

**MOONDYNE JOE**  
**THE GOLD MINE OF THE VASSE**  
**BOOK FOURTH**  
**THE CONVICT SHIP**  
**II.**  
**HARRIET DRAPER**

Four years had passed since Mr. Wyville's visit to Walton-le-dale; and he had heard no word of the woman he had then sought.

During this time the case of Alice Walsley had grown to be a subject of rare interest to this student of humanity. Scarcely a day had passed in all that time that he had not devoted some moments to thinking on the innocent prisoner, and devising some allowable means of affording her comfort and pleasure.

Perhaps the secret of his special observance of this case arose from the fact that beneath the self-imposed suffering he beheld the golden idea. To him this peaceful and silent adherence to a principle was a source of constant interest.

In all those years, Alice Walsley had never heard his name, and had only once seen his interference. The memory of the strong dark face that had then interposed to save her, and the look of kind compassion, were treasured in her heart; but she knew no more than that. Sister Cecilia, perhaps, would have told her who this powerful man was; but she shrank from asking, and she never asked.

About a week after the event in the Committee Room, Mr. Wyville, sitting with Sheridan and Hamerton in his study, received a letter, brought from Scotland Yard by a policeman.

As usual with the group, when not conversing, Sheridan read, and Hamerton lounged.

Mr. Wyville started from his seat with an exclamation, when he had read the letter. He rarely betrayed even the slightest excitement; and Mr. Hamerton would not have been more surprised had a bomb exploded under the table than he was to see Mr. Wyville thrown off his balance so unexpectedly and completely. Hamerton, however, had too profound a respect for his friend to speak his astonishment.

"Thanks, kind and simple heart!" exclaimed Mr. Wyville, holding the letter before him. "You have been faithful to your word for four years; and you shall rejoice for it all your life!"

Then, recollecting himself, he smiled in his grave way and said—

"I have received long-expected news. I have found something I sought. To-night, I must leave London for a few days; so I must say good-by, now."

"Are you leaving England, too?" asked Hamerton.

"No; I go only to Lancashire—to a little village called Walton-le-Dale." He turned to his desk, and was busily arranging his papers.

"Why, what's the matter, Sheridan? You are growing nervous of late. The name of the village took me by surprise, that is all," said Will. He was going on to say that Walton was his native village; but the entrance of Lord Somers temporarily changed the subject. Before it could be resumed, Mr. Wyville had said "Good-by," and the gentlemen took their leave.

The letter which Mr. Wyville had received ran as follows:

"Sir,—The woman Harriet Draper, as was Samuel Draper's wife before he married Alice Walsley, has been arrested for a deadly assault on Draper's sister and is at this present riting in the lock-up of Walton-le-Dale.—Your humble servant.

"BENJAMIN LODGE, Police Officer."

Accompanied by his black servant, Mr. Wyville left London that evening; and on the forenoon of the next day he stepped from the train at Walton-le-dale, and walked toward the police-station or lock-up.

It was a small stone building, containing four rooms, two of which were Officer Lodge's quarters; the third a court-room, with a dock or bar, and a raised desk and seat for the magistrate; and behind this, and opening from it, a strong room, with barred windows, used as the lock-up.

Mr. Wyville pushed the outer door, and stepped at once into the court-room, which was empty. He was about to withdraw, when a door on the left opened, and Officer Lodge, quite unchanged in four years, greeted Mr. Wyville, as if he had seen him only yesterday.

"She was out of horder bad, this time, sir; but I knew she'd turn up some time."

"Many thanks, my friend," said Mr. Wyville; "I had almost concluded you had forgotten."

Officer Lodge was a little hurt at this expression of doubt; but he was quite too mild of temper for resentment.

"Where is the woman?" asked Mr. Wyville.

Officer Lodge pointed to the heavy door of the lock-up, with a grim shake of the head. He sank his voice to a whisper.

"She's a bad 'un she is—worse and worse every time. But now she's done for."

"Done for?"

"Ay, she'll go this time, sir. Seven years at the least. She nearly killed a woman, and she would have killed her altogether if she'd had her way a minute longer."

