## TWO

## MOONDYNE JOE

THE GOLD MINE OF THE VASSE

V.

## IN SEARCH OF HIS SORROW

Nine years crowded with success ful enterprise had made Will Sheridan a strong man in worldly wisdom wealth. His healthy influence had been felt and acknowledged all the West Australian Colony. His direct attack on all obstacles never failed, whether the barriers over were mountains or men.

He had raised the sandalwood trade into cosmopolitan commerce. In nine years he had made a national industry for the country in which he lived ; had grown rich himself, without selfishly seeking it, and in proportion had made millionaires of the company that employed him.

When men of large intelligence, foresight, and boldness, break into new fields, they may gather gold by the handful. So it was with this energetic worker. His practical mind turned everything into account. He inquired from the natives how they cured the beautiful soft kan garoo skins they wore as bokas, and learned that the red gum, tons of which could be gathered in a day, was the most powerful tan in the world

He at once shipped twenty tons of it to Liverpool as an experiment. The next year he transported two hundred thousand pounds' worth ; and five years from that time, Australian red gum was an article of

car

universal trade. He saw a felled boolah-tree change in the rainy season into a transparent substance like gum arabic; and three years afterwards, West Austra lia supplied nearly all the white gum in the markets of civilization.

One might conclude that the man who could set his mind so persistent-ly at work in this energetic fashion must be thoroughly engaged, and that his rapid success must have brought with it a rare and solid satisfaction. Was it so with Agent Sheridan?

Darkest of all mysteries, O secret heart of man, that even to its owners is unfathomed and occult! Here worked a brave man from year to year, smiled on by men and women, transmuting all things to gold; vigorous, keen, worldly, and gradually becoming philosophic through large estimation of values in men and things; yet beneath this toiling and practical mind of the present was a heart that never for one day, through all these years, ceased bleeding and grieving for a dead joy of the past.

This was the bitter truth. When riding through the lonely and beautiful bush, where everything was rich in color, and all nature was supremely peaceful, the sleepless under-lying would seize on this grief man's heart and gnaw it till he moaned aloud and waved his arms, as if to put physically away from him the felon thought that gripped so cruelly.

While working, there was no time to heed the pain—no opening for the bitter thought to take shape. But it was there always-it was alive under the ice-moving in restless throbs and memories. It stirred at strange faces, and sometimes it beat wofully at a familiar sound.

No wonder that the man who carried such a heart should sooner or later show signs of the hidden sorrow in his face. It was so with Will Sheridan. His worldly work and fortune belonged only to the nine years of his Australian life; but he knew that the life lying beyond

in the long line of Liverpool shipping The man was young, but, with deep his face and recognizing him, marks of care and experience on his face, looked nearly ten years older than he really was. From the face, it was hard to know what was pass-ing in the heart; but that no common emotion was there might be guessed by the rapid stride and the impatient said glance from the steamer's progress to the shore

It was Will Sheridan ; but not the determined, thoughtful Agent Sheri-dan of the Australian sandal-wood evil doin's !' Then William Sheridan felt his trade. There was no quietness in kind's sister's arms on his neck, and his soul now; there was no power of thought in his brain; there was nothing there but a burning fever of the associations of his youth thronged up like old friends to meet him, and longing to put his foot on shore ; and then to turn his face to the one spot to his heart like stormers to a city's that had such power to draw him gate, and seeing the breach, they from the other side of the world. entered in, and took possession. As soon as the steamer was moored,

the second time that night, the strong man bowed his head and heedless of the Babel of voices around him, the stranger passed sobbed—not for a moment as before, through the crowd, and entered the but long and bitterly, for the suppressed feelings were finding a vent at last; the bitterness of his sorrow, streets of Liverpool. But he did not know the joy of an exile returning after a weary absence. He did not so long, and closely shut in, was feel that he was once more near to those who loved him. It was rather to him as if he neared their graves. ing this scene; but after a while, Mary's kind hearted husband entered,

