

MOONDYNE JOE

THE GOLD MINE OF THE VASSE

BOOK FOURTH

THE CONVICT SHIP

X.

DEAD-SEA FRUIT

From the moment that Will Sheridan had recognized Draper in the captain of the *Houquemont*, his mind was filled with an acute fear that Alice Walsley might suddenly come face to face with the wretch who had blighted her existence. Such a meeting might be fatal—it certainly would be grievous.

It was the sudden touch of this fear that made Sheridan walk so quickly to his room on the night of the recognition. It came like a flash; and he deemed it best to consider his course of action calmly. As sailor as he was, he knew that the commander of a ship usually had absolute power over all on board. He had observed, however, that Mr. Wyville, on one or two occasions, had assumed an authority in certain matters relating to the prisoners. This gave him comfort. In case Draper recognized Alice Walsley on the ship, that instant, Sheridan resolved, he would make known the whole terrible story to Mr. Wyville, and avert intended evil, if possible by fear, if necessary by force.

Meanwhile, Sheridan saw Sister Cecilia, who knew that he was an old friend of the innocent and much-wronged girl and requested her to keep Alice at all times off the main deck. He gave no reason for the request. "But, Mr. Sheridan," said the nun, thinking of Alice's health, "she must come into the open air some time." "It were better not—better not," answered Sheridan, in a troubled mind; "it were better that she should remain all day in the hospital."

"In the hospital!" repeated the wise little nun, with a plying smile. She evidently saw, more clearly than any one on board, the strange complications around her. The hearts of at least four of the principal actors in the sorrowful drama were open to her eyes; she saw the miserable Harriet Draper, and her guilty husband.

But even Sister Cecilia, wise as she was, did not know that there was a fifth heart deeply concerned in the play. As she repeated Sheridan's words, her pitying smile died away into lines of sorrow, seeing how blindly he would turn Alice's steps from one danger to a deeper one. She recalled, and with a shudder, the supreme desolation and misery of that one who now spent her days in the hospital.

"Do not fear, Mr. Sheridan," she said, as she went on her way of mercy; "Alice will be safe. She will remain in the hospital."

Taking this as an agreement with his request, Mr. Sheridan resolved that his conduct toward the captain should be absolutely reserved, until the vessel reached port. Then, what to do was beset with difficulties. That dire punishment should overtake the villain was clear; but what if his public arraignment would disturb the peace of Alice, whose slowly-healing wounds would thus be torn open?

Instead of coming to a decision, Sheridan resolved that on the first opportunity he would lay the whole matter before Mr. Wyville, and follow his advice. Soon after entering the tropics, the *Houquemont* had caught the trade winds, and sailed swiftly down the level seas. Her tall masts dwindled Pigmy-like as she passed beneath the awful shadow of Tenerife. Her sky-sails cut a line on the cliff a finger's breadth from the sea; while above her towered into the air the twelve thousand feet tremendous pinnacle. She coasted the great Northwestern bulge of Africa; and here for the first time since leaving England, her speed was checked; the sea lost its ripples, but kept its waves, that rose and fell slowly, with long monotonous rolls, like an ocean of molten glass. The sails of the *Houquemont* slapped backward and forward, the ropes hung useless, the pennant clung down the mast. The convict ship was becalmed, off the coast of Africa, seven degrees above the Line.

The faces of the ship's officers grew serious when the wind died. They did not welcome a calm in such a latitude, and at that season. The heat was intense and continuous, scarcely lowering by ten degrees at night. "I wish we were five degrees to the westward," said Sheridan to Mr. Wyville, his old marine lore recurring to him; "I hate this Gulf of Guinea."

"Why?" asked Mr. Wyville, standing in shade of a sail, while the young military officer sat beside Sheridan on the rail. "I hate it for its sharks; you can't dip your hand in this water, for a thousand miles South and East, without having it snapped off. I hate it for its low coast, where so many splendid ships have sailed straight to destruction. I hate it for its siroccos, whirlwinds, and above all, I hate it for its fevers. I don't think there's anything good about the coast of Guinea."

