



# Martin Hogan and the Catalpa Rescue

by Canon McDermott

## The Soldier Fenians



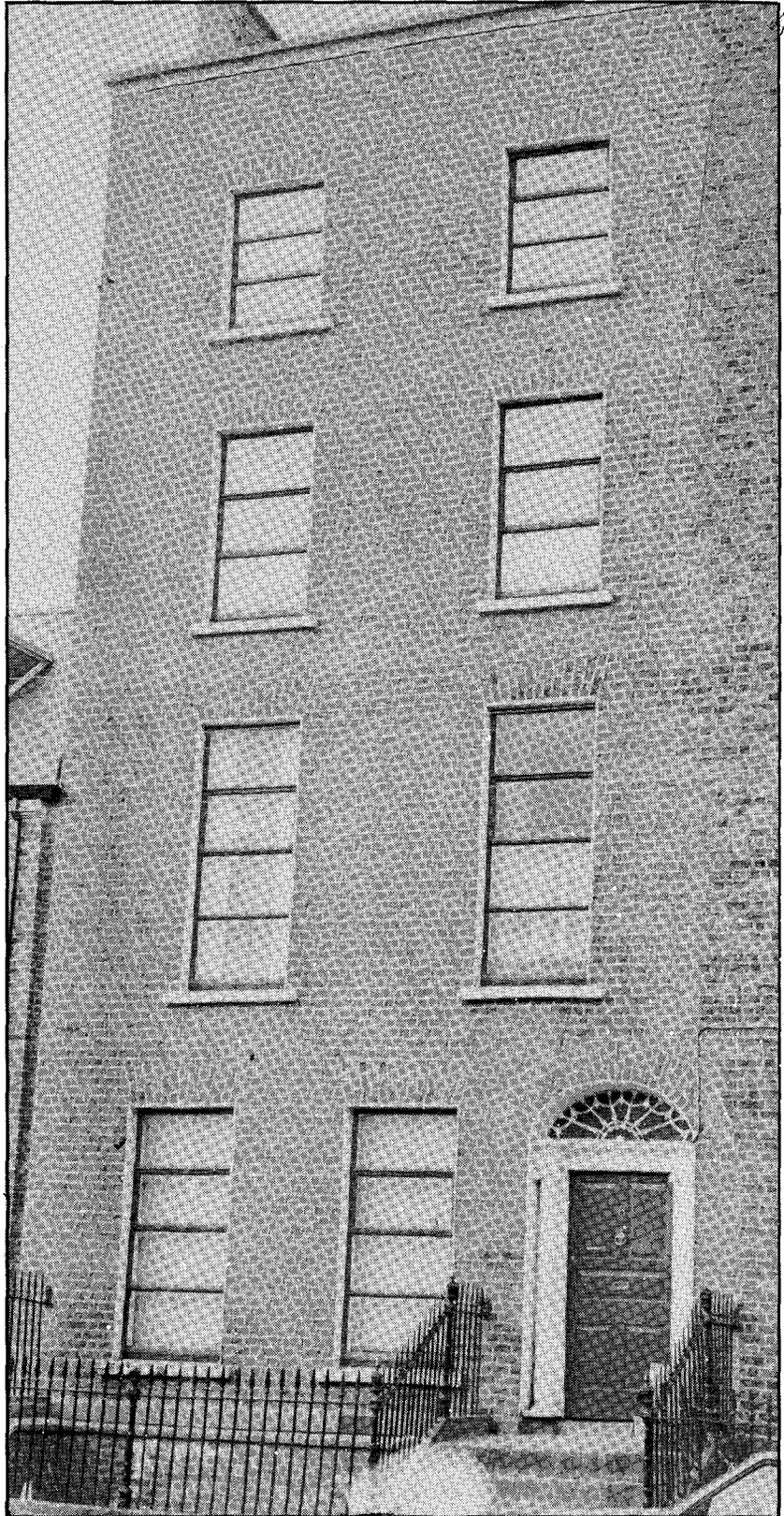
On a January evening in Dublin in 1866, Martin Hogan of 6, Barrington Street, Limerick, stood at the door of Peter Curran's Pub, at 1 Clare Lane, near Merrion Square, Dublin. He checked that he was not observed and entered. With James Wilson, he had deserted from the Fifth Dragoon Guards in November, 1865, when it became too difficult for them to operate as Fenian organisers and propagandists in the regiment. Although gazetted as deserters, they remained on in Dublin, hiding in safe Fenian houses, and working among the soldiers for the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