The great city in which he walked a rugged but tender-hearted Lancaswas as empty to him as the great ocean he had just left. Unobservant hire farmer ; and knowing that much was to be said to Will, and that this and unsympathetic, looking straight was the best time to say it, he began before him, and seeing with soul's vision the little coast village at once; but he knew, and Will Sheridan knew, that he began at the of his boyhood, he made his way to farthest point he could from what he the railway station, bought a ticket would have to say before the end. for home, and took his place in the Will Sheridan's face was turned in the shadow, where neither his sister At first, the noise and rush of the

nor her husband could see it, and so train through the cold evening of a winter day, was a relief to the rest-less traveller. The activity fell upon he listened to the story. Will," said his brother-in-law, his morbid heart like a cold hand on tha knows 'tis more'n six years feverish forehead. But, as the sun since thou went to sea, and that gret changes have come to thee since sank, and the cheerless gray twilight then ; and tha knows, lad, thou must crept round him, the people who had expect that changes as gret have come to this village. Thy father travelled from the city were dropped

at the quiet country stations, and took sick about a year after thou sped away to their happy homes. went, and grieved that he didn't hear A man came and lighted a lamp in the carriage, and all the outer world from thee. his people that thou'd turned out a grew suddenly dark. The traveller was alone now ; and, as the names of bad lad, in foreign countries, and had to run away from the ship; and when the wayside stations grew more that news came, it made th' old familiar, a stillness fell upon him, people sorrowful. Thy father took to his bed in first o' th' winter, and was against which he made no struggle. At last, as once more the train moved to a station, he arose, walked dead in a few months. Thy mother followed soon, and her last words slowly to the door, and stepped on the platform. He was at the end of his journey—he was at home. were a blessing for thee if thou were

living. Then Samuel Draper came At home ! He passed through the back from sea, looking fine in his little station-house, where the old blue uniform ; and he said he'd heard porter stared at his strange face and thou'd been drowned on voyage from trange clothes, and wondered why China. He went to sea again, six months after, and he's never been he did not ask the way to the village. here since; and 'tis unlikely," Mary's husband said very slowly, "that he moonlight, On he strode in the glancing at familiar things with husband said very slowly, ever will come to this village any every step ; for ten years had brought little change to the quiet place There were the lone trees h the roadside, and the turnpike, and down all in the hollow he saw the moon's face reflected through the ice in the millpond; and seeing this, he stopped and looked, but not with the outside. ward eye, and he saw the merry skaters, and Alice's head was on his cares shoulder, and her dear voice in ear, and all the happy love of his

boyhood flooded his heart, as he hard monotone : bowed his face in his hands and Did she-Is she dead, also ?" sobbed. Down the main street of the

Nay, not dead," said his brothervillage he walked, glancing at the in-law. bright windows of the cottage homes, Walmsley is in prison ! Will Sheridan raised his head at that looked like smiles on well known the word, repeating it to himself in blank amazement and dread. Then faces. He passed the post office, the church, and the inn; and a few steps more brought him to the

ad it.

What became of Alice Walmsley?