"That is a bad saying, certainly," said the military officer. "Yes; and it's quite true," continued Sheridan. "No one can say a good word about this coast."

"Not so fast, not so fast," said Mr. Wyville, smiling at Sheridan's earnestness. "On this very coast,

within two hundred miles of us, is being solved one of the most interesting political problems in human history. Yonder lies a settlement with a national story unequalled for dignity and pathos."

Sheridan and the young soldier looked up, astonished. "What is it?" asked Sheridan. "The Republic of Liberia," said Mr. Wyville.

Sheridan looked at the soldier, who, at the same moment, looked at him. They both smiled broadly, confessing their ignorance.

"I was too busy with sandalwood," began Sheridan. "And I with tactics," said the soldier. "But what is this Republic, sir?"

"A new country, honestly acquired, said Mr. Wyville; 'the only country on earth not torn by the claws of its rightful owners. A country where slaves have peacefully founded a nation of elevated freedom; where black men have faced God in manly dignity, and declared their right to wipe out the Scriptural curse; whose citizenship is an honor to the holder, and whose citizens are an honor to mankind.'"

"Who are the citizens?" asked the surprised officer. "Slaves from America!" said Mr. Wyville with an earnestness that made them forget the heat; "men who bear on their bodies the marks of the lash, and on their minds the rust of accursed laws; men who might be pardoned for hating their kind. God bless them!" and, as he spoke, he looked away in the direction of the land; the kindest and most amiable race on earth. They have carried with them from the great Republic of the West only that which was good—its first principles. Its unrepentant practices they have left behind."

"Will they not become corrupt?" asked Sheridan. "When?" "When they become rich," said the officer innocently. "It is to be feared," answered Mr. Wyville. "But they have one safeguard."

"What is that?" "Their climate is deadly to white men," said Mr. Wyville. The appearance of Captain Draper, coming from his stateroom, interrupted the conversation. The young officer stopped to chat with him, while Mr. Wyville and Sheridan walked to the other side of the poop.

"There are two powers of government represented on this ship," said Sheridan, determined to bring the conversation to the point he wished to speak about; "which is in command—the civil or military?" "The representative of the Comptroller-General of Convicts, the actual authority over the criminals in Western Australia."

"Then we have a representative of the Comptroller-General on board?" "No." "Pardon me, Mr. Wyville: you speak riddles to-day. You said a moment ago that every convict ship had such a representative."

"Yes; unless it have the Comptroller-General." "Then we have—Are you the Comptroller-General?" "Yes. The office was vacant, and at the request of the Prime Minister I accepted a temporary appointment. I am glad it was offered; for it will enable me to see our new law fairly started."

The evening had closed in as they conversed, and now the shade became somewhat tolerable. Mr. Wyville and Sheridan had drawn their deck chairs toward the wheel-house.

"I am glad there is a power on board above that of the scoundrel who commands the ship," said Sheridan, sternly, after a long pause. Then he continued rapidly: "Mr. Wyville, I have feared every day that I should have to strangle the wretch; but something always prevented. By some strange fatality there is on board this ship a woman whom I have loved all my life, and who has been mortally wronged by this man. I have come on this ship only to protect her."

Sheridan's lowered voice was husky with deep emotion. Having said so much he remained silent. Mr. Wyville had been looking out on the glassy and slow roll of the westward," said Sheridan, his lips and mouth closed with a gradual compression, and a light almost of alarm came into his eyes. He was thinking of Alice Walsley.

"You have loved her all your life," he repeated slowly, still looking at the sea. "Since I was a boy—and she loved me once."

"Mr. Wyville was about to speak; but it seemed as if he changed his mind. Still his lips moved, but he said nothing. "Who is she, and where?" he said after a pause, and in his usual calm voice. "She is a prisoner," answered Sheridan; and she is confined in the hospital."

"In the hospital!" cried Wyville, starting to his feet, with almost a cry of joy; then, seeing Sheridan's face, he controlled himself.

