

forms at all times; but, according to historical analogy, it will probably express itself fully in some society, or even in some one dominant personality. . . . Again at the end of all things, the general features of the conflict will be as always since Cain slew Abel. The two lines of good and evil will advance logically from principles to conclusions. There will be no mundane triumph of good over evil, but Christ will be again and again rejected and crucified in His followers. They "shall put you to death, and you shall be hated by all nations. . . . False prophets shall rise and seduce many. . . . Many shall be scandalised, and shall betray one another. There shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world. The abomination of desolation shall stand in the holy place. There will be danger that no flesh should be saved" (St. Matthew xxiv.).

After the end there will be a Day of Reckoning, a Harvest, when the reapers of God, His angels, shall assemble the nations to Christ's judgment. 'For the Son of Man shall come in His majesty, and all nations shall be gathered together before Him, and He shall separate them one from another.'

The Storyteller

MOONDYNE

(By JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.)

BOOK FIRST.

THE GOLD MINE OF THE VASSE.

(Continued.)

VI.

THE BRIBE.

When the party had travelled a dozen miles from the convict camp, the evening closed, and the sergeant called a halt. A chain was passed round a tree, and locked; and to this the manacles of the prisoner were made fast, leaving him barely the power of lying down. With a common prisoner this would have been security enough; but the sergeant meant to leave no loophole open. He and the private trooper would keep guard all night; and according to this order, after supper the trooper entered on the first four hours' watch.

The natives and wounded men took their meal and were stretched on the soft sand beside another fire, about a hundred paces from the guard and prisoner.

The tired men soon slept, all but the sentry and the captive. The sergeant lay within arm's length of the prisoner; and even from deep sleep awoke at the least movement of the chain.

Toward midnight, the chained man turned his face toward the sentry, and motioned him to draw near. The rough, but kind-hearted fellow thought he asked for water, and softly brought him a pannikin, which he held to his lips. At the slight motion, the sergeant awoke, and harshly reprimanded the trooper, posting him at a distance from the fire, with orders not to move till his watch had expired. The sergeant returned to his sleep, and again all was still.

After a time the face of the prisoner was once more raised, and with silent lip but earnest expression he begged the sentry to come to him. But the man would not move. He grew angry at the persistence of the prisoner, who ceased not to look toward him, and who at last even ventured to speak in a low voice. At this the fearful trooper grew alarmed, and sternly ordered him to rest. The sergeant awoke at the word, and shortly after relieved the trooper, seating himself by the fire to watch the remainder of the night.

When the prisoner saw this, with a look of utter weariness, though not of resignation, he at last closed his eyes and sank to rest. Once having yielded to the fatigue which his strong will had hitherto mastered, he was unconscious. A deep and dreamless sleep fell on him. The sand was soft round his tired limbs, and for two or three hours the bitterness of his captivity was forgotten.

He awoke suddenly, and, as if he had not slept, felt the iron on his wrists, and knew that he was chained to a tree like a wild beast.

The sleep had given him new strength. He raised his head, and met the eyes of the sergeant watching him. The look between them was long and steady.

'Come here,' said the prisoner, in a low tone; 'I want to speak to you.'

Had the gaunt dog beside him spoken, the sergeant could not have been more amazed.

'Come here,' repeated Moondyne; 'I have something important to say to you.'

The sergeant drew his revolver, examined the caps, and then moved toward the prisoner.

'I heard you say you had spent twenty-five years in this colony,' said Moondyne, 'and that you might as well have remained a convict. Would you go away to another country, and live the rest of your life in wealth and power?'

The sergeant stared at him as if he thought he had gone mad. The prisoner understood the look.

'Listen,' he said impressively; 'I am not mad. You know there is a reward offered for the discovery of the Vasse Gold Mine. *I can lead you to the spot!*'

There was that in his voice and look that thrilled the sergeant to the marrow. He glanced at the sleeping trooper, and drew closer to the chained man.

'I know where that gold mine lies,' said Moondyne, reading the greedy face, 'where tons and ship-loads of solid gold are waiting to be carried away. If you help me to be free, I will lead you to the mine.'

The sergeant looked at him in silence. He arose and walked stealthily toward the natives, who were soundly sleeping. To and fro in the firelight, for nearly an hour, he paced, revolving the startling proposition. At last he approached the chained man.

'I have treated you badly, and you hate me,' he said. 'How can I trust you? How can you prove to me that this is true?'

Moondyne met the suspicious eye steadily. 'I have no proof,' he said; 'you must take my word. I tell you the truth. If I do not lead you straight to the mine, I will go back to Fremantle as your prisoner.'

Still the sergeant pondered and paced. He was in doubt, and the consequences might be terrible.

'Have you ever known me to lie?' said Moondyne. The sergeant looked at him but did not answer.

At length he abruptly asked: 'Is it far away?' He was advancing toward a decision.

'We can reach the place in two days, if you give me a horse,' said Moondyne.

'You might escape,' said the sergeant.

'I will not; but if you doubt me, keep the chain on my wrist till I show you the gold.'

'And then?' said the sergeant.

'Then we shall be equals. I will lead you to the mine. You must return and escape from the country as best you can. Do you agree?'

The sergeant's face was white, as he glanced at the sleeping trooper and then at the prisoner.

'I agree,' he said; 'lie down, and pretend to sleep.'

The sergeant had thought out his plan. He would insure his own safety, no matter how the affair turned. Helping a convict to escape was punished with death by the penal law; but he would put another look on the matter. He cautiously waked the private trooper.

'Take those natives,' he said, 'all but the mounted tracker, and go on to Bunbury before me. The wounded men must be doctored at once.'

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