The inside of the pub was dimly lit, but a fire blazed at one end. The 'Curran's of Clare Lane' was a byword among the Fenians in the city, and was a favourite meeting-place of the leading I.R.B. men of the British regiments stationed in Dublin. The men who were in the pub on that evening were all cavalrymen from the Fifth Dragoons and the Tenth Hussars who had joined the Fenian Brotherhood.

Martin Hogan did not pause in the bar but continued upstairs to a private parlour. He stepped inside the room, and thus began for him a nightmare that was only to end ten years later in one of the most audacious escape stories in Australian penal history – the Catalpa Rescue – in which he was to play a key part.

The men had come to the pub that evening on the orders of John Devoy, the Irish Republican Brotherhood's chief organiser for the British Army. He had personally recruited Hogan and Wilson, whose desertions were precipitated by the wave of Fenian arrests in September, 1865. Martin Hogan was then twenty-eight years old, having been born in Limerick City in 1838.

The Irish Republican Brotherhood was founded by James Stephens on St. Patrick's Day, 1858, and its members became known as Fenians. By 1866 the Brotherhood claimed to have 80,000 oath-bound members in Ireland and 15,000 in the British Army. And there were other volatile forces ready and willing to help in bringing about the revolution the I.R.B. had long plotted.



Martin Hogan's family home, 6 Barrington Street, Limerick.



# THE WILD GOOSE

## A Collection of Ocean Tales.

VOL. I.] *Grand Shipwrecked, a Saturday, November 23, 1867.* [No. 3.

*Queen Elizabeth and the Flower of Erin  
The Tale of our Lagani, the Irish  
By, A. M. H. W. H.*

*Chapter 3.—The Barrack Room.*

*The chief person of former times  
his fair position at first caused no surprise, as it  
was thought, in the busy and confused which  
the situation occasioned, that they, retired  
unmistaken to avoid the stifling dust which  
blew all around, but when after some time the shores of hough  
were washed by the sea, the people began  
to look surprised, and many a strange  
conjecture as to what became of them was  
whispered about. A diligent search was  
instituted to discover the missing pair, but  
in vain; although the young man did not  
root and cranny, and a del, until late  
into the night, these efforts were unavailing,  
for no trace of their leader could they  
find. Hardly twenty sought him at his  
little castle, but there still the same. Great  
was the agony and grief of our hero, by  
when some days passed by, and still no  
saw him or his missing son. At length  
thought him of an ancient deed, which  
on the side of mountains, and who was  
the the queen del for his wisdom and  
she heard the father repeated to the  
in the mountain he will his actions, and  
see if he could give him any account  
his missing son. She said, after hearing  
his story and his description of the young*

*girl with whom he danced, said he must  
have been enchanted by the spells of Queen  
Elizabeth, and that she must have taken  
him away to her rocky palace. He also  
said, that if she could keep him for fourteen  
clear days from the hour of taking him away,  
she would be free. "How is it on Ireland," said he, "and  
which of you can see him from his watch-  
tower, except the old King of M"  
"I will," said the  
young man, "I will endeavour  
to repair with all possible speed before  
and if you have the good fortune to meet  
her, and that she consent to dine with you, all  
my efforts are fruitless, and you will  
see as you go on." Old Art More  
was bewildered at what he heard; eight days  
were already past, and he had but six left  
to journey to the far side of Donegal and back  
again, in case he could induce the old  
to consent to his plan. Now, that distance  
was a day of engineering and hard work, still  
he of no importance, but to the brave old  
of our ancestor it was far different. Having  
he resolutely determined to do all that  
he could under the circumstances. Hastily  
preparing his horse, he chose a valuable present  
to put into the good grace of the old  
and, saddle his flinted steel, he set off for  
Ulster. On his way he met several bands  
of men, who by the lordly Shamrock  
away on the fatal plain of Roscommon, and*