he stood up, and faced round to the two people who sat before him, his corner of his own little street. The windows of the Drapers' house were lighted, as if for a feast or merry-making within; but he passed on rapidly, and stopped before the sister hiding her weeping face against her husband's side, the husband patting her head in a bewildered way, and both looking as if they were the guilty parties who should be in of the widow's cottage. all was dark and silent. He prison instead of Alice. There, all was dark and silent. He glanced through the trees at his own Had they said that she was dead, or even that she was married, he old home, which lay beyond, and saw could have faced the news manfully, a light from the kitchen, and the oonlight shining on the window of for he had prepared his heart for it ; but now, when he had come home his own room. and thought he could bear all, he But here, where he longed for the found that his years of struggle to light there was no light. He laid his forget had been in vain, and that a gulf yawned at his feet deeper and hand on the gate, and it swung open before him, for the latch was gone. He passed through, and saw that the wider than that he had striven so garden path was rank with frozen long to fill up. 'In the name of God, man, tell me weeds, and the garden was itself a what you mean. Why is Alice Walmswilderness. He walked on and stood in the porch, and found a bank of lev in prison snow against the bottom of the cottage door, which the wind had whirled in there, perhaps a week fire, and patted his wife's head ; but a moment after Sheridan asked the question, he let his hand close quietly before. round the brown head, and raising He stood in the cheerless place for a moment, looking into his heart, that was as empty as the cottage porch, and as cold; and then he his eyes to Will's face, said, in a low voice " For murder. For killing her turned and walked down the straight child ! path, with almost the same feeling Will Sheridan looked at him with that had crushed him so cruelly a pitiful face, and uttered a sound like the baffled cry of a suffering eleven years before. He passed on to his own home, animal that finds the last door of which had been shut out from his escape shut against it. heart by the cloud that covered his His brother in law knew that now way ; and a feeling of reproach came was the time to tell Will all, while upon him, for his long neglect of his very soul was numbed by the those who loved him. Those loved him! there\_was something strength of the first blow. "They were married in the warming in his heart, and rising church, as you know," said Mary's husband, "and they lived together against the numbress that had stilled it in the cottage porch. He for some time, seeming very stood before the door of his o'dhome, happy -though Mary and I said, when it and raised his hand and knocked was all over, that from the very day The door opened, and a strange face to William Sheridan met his look. Choking back a something in face to William Sheridan met his captain, and his ship was going to his throat, he said, with an effort India, and Alice wanted very bad to 'Is this Mrs. Sheridan's house ? go with him. But he refused her at last so roughly, before her mother, "It was Mrs. Sheridan's house, sir," answered the man; but it is my house now. Mrs. Sheridan is dead." that poor little Allie said no more Five months after his going her child Another cord snapped, and the was born, and for six months the poor ailing thing looked live her old stranger in his own place turned from the door with a moan in his self, all smiles and kindness and love heart. TAS he turned, a young woman for the little one. Then, one day, It was winter again. A sunburnt, foreign looking man stood on the the man, with a sudden exclamation, woman, who said that she was Samuel poop deck of a steamer ploughing stepped after him, and placing his Draper's wife. No one knows what

## THE CATHOLIC RECORD

with decreased speed past the docks hand on his shoulder, said earnestly, passed between them - they two "Be this William Sheridan, that we were alone; but the woman showed thought were dead?" and, looking in the papers that proved what she She was a desperate woman, he said. muttered, "Poor lad ! poor lad ! don't 'ee know thy old schoolmate, Tom she was like to kill poor Alice with she was like to kill poor Alice with her dreadful words. Alice's heart was changed to stone from that Bates, and thy own sister Mary ?' Taking him by the arm, the kind fellow led Sheridan to the door, and minute. The woman left the village d: Wife, here be thy brother Will, again. But that night the little child was found dead beside the mothersafe and sound, and not drownded, as with marks of violence on it. Sam Draper told us he were-and lass ! she 'was charged wi' killing it that same Draper for all his

For

-she made no defence ; she never raised her head nor said a word. She have told how the thing might happened, for we knew-Mary and -that Alice never did that. knew with them came the sweet spirit of his boy's love for Alice. They came defence—all she wanted was to get upon his horse and dashed away, not out of sight, and hide her poor head. daring to look back at the picture of Poor little Allie—poor little Allie! She never raised her hand to hurt silent framed. her child. It was accident, or it was some one else-but she couldn't or wouldn't speak. She was sent to prison, and her mother died from the gentle God help the poor lass tonight! God help poor little Allie !" And the warm heart overflowed, and usband and wife mingled their tears flowing freely. Brother and sister were alone dur-for the lost one.

" And this was Samuel Draper's vork?" asked Sheridan, slowly.

" Ay, damn him for a scoundrel !" said the strong yeoman, starting to his feet and clenching his fist, the tears on his cheeks, and his voice all broken with emotion. "He may broken with emotion. "He may keep away from this village, where the people know him ; but there's no rest for him on this earth-no rest for such as he. Mother and child curse him-one from the grave, the other from the prison ; and sea or and cannot shut them out from his black heart. Her father was a sea-man, too, and he'll sail wi' him until the villain pays the debt to the last fathers." farthing. And Allie's white face will haunt him, even in sleep, with her dead child in her arms. Oh, God help poor Allie to night ! God com-

fort the poor little lassie ! William Sheridan said no m Samuel Draper wrote to that night. His sister prepared his own old room for him, and he went to it, but not to sleep. Up and down he walked like a caged animal, moan ing now and again, without following heart. Thy father took to the meaning of the words ;

"Why did I come here? O, why did I come here ?"