"That unhappy one!" "Yes," said Sheridan, sadly, thinking that so he described Alice Walsley.

"God help you, my friend! yours is a terrible grief." "I have feared that he would see her, or that she might see him."

"Fear no more," said Wyville, tenderly; "I have taken measures to prevent such a meeting." "You knew, then?" asked Sheridan, surprised. "I knew his guilt—but not your sorrow. I knew that he and she were on this ship. It was I who brought him here; and I had before hand secured her confinement during the voyage in the hospital."

Sheridan was surprised at this, having so lately spoken to Sister Cecilia on the subject. But she set it down to the customary thoughtfulness of Mr. Wyville. "I cannot speak my gratitude to you," continued Sheridan; "your visit to her prison awakened in her the life that wrong and grief had crushed. I know the whole story, and I have longed to speak my gratitude."

Mr. Wyville deemed that Sheridan referred to his visit to Harriet Draper in Walton-le-Dale. But how could Sheridan have discovered it? He had certainly never communicated with Harriet Draper. "How did you learn of my visit to her?" asked Mr. Wyville. "From the governor of Millbank."

"Ah—yes; I told him." Sheridan felt a great relief from this confidence. He asked Mr. Wyville's advice as to his conduct toward Draper during the voyage; and was glad to find that it coincided with his own view; to treat him with cold neutrality until the *Houquemont* had landed her passengers and had ceased to be a government ship.

When Sheridan had gone to his room, Mr. Wyville remained on deck alone. His heart was strangely happy that night, indeed, he was oppressed by the weight of his friend. For one moment he had feared that the next would crush to death something that had grown within him like a new and sweeter life. As he recalled the scene, his heart stood still with the fear, even in fantasy.

"Thank God!" he murmured, as he watched the moon rise, red and large, on the sultry horizon. "One blow has been spared!"

XI. THE FEVER Mr. Haggart at first had found himself a lonely man on the convict ship. His position was anomalous. He was neither a minister nor a prison officer. Had he been the former, the ship's officers and military officers would have taken him into their confidence; had he been the latter, the convict officials would have been his companions. But he was only a hired drudge, a non-professional. He was called simply the Scripture-reader.

So he was thrown for companionship on the two other lonely passengers, Ben Lodge and Ngarra-jil, who were glad of his company, and entirely ignorant of his position. Mr. Haggart's nature was by no means a bad one; indeed, in other circumstances it would have been an admirable one. He was simply one of those persons who make up the million, who are common vessels to hold that which is put into them. He was a queer mixture of zeal and conceit. His mind had two keys, as these were earnestness and vanity.

Had he been trained as a mechanic, he would have patiently mastered his trade, never improving on what he had been taught; and he would have been vain of his skill, and faithful to it. To give such a man a field of metaphysical labor, to put into his callow hands the absolute spiritual control of hundreds of lives in need of wise spiritual guidance, was an experiment far more injurious to poor Haggart than to the convicts. It is so always. A priest's vestments are too great for small natures, which they injure, if they do not destroy.

He became puffed up with an absurd amount of conceit, that almost amounted to real character; while the convicts, heedless before, only confirmed their opinion that Christianity was a wordy and stiff profession rather than a true saving principle.

When Mr. Wyville humiliated Haggart in Millbank, the blow appeared terrible; but in truth it only struck Haggart where he was puffed. As a man might catch a balloon with a sharp sword, Mr. Wyville's interference and authority had gashed the swelling vanity of the Scripture-reader.

From that day, though he afterwards set out to do Sir Joshua Hobb's dirty work, Mr. Haggart had changed—he was gradually returning to his real nature, which was, as it ought to be, humble, diffident, and commonplace.

"This is a good man," something within him kept saying of Mr. Wyville; "why are you his enemy?" And the answer came, and repeated itself: "Because you are Sir Joshua Hobb's tool."

These thoughts floated through Haggart's mind on his first visit to Australia; and that they had an effect on his conduct was certain. Vague hints and doubts and clews, which Sir Joshua would have been eager to seize, Haggart indeed had found, but had kept to himself.