Twenty-three years old, and one of the youngest men present, he was a man of forceful personality. Of sturdy build and dark complexion, his face showed his determined character. He had served in the French Foreign Legion, simply to learn infantry tactics for the revolution. When he had finished speaking, he introduced McCafferty. The concept of cavalry warfare put forward by McCafferty was completely new to the other men, whose training had been strictly carried out in the traditional role of cavalry. He discussed the hit-and-run tactics and the raids and forays of his irregular cavalry. There had been no set-piece charges; they had rarely fought at close quarters, and when they did they had used revolvers and sabres.

These views were completely unexpected and alien to the cavalrymen present. Their misgivings were not helped by McCafferty's strange accent and turn of phrase. Martin Hogan, particularly, must have found it difficult to relate to this concept of warfare. One of the best and strongest swordsmen in the British Army, he could cut in two an iron bar hanging from a barrack-room ceiling with one blow, but his training and experience had not included revolver fighting.

By the end of the meeting, however, the American's reputation and knowledge had made a favourable impression, even if he had not inspired affection. As the men left the meeting, they were buoyed up with confidence and hope for the future. But, as had happened so often before, their hopes would shortly turn to despair.

Because of the all-embracing type of structure of the Fenian organisation, there were many informers in the movement, including Patrick Foley of the Fifth Dragoons. And the police were ready to pounce. On 22nd February, 1866, John Devoy and most of the other leaders were arrested on information supplied by Foley. Arrests of Fenians became a daily occurrence. Hogan and Wilson did not escape, and were surprised in their sleep on 10th February. They were taken to Chancery Lane Station and charged. The court-martials all took place in the Royal (now Collins) Barracks, and the sentence was death, subsequently commuted to penal servitude for life. In all, 68 civilian and military Fenians were sent to England to serve their sentences, and in the following months the prisoners were moved through various jails, including Chatham, Portsmouth and Dartmoor, until they finally arrived at Portland Prison.