He felt that he could not bear this agony much longer-that he must think, and that he must pray. But he could do neither. There was one picture in his mind, in his eye, in his heart-a crouching figure in a dock, with a brown head sunk on her white hands,-and were he to try to get one more thought into his brain, it would burst and drive him mad.

And how could he pray-how could kneel, while the miscreant walked Tom Bates ceased speaking, as if the earth who had done all this ? were told, and stared straight at the fire; his wife Mary, who was sitting on a low seat near him, drew But from this hateful thought he reverted with fresh agony to her blighted heart. Where was she that closer, and laid her cheek against his night? How could he find her and weeping silently; and he put help her? If he could only pray for his big hand around her head and her, it would keep him from delirium Will Sheridan sat motionless for until he saw her. about a minute, and then said, in a

And he sank on his knees by the hed where he had knelt by his Then came a time when the first mother's side and learned to pray ; great sorrow darkened his young life and again the old associations came and grief and gloom hung over the thronging to his heart, and softened castle, for its sweet and gentle lady ' but worse than that. Alice The sweet face of his boy's love lay ill unto death. Just before death came she laid her hand on the dark, drew to him slowly from the mist of years ; and gradually forgetting self, bowed head of the boy, as he knelt and remembering only her great sorrow, he raised up his face in pitein speechless woe beside her, and said to him : "My child, live so that ous supplication, acknowledging his we may be reunited in heaven, where there is no more parting; do utter dependence on divine s rength, before. Such prayers are never offered in vain. A wondrous quiet came to the troubled heart, and and prayed as he had never prayed remained with it.

The long summer day grew to its THE LAST PAINTING close, the artist's face gr

and whiter, the sweat of exhaustion There once dwelt in a stately castle a beautiful, dark-eyed boy, the stood thick upon his brow. Then, as twilight crept into the room, and last of a noble race, and a fair, its dusky shadows hid the long day's golden-haired lady, his mother. Far strange work, his hand fell heavily to his side ; with a sigh of complete and near was this lady known for gentle goodness, her sweet exhaustion he sank upon the soft rug at the foot of the easel and sank charity, and hardly a peasant bent his knee at evening beneath the shadow of the great castle but asked nto profound slumber. For hours then the he slept; darkness fell, God's blessing on her head. Many years before, when the boy was but rose higher and higher until

its light poured through the window a toddling thing, the grim call of war had taken from her the lord of upon the picture on the easel. And as it stood, bathed in silvery light, the artist awoke with a great start She and looked upon it. Had he gone uttered no complaint, she made no moan, when in the great wide doors he stooped and with white lips mad, or was he dreaming, for surely his brain never conceived nor his kissed her and the boy, then sprang hand executed that picture.

w whiter

face infinitely, pathetically A eautiful, with great, mournful patient eyes, in which lay a world of anguish the great doors And the young wife took sadness and mute reproach. The up her burden of suspense, dread and soft bronze-tinted hair was pushed weary waiting, and bore it with back from the brows, and about patience, although the rose them was pressed a crown of sharp faded from her cheek and her blue thorns, while the blood trickled slowly over the marble pallor of cheek and brow.

The artist rose slowly, with fascinated gaze still bent upon the pic-The beautiful, pathetic eyes ture. seemed to be looking their sad reproach right into his very soul, and his heart began to beat with a strange pain. Again he was a little sitting at the feet of that child sweet, dead mother, listening to the sad story of how Jesus suffered and died. Bah ! he was only a credulous child then, and now he is a man, able to reason and to think ; and how beautiful and how sad that face, how patient, how reproachful the mourning eyes ; and those sharp and cruel thorns - what pitile hand had pressed them into the delicate flesh ? Sin had fashioned them and unbelief had pressed them

The years went on, and the young there. lord of the castle grew from child-Bah ! what thoughts were those ! Had this face, which had grown so strangely under his hand, made a hood to boyhood, environed by a mother's tender love, guarded by a mother's prayers, taught all that is purest and best from a mother's gentle lips. He was beautiful, with weak fool of him? He will blot it and his weakness out forever. He caught up a brush and raised his hand to dash it across the face, but the dark beauty of his father's race ; he was proud, impetuous, daring; his hand fell again heavily to his side. No, no, he could not while but he was innocent and pure of Ah those eyes looked up into his.

