

A very old tradition tells us that it was about this time the Apostles, who had hitherto remained together in Jerusalem, separated. The persecution of Herod, which was especially directed against them, would explain their departure; and in any case it was time to set about fulfilling the Lord's commands to 'go and teach all nations,' for the Jews as a body gave no sign of receiving the Gospel message and the pagan world sorely needed light and grace. According to tradition (borne out by many hints in the Epistles), the Apostles, before separating, drew up a 'standard of faith,' similar to, if not in the exact words of the Creed, known to us now as the 'Apostles' Creed.'

The Storyteller

MOONDYNE

(BY JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.)

(Continued.)

BOOK SECOND. THE SANDALWOOD TRADE.

VII.

MILLBANK.

Arrived in London, he proceeded at once to the Colonial Office, and left his letters for the Secretary, and with them his address in the metropolis. He went through the same routine with the dispatches for the Prison Directors. Then, though his heart craved instant action, he was forced to exercise his patience, to wait until these high and perhaps heedless officials were pleased to recognise his presence.

The great city was a wonder to him; but in his intense pre-occupation he passed through it as if it had been familiar from childhood. On the day after his arrival, not expecting an answer from the officials, one of whom, the Colonial Secretary, was a Cabinet Minister, he tried to interest himself in the myriad strangenesses of London. He visited Westminster Abbey and the British Museum. But, everywhere, his heart beat the same dolorous key; he saw the white face, the slight crouching figure in the dock, the brown hair bowed in agony and disgrace. On the walls of the great picture-gallery the gilded frames held only this pitiful scene. Among the tombs of the kings in Westminster, he thought of her ruined life and shattered hope, and envied, for her sake, the peace of the sleeping marble knights and ladies.

All day, without rest or food, he wandered aimlessly and wretchedly through the sculptured magnificence of the galleries. When the night closed, he found himself, almost unconscious of how he had come to the place, or who had directed him thither, walking with bared and feverish brow beneath a high and gloomy wall the massive outer guard of Millbank Prison.

Hour sped after hour, yet round and round the shadowy, silent precipice of wall the afflicted heart wandered with tireless feet. It was woful to think how near she was, and to touch the silent granite—yet it was a thousand times more endurable than the torture and fear that were born of absence.

Surely, if there be any remote truth in the theory of psychic magnetism, the afflicted soul within those walls must have felt the presence of the loving and suffering heart without, which sent forth unceasingly silent cries of sympathy and comfort. Surely, if communion of living spirits be possible, the dream of the lonely prisoner within must have thrilled with tenderness when his fevered lips were pressed as lovingly to the icy stone of the prison wall, as once they were pressed to her forehead in affectionate farewell.

Back to his hotel, when morning was beginning to break, the lonely watcher went, spiritless and almost despairing. The reaction had begun of his extreme excitement for the past four days. He passed along the lonesome river, that hurried through the city like a thief in the night, flashing under the yellow quay-lights, then diving suddenly beneath dark arches or among slimy keels, like a hunted murderer escaping to the sea. Wild and incoherent fancies flashed through Will's feverish mind. Again and again he was forced to steady himself, by placing his hand on the parapet, or he should have fallen in the street, like a drunken man.

At last he reached his hotel, and flung himself on his bed, prayerless, friendless, and only saved from despair by the thought of an affliction that was deeper than his, which he, as a man and a faithful friend, should be strong to relieve and comfort.

It was past noon when he woke. The fever had passed, and much of the dejection. While dressing, he was surprised to find his mind actively at work forming plans and surmises for the day's enterprise.

At breakfast, a large official letter was brought him. It was a brief but unofficially-cordial message from the Colonial Secretary, Lord George Somers, appointing an hour 2 o'clock that day—when he should be happy to receive Mr. Sheridan at the Colonial Office.

Under other circumstances such an appointment would have thrown off his balance a man so unused to social or formal ways as this stranger from Australia, whose only previous training had been on a merchant ship. But now, Will Sheridan prepared for the visit without thinking of its details. His mind was fastened on a point beyond this meeting.

Even the formal solemnity of the powdered servant who received him had no disturbing effect. Will Sheridan quite forgot the surroundings, and at length, when ushered into the presence of the Colonial Secretary, his native dignity and intelligence were in full sway, and the impression he made on the observant nobleman was instantaneous and deep.

He was received with more than courtesy. Those letters, Lord Somers said, from Australia, had filled him with interest and desire to see a man who had achieved so much, and who had so rapidly and solidly enriched and benefited the Colony.

The Colonial Secretary was a young man for his high position—certainly not over forty, while he might be still younger. He had a keen eye, a mobile face, that could turn to stony rigidity, but withal a genial and even frank countenance when conversing cordially with this stranger, whom he knew to be influential, and who certainly was highly entertaining.

Will Sheridan was soon talking fluently and well. He knew all about the Penal Colony, the working of the old penal system and the need of a new one, the value of land, and the resources of the country, the capabilities for commerce; and all this the Secretary was most anxious to learn.

After a long interview, Sheridan rose to take leave, and the Secretary said he hoped to see a great deal of him before his return to Australia, and told him plainly that the opinions of a settler of wealth and intelligence on colonial matters in Western Australia were just then of special importance to the Government. He also wished it were in his power to give Mr. Sheridan pleasure while he remained in England.

There was only one thought in Sheridan's mind all this time, and now was the moment to let it work. He said he desired very much to visit the convict prisons in England, and compare the home system with that of the Penal Colony.

The minister was gratified by the request, and, smiling, asked which prison he would visit first. Will mentioned Millbank; and the minister with his own hand wrote a few lines to the governor, and handed the paper to his visitor.

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