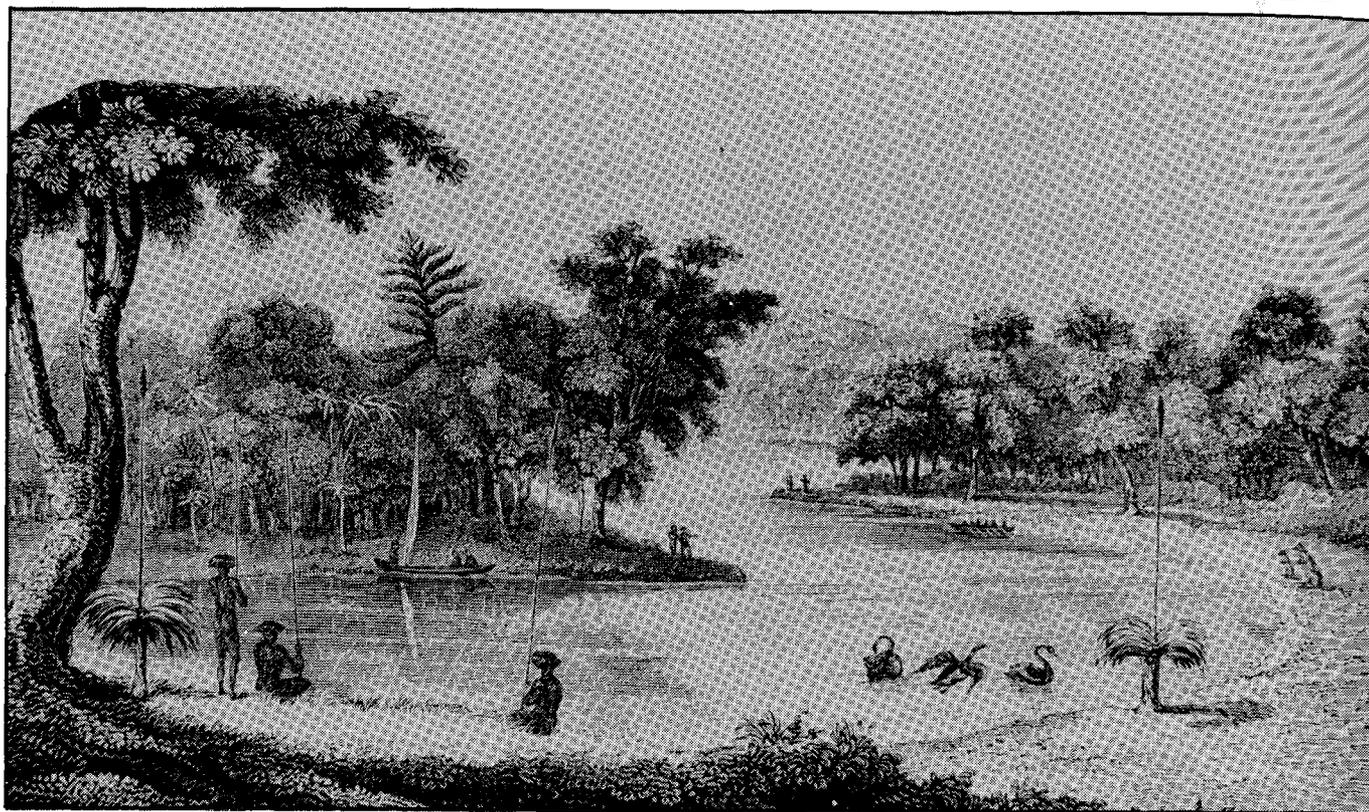
### Voyage to Fremantle

Early on the morning of 15th October, 1867, the prisoners in Portland Prison

A title page of the 'Wild Goose', No. 3, November 23, 1867... On this the rich alluvial lands of Limerick, then by the lordly Shannon far away... (Mitchell Library, N.S.W.).

It has been estimated that about a quarter of the soldiers who fought in the Union and Confederate armies in the American Civil War were Irish. These armies had provided the Fenians with the tough, trained officers and soldiers it required. One of these men, Captain John McCafferty, was present in the room on the night of 17th January, 1866. He was the man Hogan and the others from the Fifth Dragoons and Tenth Hussars had come to hear in the crowded parlour. The American-born McCafferty, from Sandusky, Ohio, had fought on the Confederate side as an officer with Morgan's Guerillas, an irregular cavalry unit, and his military exploits were known to the Fenians. He had taken a detachment of cavalry raid-

ers behind Union lines, captured a large haul of badly needed ammunition, loaded it on to barges which he had seized, and brought the cargo down the Mississippi River, under fire from Federal batteries. With McCafferty and Hogan in the parlour were John Devoy, John Boyle O'Reilly, Patrick Keating and James Wilson, a highly intelligent man, whose real name was McNally. McCafferty, an expert in cavalry tactics, was to be the commander of a special cavalry unit in the proposed rising. The six were no ordinary soldiers, but men of the highest calibre who had been carefully hand-picked for the unit. Devoy outlined the military strategy to be employed in the insurrection.



... on Thursday, 9th January, 1869, the *Hougoumont* dropped anchor in the Swan River.'

were roughly awakened and ordered from their cells. Shouts of 'chains, chains' echoed between the dank walls. Some 279 prisoners, including 62 Fenians, were chained together in groups of ten for transportation to Australia. Among the sixty-two were seven soldier Fenians who were to make prison escape history – John Boyle O'Reilly, James Wilson, Martin Hogan, Thomas Hassett, Thomas Darragh, Michael Harrington and Robert Cranston.

### The Voyage of the *Hougoumont*

In the storm-racked harbour the 875 ton frigate the *Hougoumont* was straining at the anchors. She carried the broad arrow of the convict ship, in stark white, on her bare, sinister hull. The wind and rain tore through her canvas, and washed her teak decks. Since she had been captured from the French two years before, the ship had served the transportation trade. But now, as the last voyage of a convict ship to Australia was about to commence, so, too, was a heroic episode in Irish, Australian and American history.