"Tell me the facts," said Mr. Wyville.

"Well, sir, she were down near Draper's 'ouse all one day, last week, and she hacted queer. They came

for me and told me, and I looked after her all the hafternoon. But she were doing no harm to nobody. She only sat on the roadside looking at Draper's 'ouse. Toward evening she went into Mrs. Walsley's old 'ouse, wich is hopen, and she stayed there an hour. Draper's sister, who was too curious, maybe, went up to the 'ouse, to see what she were doing; and then it began. I heard two voices, one at screaming and tother swearing, and when I ran to the spot, I sees Harriet assauling the woman, chokng her and beating her head against the stones. If I had been half a minute later, there would have been murder."

"Does the prisoner speak to any one?" asked Mr. Wyville.

"No; there's no one to speak to her but me; a d she never hopens her lips to me."

"Can I see her, and speak with her?"

"Yessir," said Officer Lodge; "but be careful—she's not safe."

Officer Lodge carefully locked the outer door, and then approached the lock-up. He knocked on the door heavily with the key, as if to rouse the prisoner. No sound came from within. He turned the key in the lock, and opened the door.

Mr. Wyville entered the lock-up, which was a room about twelve feet square, with one window. A wooden bench ran round three sides of the room, and in the farther corner, upon the bench, was something like a heap of clothes.

It was the prisoner, who sat upon the bench, her back to the wall, her knees drawn up, and her face sunk upon them. A tattered shawl covered her, so that she presented the appearance of a heap of wretched clothes.

She did not move as the door opened, nor for a minute afterwards. But as some one had entered, and the door had not been closed, she became aware of the intrusion. She raised her head, and looked around on the floor, slowly, till her glance fell on Mr. Wyville's feet. Then she raised her eyes, till they rested on his face.

She seemed to have been in a sort of daze or waking dream. She did not take her eyes away, but looked at the strange face before her as if she were not yet awake.

She was a woful wreck of womanhood. Her eyes had cavernous circles around them, and her cheeks were sunken, as if with consuming disease. Her hair, unkempt, was covered with the old shawl, but its straggling locks fell across her forehead. As she looked at Mr. Wyville, some remnant of womanly feeling stirred within her, and she raised a wasted hand and pressed backward the tangled hair from each side of her face.

Wretched as she was, and lost, there was something beneath all the stains that spoke of a face once comely and soft and lovable.

"Harriet Draper!" said Mr. Wyville with unusual emotion in his deep voice, and speaking in a subdued tone.

She moved uneasily at the name, and her large eyes grew fearfully bright.

Harriet Draper, I have been searching for you many years, May God pardon the man whose crime sent you here!"

"Ach!" gasped the woman suddenly burying her face again, as if she had been stabbed in the breast. Then she started, and sprang to the floor, and put her hands on her eyes.

"O God! what did he say?" she hoarsely whispered, as if speaking to herself; "O God! God! to pardon him and not me!"

She took away her hands, and looked severely for a moment at Mr. Wyville. He met her gaze with a severe, greater than her own.

"Yes! God pardon him, for through him you have been made guilty," he said.

"Who are you?" she cried, becoming excited. "Who are you that pretend to know me? No man made me commit crime. You lie! you don't know me! you don't know him!"

Her voice became high with excitement, and her eyes blazed, as with frenzy.

Harriet Draper, I know you and I know him—your guilty husband. I have searched for you for years, to ask you to lighten your soul of one grievous crime. Before long, you will need repentance; for your health is broken, and you cannot die with this terrible burden on your conscience."

"What—what are you talking about?" she asked, still fiercely, but in a lower tone. "What have I done?"

"You have committed murder!"

She looked at him without a word and increased the pitiful fixity of her gaze by raising her hands to press her temples, as if to keep down pain.

"You murdered Alice Walsley's child!"

Her eyes closed, and she gasped at her breast with both hands, and tottered backward sinking on the bench with a long moan.

"You killed the child, and you saw the innocent mother dragged to prison for your crime. You have remained silent for nine years, and destroyed your own life, while she has borne your punishment. You shall now confess, and save her who has suffered so much to save you."