Since the *Houquemont* sailed he had been especially disturbed in mind. When the incident of the fire came, and he spoke his mind to Mr. Wyville in the hurried words,

"Get out as fast as you can," cried a man in the boat. "And be sure you allow no one from shore near the ship. We have the plague in St. Antonio."

Without another word, the boat's course was changed, and she returned to the town. The crew of the *Houquemont* needed no incentive to work. By 10 o'clock that night, the casks were filled and the ship was under sail.

A fortunate escape! said the medical officer to Sheridan, who did not answer, but looked at the pennant. The wind had changed, and was blowing directly from St. Antonio. Next morning the beautiful island was out of sight. The convicts got plenty of water that day, and their hearts were glad. Toward evening, one of the warders went to the doctor's room, and said that there was a prisoner very ill, who complained of nausea and pains in the head and shoulders. The doctor's face grew pale at the word; but he turned away from the warder.

"Take that man on deck at once," he said, quietly, and place him in the punishment division forward." The warder went to carry out the order. The doctor hurriedly consulted a book, then left his room and walked forward.

The sick prisoner was there before him. The doctor examined him, quickly ordered his treatment, and retired. He joined Mr. Wyville on the poop. "We have the fever on board," he said in a low voice. "A man has been attacked by the worst symptoms."

An hour later, two more convicts complained of sickness. They were taken from the hold, and placed in the cell forward. Next day it was known throughout the ship that the fever, which the sailors and convicts called "the black vomit," was on board; and before nightfall thirty prisoners were seized.

The sick were taken away from the hold at first; but this separation had soon to be abandoned. There was no room for them apart. The hospital was full. Those who took the fever had to lie side by side with their terror-stricken fellows.

Like an angel of comfort, Sister Cecilia tended on the sufferers. Following her steps, and quietly obeying her word, went Mr. Haggart. In the female compartment, where twelve prisoners lay with the fever, Alice Walsley moved ceaselessly in the work of mercy.

On the third day, the chief officer of the ship said to Mr. Wyville—"Captain Draper has the fever." The doctor, shortly after, came from the captain's room, and reported that Draper had, indeed, been seized, but with symptoms of less virulence than the others.

"Who will attend on Captain Draper?" asked the doctor. "He will be unconscious in another hour, and will need care." "I will attend him," said Mr. Wyville, after a pause; "write your directions, doctor, and I will stay beside him to-night."

TO BE CONTINUED

THE ROSARY HOUR Twilight has descended upon the garden. Slowly night enfolds the trees and flowers in her embracing arms. Far above the new moon shines dimly, a faint golden crescent through the azure of the skies.

Up and down the shaded alley, bordered with fragrant box, slowly walks an old lady, "Grande dame" one can not doubt, from the stately cast of her features, and the richness of her long black silk gown, trailing softly along the gravelled path. But her face is very sweet and motherly, and her large brown eyes are filled with tears. Her gown is swept the dead leaves she holds a brown rosary, worn with constant use.

She pauses a moment, closing her eyes, while the tears, overflowing, course down her faded cheeks. Memory is busy in her loving heart. It seems but yesterday that the house was full of children. Today the home nest is empty; the birds have flown. She is alone and lonely, the poor mother. Her life is finished. Comes an instant of poignant regret—of bitterness. She is no longer of any use on earth.

"Of what am I thinking?" she exclaims, half-aloud. "O my God, I have much to thank Thee for. I can at least pray for them—my dear absent children, dwelling forever in my poor old heart. Ave Maria! Ave Maria! May they be good, may they be happy, may they all lead noble and Christian lives. Most holy Virgin watch over them. My sweet daughter, Jeanne—my dear sons, George, Henry."

Still the dead leaves rustle softly under the sweep of the long black gown. Still the pale, trembling lips murmur again and again, "Ave Maria! Ave Maria!" It is dark in the garden now, save for the smile of the pale young moon dropping softly through the trees.