It is not difficult to imagine the thoughts of the Irish convicts as they dragged their chains in lines of twenty along the quay on that morning, towards the ship standing off Portland harbour. Out of the misty gloom a small paddle-wheeled steamer emerged. The convicts were pushed on

board and were taken in relays to the *Hougoumont*. They stumbled up the gangway, and stood frozen and dumb on the deck as their chains were knocked off. Strange, harsh voices called out their registered numbers and, one by one, the prisoners joined a line that sank into the black bowels of the ship. Up on deck, anchor chains screeched, riggings strained and sails floated aloft as the *Hougoumont* headed for the channel and the open sea. The dreadful voyage was under way.

Below decks, the Fenians found themselves in the forward hold with murderers, thieves and forgers. Wilson quickly chose a corner where a whale-oil lamp guttered and hammocks could be slung – and which could be defended! The conditions were appalling. The stench of two years of human cargo remained. There were neither washing nor toilet facilities. The hold and hull were grimed with grease and dirt, and were also very cold and damp. The ship struggled for days in fierce storm conditions as it made its way out of the channel and into the Bay of Biscay. The wild tossing of the ship caused many injuries and violent seasickness. The ship's doctor, Surgeon Brownslow, was appalled at the lack of preparations for medical needs. He decided, according to one account, to press some of the more able-bodied prisoners into service as medical aids. The soldier Fenians were obvious choices, because they had some knowledge of splints and binding wounds,

and so became Brownslow's assistants on the long voyage.

Even in these harsh conditions, the Fenians showed themselves to be a resourceful lot; they managed to procure pen, ink and paper, and so were able to publish a broadsheet, which they called *The Wild Goose*. This unique publication contained articles by various Fenian prisoners; it shortened the journey for the prisoners, and was also very popular with the officers and crew, and this popularity helped to alleviate the harsh treatment meted out to prisoners. Seven issues were published, and all have been preserved in the Mitchell Library of New South Wales. Many years later, when Boyle O'Reilly was a free man and leading citizen in Boston, he vividly recalled those days and nights:

*Amid the dim glare of the lamp, the men at night would group strangely on extemporised seats. The yellow light fell down on the dark forms, throwing a ghastly glare on the pale faces of the men as they listened with blazing eyes to Davis's 'Fontenoy' or 'The Clansmen's Wild Address to Shane's Head'.*

In his book, *The Irish in Australia*, published in 1987, Patrick O'Farrell summed up the voyage: 'Like the Young Irishmen, though a step below them on the social scale, the leaders of the Fenian group were superior convicts, travelling with the privileges of political prisoners and gentlemen ... educated, cultivated and very hostile to their



Fremantle 'short' jetty and customs house in the 1870s. (Library Board of Western Australia).

... environment.

Still, the voyage to Fremantle was a long, dreary journey of storms, seasickness, punishments, floggings and death. And so the ship sailed on round the Cape of Good Hope, and across the Indian Ocean. The Fenians were spared the worst of the treatment because of their discipline, and the respect in which they were held. Finally, on Thursday, 9th January, 1869, the *Hougoumont* dropped anchor in the Swan River, and, on the following day, the convicts were taken in small boats to a mist-shrouded Fremantle harbour, just outside Perth in Western Australia. The grim voyage was over, but the prisoners were about to face another prison, in another land, twelve thousand miles from home.

### Fremantle Prison

Later that morning, through a cloud of hot dust, the chained line of prisoners stumbled their way along the quay, guarded by a platoon of the Enlisted Pensioners Reserve. The Fenians first impression of the town was of white everywhere. It was a collection of one and two-storey houses, shops and business premises, many constructed of white-painted wood and some of limestone and sandstone. Dominating the view was a huge dirty, white limestone structure with star-shaped walls. Fenians did not need to be told that this was the Imperial Convict Establishment of Fremantle, notoriously known as 'The Establishment', the highest security prison in the colonies. Nobody had ever escaped from this fortress. At first sight, it seemed only slightly more intimidating than Chatham or Dartmoor: its walls were not very high, not much higher than the walls which might surround a country estate. The prisoners continued to study their

new surroundings. Fleeting thoughts of escape crossed their minds. O'Reilly, who had escaped from Dartmoor and had been caught only because of sheer bad luck, whispered: 'There will be a way. There has to be a path to liberty. I'll find that path'. But, like the other prisoners, he was soon to be disillusioned.