"Ha! ha! ha! ha!" screamed the woman, in a laugh so sudden and hellish, that Mr. Wyville stepped back appalled. He had expected a different result. Again and again the horrid laugh rang through the

place, till it had exhausted the strength of the ferocious and most miserable being who had uttered it, and she sank heavily on the bench.

"Save her!" she cried at length, cleaving her hands, and shaking them over her head. "Ha! ha! save her! Save the false woman that sent me here! Never! I hate her! She brought her suffering on herself by stealing my husband—he was only a fool in her hands!"

She rocked herself to and fro for a time, and then cried wildly—

"Why should I forgive her? Why should I save her? Am I to bear all the misery she made? He was my husband, and he loved me, till she made him false!"

Here she became wildly excited, almost screaming her words.

"If she were free to-day she would seek him out, and go back to him. Why should I save her to do that? Begone! I will not! I know nothing about her. I would rather die than speak a word to save her!"

A fit of coughing, that almost convulsed the miserable frame, now seized the woman; and when it had passed she sank back against the wall exhausted.

Mr. Wyville remained silent; he feared that more excitement might affect her reason, or her life. He looked down upon the unfortunate being with profound pity. He had expected a depraved and selfish nature, shrinking from confession through selfish fear. He saw, instead, a woman's heart, criminal through its own love and truth, and cruelly unjust through jealousy of its rival.

Darkest and saddest of human sights—the good tortured from its straight course until it actually had become evil; the angelic quality in a heart warped by deceit and wrong until it had become the fiendish part.

"O, man, man!" murmured Mr. Wyville, as he looked upon the wreck, but only saw the evil-door beyond her. "Your sin is deeper than the sea. Not here, not here must I seek to right the wrong."

He walked from the place with bowed head. Officer Lodge, without speaking, locked the door, and followed him. Mr. Wyville sat down in the court-room, and after a long pause, said to Officer Lodge—

"Has this man, Draper, ever been here—since the crime was committed?"

"No, sir, he hasn't never been seen; but they say as he has been here; that he came in the night to his own folks once. He can't never live in Walton, sir."

"Has he been outlawed?"

"No, sir, there was no one to go against him. The law let him pass; but the people couldn't stomach him—though they never thought he was as bad as this."

"You have heard, then, what I have said to this woman? It will do no good to speak about it. She has made no confession—nor will she confess till the hand of death is upon her. When is she to be tried for this last offence?"

"In two weeks, sir; and she'll get at least seven years."

"Well, my kind friend, remember she has been cruelly wronged; and so long as she is in your charge, treat her with mercy. She is not the author of her crime and wretchedness."

Officer Lodge promised to be kind, though his heart overflowed when he thought of poor Alice Walsley and her great wrong. He also promised to send by mail to Mr. Wyville a report of Harriet Draper's sentence.

Mr. Wyville thanked him, but offered no reward.

"I shall see you again before long," he said, as he left the little court-room. His journey to London that night was mainly consumed in reflection on the tangled web of crime and injustice in which he had become so deeply interested.

Two days later, Mr. Wyville sat in the office of the governor of Millbank, relating to him the story of Harriet Draper and Alice Walsley.

"Good heavens!" cried the kind old governor; "the case must be brought at once before the Directors."

"No," said Mr. Wyville, "not yet—and not at any time before them. Release cannot right the wrong of this injured woman. She must be cleared by the confession of the criminal—and then we shall send her case to the Queen."

"Well," said the governor, "but how are you to get the confession?"

"This woman, Harriet Draper, will come to Millbank within two weeks. If she does not confess before the convict ship sails, she must be sent to Western Australia next month."

"We never send convicts in their first year," said the governor.

"She must go," said Mr. Wyville, warmly; "break your rule for the sake of justice."

"I'll break it for your sake, Mr. Wyville," said the governor. "I shall put her name on the roll."

"And she must be kept aloof from the others. Can this be done?"

"Yes; we can enter her on the hospital list, and send her before the others to the ship. She will be confined on board in the hospital."

Mr. Wyville held out his hand to the governor.

