stormy sea; and he would console himself by the thought that it would not be long till he would be able to help them a little at home. And when he would write to his father, telling him of his hopes, the old man would smile wisely, and he would say quietly to himself, "Yes, Charlie, you will be able to help us; and you will be able to."

At dinner Martin Elkin told his wife and Annie the news. The mother wept quietly. Annie stood up and moved quickly till she stood behind her father's chair; then the strong young arms went around the old man's neck and the hands clasped over his chest. The head bent down and the sweet lips of the child kissed the white, wrinkled cheek of her father.

The night before the ordination old Martin walked for a long time, back and forth, along the bank above the sea.

"Tomorrow his boy would be a priest; and soon he would see him standing, white-robed, at the altar of God. In the hands of his son the bread and the wine would be changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. How could he ever thank God enough? He stopped in his walk and looked far down through the darkness to where the great steady beams themselves out over the dark sea, warning sailors of the rocks and shoals. Hundreds of times he had seen the light shining so; and he had passed on without any further thought as to its being there. To night, however, he saw how beautifully symbolic it was. For centuries ago, on the mountainside, had not the Master likened His followers to a light shining in the darkness? "Ye are the light of the world," He had said. Was not Charlie to be a successor to those followers? He supposed the lad was asleep. But away in the town, kneeling before the Tabernacle in the Bishop's private chapel, Charlie was praying under the faint glimmer of the sanctuary lamp. Long after he finished his prayers he knelt there silently, thinking of something. He did not know that he was thinking of what his father called "the first installment."

The "great day" dawned and the sun came up out of the sea clear and bright. Long before the time set for the beginning of the ceremony the little church was filled with friends of the lad. There were many—old and young and middle-aged—who were proud of him; for all through the years of his college course he had not changed his pleasant ways. He had come at vacation time with the old pleasant smile and the warm grip of the hand. They felt that he belonged to them; and as they waited there for his appearance, many a beautiful prayer went up to the Queen of the clergy, asking her to protect the lad and keep him holy all the days of his life.

Up in the little tower of the church the bell sounded, and when it stopped the door leading from the sacristy opened and the procession filed into the sanctuary. Charlie, clothed in the long white alb and gold-fringed stole, looked pale and as if he were a candidate for priesthood, usually do after the first years of seminary training. He carried on his arm the other vestments worn by the priest at Mass.

Annie, who was in the pew with her father and mother, after one long look of affection at her brother, counted the clergy. Besides the Bishop and Father Kerr, there were eight priests, some of whom had come a great distance. Old Father McMullan, with his kind, spectacled eyes and double chin, had come from ten miles beyond Fir Point in a fishing-boat. The mist began to gather in old Martin's eyes. Just twenty-five years ago the old priest had baptized Charlie.

The ceremony progressed. Annie watched the priests intently as they put on their stoles. She followed each one with her eyes, as after the Bishop and his assistants had imposed hands on her brother's head, they came forward to do the same. She wondered if Charlie knew that it was Father McMullan who pressed so heavily on his head.

She watched her brother as he received the vestments; and noticed that the last one—the chasuble, she thought it was called—reached no lower than his elbows. She knew that when the pins would be removed

from this, and it would fall to its full length, her brother would have already received all the powers of the priesthood.

When he came down from the altar where he had been kneeling at the Bishop's knee, his hands were clasped and a white cloth was wrapped around some of his fingers. She knew what that meant; the hands of her brother had just been anointed with the oils of priesthood. She did not look at her father; she felt that the strong man was weeping. Then she heard him pray: "O my God, I thank Thee! I thank Thee!" And then, "A priest of God!"

When the chasuble was lowered, and when at the Bishop's command the choir had sung "O What Could My Jesus Do More?" the young levite stood up, vested in all the dignity of God's holy priesthood. He came over to the sanctuary rail, accompanied by the Bishop. His Lordship invited the parents of the young priest to come to receive his first blessing.

They advanced to the rail and knelt down. The old father bowed his gray head, and the young priest, with all the love of his strong heart and all the warmth of his priestly fervor, raised his eyes and his hands towards heaven. The hands, fresh from the holy oils, came down gently, yet firmly, on the head of the old father, and rested there; and his son, for the first time, spoke the words of his priestly blessing: "May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost descend upon you and remain forever. Amen."

Old Martin had received the "first installment"—B. J. MURDOCK, in the Rosary Magazine.

THE EPISCOPALIANS' PAGEANT

At the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, held last month in St. Louis, an appeal was made to the general public in the form of a dramatized argument for continuity, the thing which seems to be nearest to the hearts of Episcopalians. This visualized argument took the form of a "Pageant of the Church," which has been described as "an entertainment with a purpose" by the Rev. George Long, who designed and produced it. It is this pageant, as shown forth in the official program for the occasion, which makes one wonder whether laughter or tears, whether pity or indignation is more appropriate for the occasion.

Many committees had labored hard in the production of the pageant, numerous members of various congregations had rehearsed diligently for it, the performance itself won encomiums from the secular press, and so the affair was probably a considerable theatrical success. But sound argument or presentation of solid facts as a basis for the all-important claim there was none. If the result were to be judged by the showing made by the "Committee on Historical Research," then failure was written large across the whole affair.

One might pity the failure, if the efforts were made in a good cause and after honest striving for a sacred object; or one might deplore the sad spectacle of sincere souls wandering in the mists. But with the program of the pageant as evidence, a program enriched by special papers by supposed experts, clarified by descriptive notes by the designer and producer, rounded out with the words of the "episodes" from the pen of another minister of the Episcopal Church, the Catholic reader must gasp at the colossal ignorance displayed or burn with indignation at the dishonest attempt to throw dust in the eyes of sincere souls.