At the same hour, in another part of France, a group of young women on the flowery terrace of a grand chateau were awaiting the return of the hunters. "I have a surprise for you," said the hostess to her visitors. "The gentlemen have arranged a trip to the old Abbey—the ruins, you know, are one of the sights of the neighborhood. Rene de Plazac will explain the architecture; he is a great antiquarian, as you are all aware. He will tell us all about everything; he loves to do it. And,

not to be too serious Raoul, who is inimitable, will mimic some of the politicians and writers of the day. I believe every one has prepared something for our amusement. And we will pass the night at the old Inn of the Three Pheasants, famous for its soft beds and fine cuisine."

Her companions were delighted. From the terrace their voices sounded like a charming concert of birds. "And the children?" questioned one at length, a new arrival, when the echoes had died away—"what is to be done with the children?" "Oh, we will leave them with their 'bonnes.' There are three or four of them, enough to take care of the whole lively brood."

"My little Pierre is, as you know, something of an infant terrible," rejoined the first speaker "and Lyette—somehow I do not like to leave them for the whole day and night."

"Oh, Jeanne!" the others exclaimed reproachfully, while one of them cried: "You belong to another day than ours, Jeanne. You are indeed an old-fashioned mother. Surely you will not give up the excursion on account of the children."

Jeanne did not reply. She looked serious. "Now Jeanne, be sensible. We shall have a most enjoyable day. It will be a rest for you, as well as a pleasure. And there are none of us who appreciate more than you do the beauties of nature, the fresh air—the glorious drive."

"I admit all that," Jeanne responded. "Well, then, it is decided, model mother, that you can leave the babies for a whole day." "Model mother." The words lingered in her ears—that of her own mother, who, at this hour, in the twilight, she knew she must be saying her beads under the trees in the dear old garden. No, that mother would never have left her little ones for a day and a night in the doubtful care of nurses, gathered from here and there, all of them strangers to each other and to the children to be left under their protection.

Jeanne made a desperate effort to assert herself in her rather embarrassing position. Such things require courage, and she was naturally timid—this flower from an old-fashioned garden.

"It is true, Valerie," she said thoughtfully, yet smiling as she spoke. "I do belong to another century than this. I should have been born a few hundred years ago. Laugh at me if you will, but I cannot leave my children for so long a time."

At this there was a general outcry, some of her friends going so far as to ridicule her primitive ideas. But she remained firm and, folding her embroidery, rose to leave the company, saying: "It will soon be dinnertime and my little ones must need attention. They have been on the beach since their nap."

"Jeanne, Jeanne! But you are ridiculous. Surely the 'bonne' can take care of that." But Jeanne resolutely pursued her way to the house, to be greeted by Pierre and Lyette, with their nurse, returning from the beach.

"Oh, mamma!" they cried, running towards her. "We have had such a good time!" "I am glad, dear ones," rejoined the old-fashioned mother. "Come now, Bernadine, we will get them ready for dinner."

During the time of preparation, she was very thoughtful. She could not banish the vision of that dear, delightful garden, and the white-haired woman pacing the box-wood path with her rosary in her hands. When they were ready and Bernadine had departed she softly closed the door.

"Now, dear ones," she said, "let us kneel down and say a decade of the Rosary, as we used to do at grandmamma's. Twilight is falling, the new moon is beginning to peep through the trees. Come, darlings. It is Rosary time. Ave Maria! Ave Maria!"

Always he had wished to be a priest. And for three years now he had been studying, praying, leading the austere life which is necessary to form the souls of those whom God has chosen to help save the souls of others. But lately he had been languid, distracted, performing his duties perfunctorily, one might say suffering from an ennui that comes to the bravest and purest at some time of their preparation for the priestly career. His superiors had only words of praise for him; and he deserved them all. But this evening he sat alone in his little cell, fatigued and listless; everything looked dark.

He arose and went to the window, stretching his arms as he gazed listlessly into the courtyard where several young men in cassocks, like himself, were walking together, with books in their hands.