"I thank you sincerely," he said; "I am deeply interested in this case. When he had gone, the bluff old major walked up and down his office, and mopped his head with his big handkerchief.

"It's like good health and a good conscience to come near that man," he said to himself. "How strange it

is that he should have such deadly enemies!"

III.

A CAPTAIN FOR THE HOUQUEMONT

In Mr. Wyville's house, in the library or study, sat Mr. Hamerton. He had been writing for hours. On the table beside him lay a heap of documents, with large red seals, like little-deeds; and in another heap lay a number of letters, addressed and stamped.

Mr. Wyville entered, and they talked for some minutes in a serious vein. It was evident that Mr. Hamerton was engaged in some more important business than usual, and that he had advised with Mr. Wyville during its progress.

Lord Somers called, as usual, on his way to the Department; and shortly afterward Sheridan arrived. Mr. Hamerton continued to write, and a cursory conversation began, the gentlemen glancing at the morning papers.

An exclamation from Lord Somers broke the commonplace.

"Hello! What the deuce! Why, Hamerton, this must be your place. Are you going to sell Broadwood?"

"Yes," said Hamerton, and he went on with his writing.

"The whole estate and manor house?" asked the peer, in plain astonishment.

"The whole thing," said Hamerton, in the same prosaic tone.

Will Sheridan took the paper, and read the advertisement: Magnificent and historic demesne and manor house of Broadwood—400 acres of rich land—entire village of Broadwood—valuable church living—antique furniture, pictures, armor, etc.—in a word, the entire surroundings of an English aristocrat of the first class, advertised in the daily papers to be sold by auction, not as a whole, but in lots.

"What do you mean by that?" asked Lord Somers; "why not sell the right to one purchaser?"

"Because he couldn't buy it," answered the stolid Hamerton, who was in a mood for apothegms.

"What! you want too much money for it?"

"No, I do not."

"Come, come, Hamerton—this is unkind. Your place is close to mine, and I am naturally interested, independent of my sincere interest in your affairs."

"Well, you spoke of buying the right. Now Somers, no one man could buy or hold the right to so much land as Broadwood, in this populous and poverty-stricken country—yes, poverty-stricken—there are only a few rich people. Eighty out of every hundred are miserably poor. The best a rich man could do would be to buy the title-deeds; but the abstract right of ownership would remain with the farmers who tilled the land."

"I don't understand you," said Lord Somers.

"I propose to sell the deeds to the men who already hold the land by right."

"You will break up Broadwood, and sell it to your farmers?"

"I will."

Lord Somers was seriously affected by this extraordinary announcement; but he knew Hamerton too well to remonstrate or argue.

Mr. Wyville, looking across his paper observed both speakers, and listened to the conversation, evidently pleased.

"You will be no nearer to your republican idea when this is done," said Lord Somers, at length; "you will have sold the land; but the money it brings has not been earned by you."

"Quite true," answered Hamerton.

"Why keep it, then?"

"I shall not keep it."

"Why, Hamerton—what do you mean? What will you do with it?"

"I shall invest it in schools and a library for the people of that section 'for ever,' as the lawyers say. Mr. Wyville and I have been looking at the matter, and we think this money will establish a school with three technical branches—chemistry, engineering, and agriculture."

"And you? will you teach in the schools for a living?"

"Oh no; I am going to Australia."

"To Australia?" said Lord Somers and Sheridan in a breath. Then Sheridan asked—

"Are you going to settle there?"

"Yes; I am tired of Europe. I shall never return here."

"I am glad," cried Sheridan, starting up and seizing Hamerton's hand. "Australia is going to send out the largest-hearted men that ever owned the earth. You will be at home there. You will breathe the freely in such men turn by nature to the magnificent South!"

Mr. Wyville had approached the table with a look of intense pleasure. He laid his hand almost caressingly on Will Sheridan's shoulder. As they were placed, these three men—Wyville, Sheridan and Hamerton—they formed a remarkable group.

"You are dangerous company," said Lord Somers, looking on them with admiration. "You almost tempt me to follow you, or go with you to Australia. When do you sail?"