In nine "groups" the history of Christ's Church is presented to the eye and ear; the period of two thousand years is traced from the day of Pentecost to the present gathering of the "Protestant Episcopal Church." One might pass by the account of the Council of Jerusalem as entirely edifying and innocuous were it not for the fact that the proceedings are shown to be under the entire supervision of St. James. St. Peter is mentioned indeed but is not given the place which is his in the record of the Acts of the Apostles. Was that an oversight or was it considered an unimportant detail? Who knows? But in the following episode of the "Council of Nicea," one cannot help asking why the presidency of the Council is put down as being in the hands of Constantine and of Eusebius of Antioch. Why is no mention made of the Hosius of Cordoba and of the priests, Victor and Vincentius, who were the Papal Legates and who signed the acts of the Council before the Eastern Bishops? But the perplexed were doubtless enlightened by the subsequent assertion about "the rise of the Papacy in the sixth century" under the "masterful man" Gregory the Great, who introduced into southern England the Christianity "which was to fuse with that still existing in the north and in Wales, and so to produce the English Church." So Gregory is counted among the authors of the freest spirit in modern Christianity!

Of course, we are treated to the "truth" as to the unflinching opposition between the old English Church and Rome, an opposition which, on the statement of the authors of the written accompaniment of the pageant, passed away. We also have the glorification of "Wylif and men of like vision," because of whom

"the Church emerged from medieval darkness." It would be so comforting if the singers of this old tune could be made to realize that the Middle Ages can be "called dark only by those whose minds are in darkness." The printing press by multiplying the Bible "freedom of thought, the inalienable right of everyone, was to be restored." It was restored with a vengeance, and the end is not yet.

The only Catholic Church in England before the so-called Reformation was the one which recognized the spiritual headship of the Pope and recognized it as a vital part of the Church organized by Christ. If the Church of England and her "emancipated" daughters can claim continuity, it must be with this Church. The Rev. George Long tells us that "the temporal authority of the Pope" was repudiated; that "in matters spiritual the English Church never severed herself from Rome, it was solely the act of the Roman Curia." What does Mr. Long mean by that? The mystery grows, for on the very next page of the program we are told that a bill of Parliament made Henry "the Supreme Head of the Church;" and thus "the English Church, without disturbing its historical continuity, became independent of the authority of Rome." Wonderful, wonderful, historical continuity! The spiritual headship of Christ's Church is transferred from the Pope, the Successor of Peter, whom Christ placed to rule His Church "all days even to the consummation of the world" to the hands of the King, and this by the power of Parliament. Later "Edward VI. formulates articles of religion and composes a Prayer Book" a function, of course, of the temporal power, and, still there is no "disturbance of historical continuity." The Church of England is the legitimate successor of the pre-Reformation English Church!

There is no foundation for the claim of continuity between the two. Continuity means a successive existence without constitutional change; to be the successor of another means to enter into the place of that other for the fulfillment of the same functions and under the same principle of accession to power. Between the Catholic Church in England before the Reformation and the Anglican Church there is no such succession. The old Church held its power from God and subject to Christ's Vicar on earth, the Roman Pontiff. The new church holds its power as a servant of the Crown and of Parliament, rejecting the headship of the Pope. In this country, for the mandate of Parliament the votes of the laity has, in large measure, been substituted, as was shown in the present convention, when the lay vote overrode the will of the clergy even regarding something so sacred as a Sacrament of the Church of Christ. Continuity in Apostolic succession! One might as well say that the French Republic which sprang from the French Revolution, was the successor of Louis XVI.; that the United States of America is the successor of Great Britain in this country; that the Bulgarians are successors of the Turks in the new lands added after the last Balkan war. It was not a succession, it was a revolution for those who looked upon it as warranted, a rebellion for those who opposed its principles. But for neither can it stand as a continued succession.

The question of continuity of succession is chiefly the question of jurisdictional succession; the succession of Orders is of secondary importance. A church might preserve intact succession in Sacred Orders, though the line of Apostolic jurisdiction had been broken. Such is in fact the condition of the Greek and Russian Churches. Yet the English Church has not even preserved this; for it has no Orders.

The Rev. George Long tells us that "the English Church retains her autonomy" through the "consecration of Parker," and makes the following statement: "The question of the validity of English Orders is nearly ceasing to be an open one with opponents; position after position has been abandoned by impugners. . . . Archbishop Matthew Parker was consecrated by at least two bishops who had themselves been consecrated according to the Sarum rite, viz.: Barlow and Hodgkings." Of course, the writer would have one infer either that the intentions of the many and learned Catholic scholars are not worthy of being considered or that they too have receded from their position on the question. But we maintain of course that for Catholics the controversy has been ended by the exhaustive research and strong presentation of the matter by the Roman decree on Anglican Orders. Is the last sentence from the pen of the Rev. Mr. Long merely weak or is it designedly misleading? Why, even one of the "impugners" could have made out a better historical case than he has done, and that too without the misleading statement that "Parker was consecrated." The question is whether he was validly consecrated; and the contention against the Anglican claim is that he was not, because of an essential defect in the form of ordination used and in the intention of those who consecrated him. A cursory perusal of Father Smith's article on Anglican Orders in the "Catholic Encyclopedia" would have shown wherein lay the objection against the validity of the Anglican Orders, which has not "been abandoned by impugners."

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