Two contemporary accounts do not paint a very flattering picture of the town. The first by the English novelist, Anthony Trollope, is dated 1872:

*Fremantle has certainly no natural beauties to recommend it. It is a hot, white ugly town with a very large prison, a lunatic asylum, and a hospital for ancient and worn out convicts ... At Fremantle there is hardly a man whom it can be worth the reader's while to have introduced to him.*

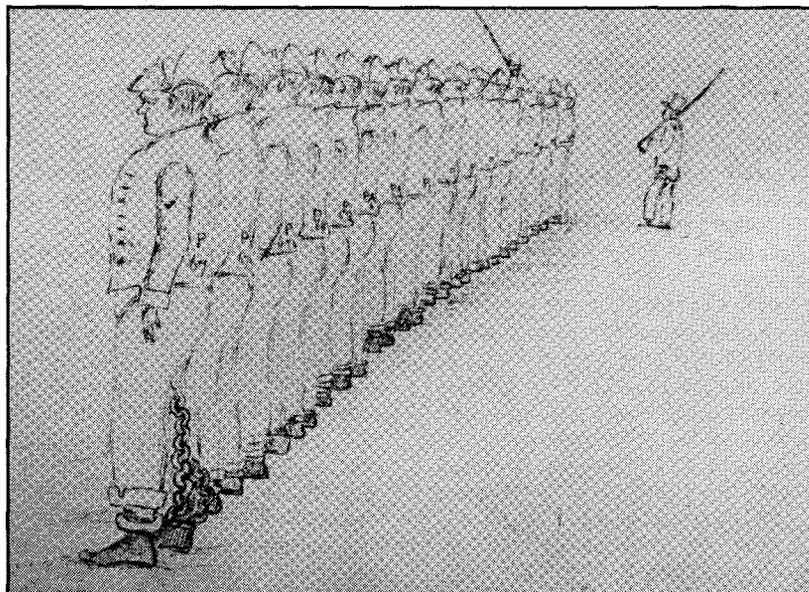
Another picture of Fremantle is given by William Taunton who visited it in 1876, the year of the Fenian escape,

and wrote of it in a book called **Australind**, published in 1903:

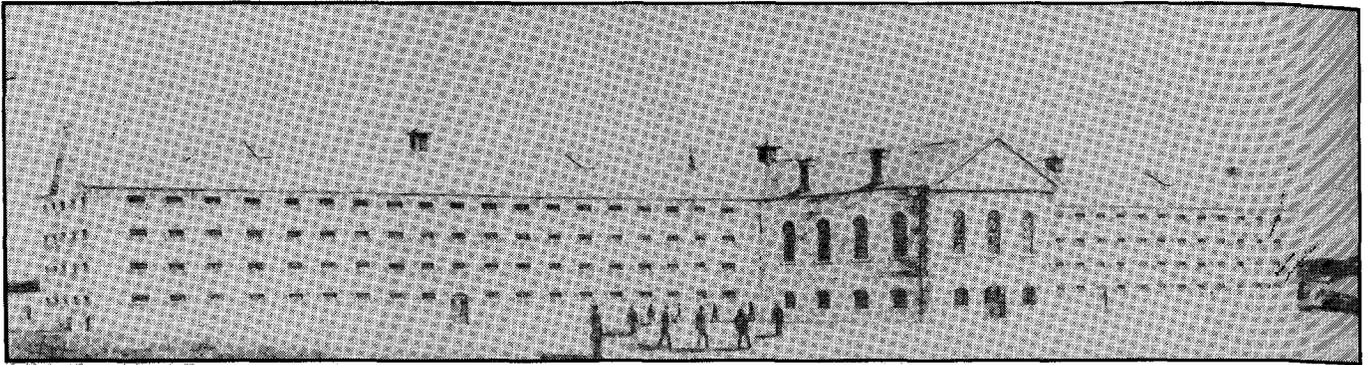
*Fremantle consisted of one principal street made up of Hotels and stores and a few Government buildings, including the Imperial convict depot, a lighthouse and a number of private dwellings all glaring in whitewash. Each house had its green verandah blinds and encircling verandah. A few churches made up an apparently sleepy but really flourishing township, which might be described as a city of public houses, flies, sand, convicts and stacks of sandalwood.*