Mr. Sheridan and I will sail on the convict ship in three weeks," said Mr. Wyville. "Mr. Hamerton will take my steam yacht, and follow when he has settled his plans—perhaps a week later."

"I am dumbfounded," said Lord Somers. "I cannot speak on this new thing. I only foresee that I shall be very lonely, indeed, in London when you have gone."

After some further conversation on this point, Mr. Wyville changed the subject.

"You have engaged a captain for the convict ship?" he said to Lord Somers.

"Yes; Captain Rogers, late of the P. & O. Company's service."

"You were not aware that I wished to engage him for my yacht?" said Wyville.

"No; I should be sorry to take him from you. But his articles are signed now, and good commanders for such a service are not easily found."

"If I find you a suitable captain, and guarantee his command, will you oblige me by cancelling Captain Rogers's commission?"

"Certainly—if you give him instead the command of your steamer."

"Thank you; that is my intention."

"But have you found another captain for the convict ship?" asked Lord Somers.

"Yes—I have been looking into the matter with the view of saving you further trouble. I have settled on a man who is classed as a first-rate master-mariner and commander, and who is now in London, disengaged."

"I shall make a note of it," said Lord Somers, taking out his pocket-book. "What is his name?"

"Draper," said Mr. Wyville; "Captain Samuel Draper."

"That will do," said the Secretary. "I shall have new articles made out. Will you see to it that he is engaged at once, and sent to the ship at Portland?"

"Certainly. I shall attend to it to-day."

Mr. Hamerton and Sheridan, who had been talking together, at the other end of the room, now approached, and the conversation became general. Soon after, Lord Somers said "Good-morning," and proceeded to his Department.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE TEST OF LOVE

Even Mrs. Thomas Thompson, mother of many daughters, admitted that Constance Russell was "pretty nearly handsome," which meant that the latter had all the gifts and graces which constitute beauty.

She had something more, as was dimly felt and either admired or resented, according to the disposition of her companions, even while she was still a school girl at St. Margaret's. She was not unique, to be sure, in her slight, straight, supple figure, a little above medium height, nor in soft and abundant hair and perfect complexion. The wholesome living and the long hours on the heights under the fragrant pine trees at St. Margaret's brought out the grace and glow of health, and these are more than half of beauty—in all the pupils.

But Constance had what Old World folk call a high-bred face and the delicate little hands and feet that go with it. She had, in a word, "style" and the fine instincts of a long line of progenitors educated and used to gentle living. She never was guilty of a fault of taste, nor lost her temper under any of the contrarities of life in a large boarding school.

The Russells were not rich, however, and Constance was in training for the Normal College. The circumstances gave some slight satisfaction to a few envious minds, though Helen Corbett, the daughter of a Chicago multi-millionaire, who intended to supplement her school course with a three years' tour in Europe and the Orient with a chaperon who boasted her Ph. D., would have given her prospects for that subtle refinement which made every stranger ask when Constance appeared, "Who is that exquisite girl?"

Constance had said little of her own plans and prospects, though making no secret of her intention to become a teacher. Naturally she would be the best one possible. Her admirers used her need as a defense of her intense preoccupation with her studies and her habit of always coming out ahead. The average school girl loves not "a grind," and cannot have much heart for a class competition wherein it is all but certain one will lead in such fashion that the second is not worth a thought.

Constance graduated at the head of her class, and her essay, "Out of even the most time-worn attendants at school commencements, it was an earnest and ungrish plea for Catholic women to strive for the high places in the intellectual and business pursuits open to them, and to glorify God and serve the Church by their success. The stately Archbishop was grave and attentive. Constance took all the medals and honors for which the seniors could compete, nor gave sign, save by a slightly increased color, that she recognized the enthusiastic applause as all for her. At her seventh summons to the platform, as he laid the rarely won laurel wreath on her brown tresses, the Archbishop said softly: "My dear child, you have given us a right to expect much of you."

"Even had she heard Mrs. Thompson's comment, 'Certainly, Constance Russell has the plainest and cheapest gown in the class,' it would not have troubled the girl. The serious compliment of one whose words of praise were so few and carefully measured would have neutralized any criticism. He should not be disappointed in her.