"I wonder," he soliloquized, "if any of them ever feel as I do now? What is the matter with me? Is it only a temptation of the Evil One—or can it be possible, after all these years, I am only just learning that I have not a true vocation? Of what use these dry studies—these minute subtleties? Are they necessary? The Apostles knew them not. I seem to understand nothing, am interested in nothing. I am tired—tired! Yes, it is a grand thing to offer the Holy Sacrifice, a wonderful thing. And to be able to hold thousands with the spell of fine oratory—to convert sinners—to save souls. But what long years of preparation and sacri-

AUTOMOBILES LIVERY GARAGE
R. HUESTON & SONS
Livery and Garage Open day and Night,
479 to 483 Richmond St. 586 Wellington St.
Phone 421 Phone 441

FINANCIAL
THE ONTARIO LOAN & DEBENTURE COY
Capital Paid Up, \$1,750,000. Reserve \$1,450,000
Deposits received, Debentures issued, Real Estate Loans made. John McClary, Pres.; A. M. Smart, Mgr.
Offices: Dundas St., Cor. Market Lane, London.

PROFESSIONAL CARDS
FOY, KNOX & MONAHAN
Barristers, Solicitors, Notaries, &c.
Hon. J. J. Foy, K.C. A. E. Knox, T. Louis Monahan
E. L. Middleton George Keough
Cable Address: "Foy"
Telephones: (Main 799)
Offices: Continental Life Building
CORNER BAY AND RICHMOND STREETS
TORONTO

H. L. O'ROURKE, B. A.
(Also of Ontario Bar)
BARRISTER, SOLICITOR, NOTARY
Money to Loan
Suits, Bonds of Trade Building,
231 Eighth Avenue West,
CALGARY, ALBERTA

JOHN T. LOFTUS,
Barrister, Solicitor, Notary, Etc.
712 TEMPLE BUILDING
TORONTO
Telephone Main 639

FRANK J. FOLEY, LL. B.
BARRISTER, SOLICITOR
The Kent Building
Corner Yonge and Richmond Streets
TORONTO, ONT.

DENTISTS
DR. BRUCE E. EAD
Room 8 Dominion Bank Chambers
Cor. Richmond and Dundas Sts. Phone 5660

Altars Pulpits Pews
Confessionals Vestment Cases Baptismal Fonts, Etc.
Any style, from the least expensive to the most elaborated.

School Desks Teachers' Desks Laboratory Tables
Prices and full particulars on application.

London Art Woodwork Co.,
London, Canada L.D.

St. Jerome's College
Founded 1864 BERLIN, ONTARIO
Excellent Business College Department.
Excellent High School Academic Department.
Excellent College and Philosophical Department.
Address:
REV. A. L. ZINGER, C.R., Ph. D., PRESIDENT

Funeral Directors
John Ferguson & Sons
180 KING ST.
The Leading Undertakers & Embalmers
Open Night and Day
Telephone—House 373 Factory 543

E. C. Killingsworth
FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Open Day and Night
582 Richmond St. Phone 3971

Read Her Letter
"My husband has suffered for some time with lame back and kidney troubles. He became so bad that work was almost impossible and he had tried so many remedies and got no relief that he had become discouraged. A friend advised him to give Gin Pills a trial, so I sent for a sample box. They did him so much good that he got six boxes and will continue taking them until he is entirely cured."
Mrs. James Harris,
Etc. a box: 6 boxes for \$2.50.
Write for free sample to
NATIONAL DRUG & CHEMICAL CO. OF CANADA, LIMITED
Toronto, Ont. 55

Gin Pills
FOR THE KIDNEYS
"My husband has suffered for some time with lame back and kidney troubles. He became so bad that work was almost impossible and he had tried so many remedies and got no relief that he had become discouraged. A friend advised him to give Gin Pills a trial, so I sent for a sample box. They did him so much good that he got six boxes and will continue taking them until he is entirely cured."
Mrs. James Harris,
Etc. a box: 6 boxes for \$2.50.
Write for free sample to
NATIONAL DRUG & CHEMICAL CO. OF CANADA, LIMITED
Toronto, Ont. 55