Early in him the fire of genius beautiful, sad eyes, dark with the began to glow, and/sitting at his mother's knee, his dark curly head shadow of the cross, beneath the crown of cruel, mocking thorns, you against her shoulder, he would tell have melted the ice about one heart. With a great sob, down on his knees the ambitious dreams which filled the artist sank, and the tears fell his young mind ; of how some day in heavily on his hands as he raised great artist whose fame would ring them, clasped, "Thou hast conquered hroughout the world and whose forgive, have mercy." There the pictures would live forever. And the words died on his lips ; he sank back other as she listened and watched and lay still and motionless beneath the flushed cheek and sparkling the pictured head.

And thus they found him in the would sometimes sigh and er thus : "Dear, always rememmorning, and thought at first he ber that the truest greatness is first slept, for there was a smile on the to be noble and pure of heart; and face; but when they tried to rouse him they found that he was dead. no matter how we may appear

There hangs in a certain great high, it will avail us nothing if we church a picture whose fame has are not pleasing in the sight of spread all over the world—a thorn-crowned head of Jesus Christ painted as no hand ever has or ever will again, paint it. From the shadow cf And the boy listened patiently and reverently, sometimes bending his proud, young head to kiss the white, the altar the beautiful, sad eyes look jeweled hand laid so tenderly on his down upon kneeling thousands The name of him who painted it will live forever; and though long years have passed since they found him dead beneath the picture, tottering old men and women still tell why it is called "The Last Painting." Howard Wright, in Catholic Herald of Sacramento. Cal.

> THE POPES AND THE JEWS

As Catholics have long been, on acwaiting for you. The years passed b , the boy had a victims of count of their relig become a man and the ambitious misrepresentation, slander and perse dreams of his boyhood had all come cution, they should be the last to countenance by word or deed any to pass ; no greater artist ever lived ; his pictures were the wonder of the such excesses against men of other s name rang throughout the But had he remembered, Divine commission of the Church to age; his name rang throughout the land. which they belong, fighting for her through all the flattery and homage of the world, the teachings of that dead mother? Alas, no; it was an good example to bring others into good example to bring others into her fold, they should never forget age of unbelief, and in the whirlpool that one of the noblest virtues which of skepticism raging around him his faith was engulfed. He still chertheir Faith enjoins, is love and charity to all men. Religious hatred ished tenderly and reverently the and bigotry should be odious to them. Our fathers have passed memory of that loved God she had aught him to love in his innocent boyhood, nor in the heaven where through those scorching flame earnestly pray that others may never she had said she would wait for him. have to suffer the same bitter pangs. One day, when a great church was being built, they cam and asked him We sincerely and heartily condmen religious persecution in every shape to paint a picture to hang there. But when they told him the picture and form. Among the lessons which our Holy they wanted was a thorn-crowned head of Jesus Christ he very reluc-Father, Pope Benedict XV., impressed upon a world dazed by tantly promised to paint it; for all at pictures had been painted almost unimaginable scenes of strife his gre and bloodshed, we find this allunder that inspiration which lights important precept. In his answer to the petition of the American Jewish the road to genius, and he felt no inspiration would come to him where Committee begging him to use his he had no belief. moral and religious influence in It was some days before he could bring himself to begin, but at length behalf of their suffering brethren in he stood before the easel on which was the bare canvas, brush in hand, various belligerent lands, the Holy Father, through his Secretary of State, Cardinal Gasparri, after stating and listlessly, with a frown on his that he was unable to express his brow, began to paint. It was early morning; the soft opinion concerning the special facts mentioned in the memorial, said : In principle, as the head summer air came through wide-open windows and gently lifted the raven hair from his contracted brows; it of the Catholic Church, which considers all men as brethren and teaches them to love one another, he was the fresh, quiet hour when In the Penal Colony of Western inspiration had always come to his wooing. And in a little while his hand began to move more rapidly, will not cease to inculcate the observ ance among individuals as among nations of the principles of natural his eyes lighted from an inward fire, right, and to reprove every violation his dark cheek flushed hotly, his of them. This right should be observed breath came quick and fast. The hours passed by but he still labored and respected in relation to the on; no food had that day passed his Children of Israel as it should be as ing that his would be treated with lips, but he was unconscious of to all men, for it would not conform to justice and to religion itself to hunger. A strange, enrapt feeling think that these letters might be the held him, a stranger power seemed derogate therefrom solely because of means he sought for, and he made to guide his hand, and the picture a difference of religious faith. up his mind to deliver them at once. grew with marvelous rapidity upon the Supreme Moreover, . . the Supreme Pontiff feels in this moment more the canvas.