She expected much of herself and her firm chin and confident outlook on the world suggested that she was not likely to miss her aim.

Constance left St. Margaret's with the admiration and respect of all her teachers and the warm affection of some of them. But one of these latter, who knew the girl best and loved her most of all, often murmured to her own heart:

"Oh, if my dear child were a little less determined and ambitious! She seems bent on getting the best of earth and heaven as well, and can one have both? Of course, she can't help succeeding and attracting, and if only she keeps up her high motive. But the world, the world! Then Sister Gertrude, who would have willingly given her life for a soul, began a new novena that in the pursuit of temporal success her darling might not forget the reward everlasting.

Of course, Constance was pre-eminently in the Normal College, distinguishing herself there, as at the convent, in literary studies. She was named immediately at the conclusion of her course, and after two years' apprenticeship was recalled to take a place on the faculty of the Normal College. Only twenty-two years of age! sighed teachers growing gray in the service at \$400 a year, as they noted the phenomenal beginning of this young girl who would soon be drawing her maximum of \$1,900; and they marveled what further heights, professional or social, awaited her easy conquest. With her beauty it would be her own fault if she had not made a brilliant match by twenty-five.

There was covert opposition, it must be admitted, to giving this place to a girl who had received all her training antecedent to the Normal College in a Catholic convent but the master, whose choice she was, notified his friend, Frederick Warder, and arranged a meeting with Constance for the fractious members. As usual, she came and saw and conquered.

The families of the faculty made much socially of the beautiful, gifted and unassuming girl, but this affected not her exceedingly level head. She was not aware of the condescension which some of her old friends saw in these attentions. Her profession always came first. She saw the advantage as well as the pleasure of meeting the eminent teachers and the literary lights, resident or visiting in the city of her home. She was a tireless student, but so unostentatious that only her master and a few unusually observant persons realized her advance, "unbasking, unresting." Her beauty and her native social sense suffered not from her intellectual development. Her toilettes were above criticism now, for she was able to exercise her taste, which was as fine here as in all things else. Many a pleasant and well-renewed bit of revision or translation came her way, and with her duty to her family generously done, she had still—for she remembered earlier poverty—a steadily growing bank account.

Reserved force, wisdom, tact and distinction were more and more evident in Constance Russell, and her old teachers at St. Margaret's were righteously proud of her. She spent a week of every summer vacation with them, was faithful through the season to her Sodality meetings, and was always ready with any service in her power. The rector of the parish, the Cathedral, spoke to the nuns with much satisfaction of her exemplary attendance at the sacraments. Yet Sister Gertrude's heart was not at ease.

"Ah, me," she said, "I know the day is near when Constance will have to choose. It is impossible that a soul like hers should not be tested. God keep her faithful, be my sacrifice what it may!"

A few words at the social hour following the April Sodality meeting had roused the nun's solicitude afresh. She was the centre of a group of young matrons, her old-time pupils, when one of them, at sight of Constance on the outer side of the assembly room, exclaimed:

"Perhaps you have heard that Mr. Warder has fallen under her spell."

"She has always got anything she wanted so far," commented another; "and if she wants him, she'll get him, too, but not entirely on her own terms, I fancy. He's a millionaire three or four times over, but he hates religion like a French infidel."

"That may be only gossip," rejoined the first speaker. "Anyhow, Constance can take care of herself and her religion, too."

Sister Gertrude with a chill at her heart, moved away from the group. An older woman, who had been silent through the brief conversation, followed her into the corridor.

"Sister," she said, "I know how you care for Constance. I fear it is worse than Mrs. Wallace says or suspects. I know three or four young men whom Mr. Warder has put on their feet in a business way, and every one of them has dropped his religion. Oh, you would never suspect anything. He is very generous and very plausible, but I fear he gets the price of his help in every case."

"Let us hope there is no truth, then, in the rumor of his interest in Constance," said the nun. Her bell summoned her for a moment. She had the delicate sense of fitness which nuns keep, and it always jarred upon her to hear of the woman as the hunter and the man as the game in the matter of marriage. In that, rumor certainly was unjust to Constance. But this man of position and wealth, this enemy

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