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eyes grew sad and wistful. Then one day the waiting came to an end, when, through the gates of the castle, they bore its dead lord wrapped in a blood - stained flag

castle - her husband.

her

Poor

under whose standard he had brave fought and fell. And the young wife knelt beside the cold, dead form and prayed heaven to give her strength to bear her trial; and, as though in answer to that prayer, a little child stole to her side and slipped its baby hand in hers, and that touch brought something of peace even there beside the newly dead, and clasping the small form closely to her she murmured another prayer : "Oh, God, take my little one in Thy care ; never let him stray from Thee; keep him ever pure and true to the faith of his

the years to come he would be

before the world, how great,

how

eves.

heaven

answer thus :

was that which gave him happiness or misery.

He became a grave man before his time ; and one deep line in his face, would have that to most people would have denoted his energy and intensity of will, was truly graven by the unceasing presence of his sorrow.

He had loved Alice Walmsley with that one love which thorough natures only know. It had grown into his young life as firmly as an organic part of his being. When it was torn from him there was left a gaping and bleeding wound. And time had brought him no cure.

In the early days of his Australian career he had received the news of his father's death. His mother and sister had been well provided for. They implored him to come home but he could not bear to hear of the one being whose memory filled his existence; and so he never wrote to his people. Their letters ceased and in nearly nine years he had never heard a word from home. But now, when his present life

was to outward appearance all sun-shine, and when his future path lay through pleasant ways, the bitter thought in his heart rankled with unutterable suffering. Neither work nor excitement allayed the pang. He shrank from solitude, and he was solitary in crowds. He feared to give rein to grief; yet alone, in the moonlit bush, he often raised his face and hands to heaven, and cried aloud in his grievous pain.

At last the thought came that be must look his misery in the facethat he must put an end to all uncertainty. Answering the unceasing yearning in his breast, he came to a

"I must go home," he said aloud one day, when riding alone in the forest. "I must go home—if only for one day."

VI.

THE DOOR OF THE CELL

When he brose from his knees, he

looked upon every familiar objectaround him with awakened interest, and many things that he had f rgotten came back to his memory and affection when he saw them there. Before he lay down to rest, for he felt that he must sleep, he looked through window at the deserted cottage the and had strength to think of its former inmates.

" God give her peace, and in some way enable me to bring comfort to he said. And when he arose Poor Tom Bates still stared at the re, and patted his wife's head; but arch for means to bear comfort to the afflicted heart of Alice Walmsley. From his sister and her husband he learned that Alice was confined in

Millbank Prison in London, and he made up his mind to go to London that day. They, seeing that he was determined on his course, made no effort to oppose him. He asked them not to mention his visit to any one in the village, for he did not wish to be recognized; and so he

turned from the kind-hearted couple, and walked toward the railway station.

Sheridan now remembered that he had brought from Western Australia some letters of introduction, and also some official despatches; and he thought it might be a fortunate circumstance that most of the official letters were addressed to the Colonial Office and the Board of Directors of

Convict Prisons. Australia, where there are few free settlers, and an enormous criminal population, a man of Sheridan's standing and influence was rarely found ; and the Government of the Colony was desirous of introducing him to the Home Government, know consideration. He began to

TO BE CONTINUED

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