Although hardly yet a city, the fact that he found Fremantle flourishing was in no small measure due to the labour so conveniently and cheaply supplied by convicts then serving their sentences. Even the prison itself had been built by the convicts who were doomed to live in it.

Inside the jail, the prisoners were



'the chained line of prisoners'.



Prisoners exercising in front of Fremantle Gaol in the 1850s (Library Board of Western Australia).

lined up facing a rostrum. Surrounding the parade-ground were the three storey cell block, some smaller barracks, storehouses, a Church of England chapel, residences and some guardhouses. A few trees cast sad shadows on the dusty white of the crushed limestone parade-ground. From a staff-pole a Union Jack hung limply in the hot morning air. A stocky grey-haired man, in a white and tropical helmet, mounted the rostrum and looked silently over the assembled prisoners. After a few moments, during which all sound ceased, he began to speak in a flat, quiet, but penetrating tone – the voice of a man with no doubts about his power of life and death. 'I want your undivided attention. That is my first order'. He stopped and gazed without interest over the heads of the silent ranks. 'My name is Doonan. I am Assistant Superintendent of this prison ... my word is law'. There was neither drama nor threat in his voice. He was simply stating a fact.

He went on to read the rules of the prison and to describe the punishments for breaking them – flogging, solitary confinement and extension of sentence. Frequently he added the words '... the punishment for which is death'. He paused, and this time looked directly along the lines of emaciated men. He continued again in a matter-of-fact voice: 'Some of you will think of ways of escaping. I will save you the trouble and tell you how. There are two ways of escaping from this prison, by land or by sea'.

He warned them against escaping by land 'through the most cruel country God ever turned over to the devil', a country of deserts, salt-lakes, bitter deceiving springs, sun-parched plains, without water, red hot rocks, poisonous insects and death-dealing snakes. 'You cannot live, you can go mad, you will die – unless I find you first. And I will, and you will be glad I did, and be grateful for flogging and the chaining'.

And there was less hope of escape by sea. No English ship's master would conceal them aboard ship. To swim to

some ship of foreign registry was out of the question, because the waters contained vicious sharks, and escapees would be torn to shreds before they even reached a ship. Doonan did not even bother to mention the water police, the constant police patrols through the town, or the local defence organisation, but he was all too accurate in his brutal assessment of the situation. A remarkable Royal Engineers' officer, named Edmund G.W. Henderson, described Western Australia as a 'vast natural gaol'. The prison staff believed that escape was impossible. To the north east and south lay insuperable obstacles with every conceivable hazard, human and natural. If a prisoner broke away, there was nowhere to go. To the west was the ocean. Although the Fenians knew much about prison escapes, there was no escapes from Fremantle Prison – not yet!

The days became weeks, the weeks lengthened into months and the months dragged into years. At night the prisoners were paired into cells, seven feet by four, and nine feet high. They were all assigned to work-parties, some inside, some outside the jail. Inside, they cooked, scrubbed, cleaned and scoured, day in and day out. Dreary drudgery, with no relief or hope was their lot. But one of them, John Boyle O'Reilly, was picked out as a different class of prisoner and assigned to the library.

Outside they worked in gangs, either in or about the town, building, repairing, paving streets and disposing of garbage. They were slaves used for any task the settled community required to be done; they were sent into the bush, sometimes for weeks at a time, building roads or bridges, clearing land, and tormented by insects at night. This outside work in the town and the surrounding countryside gave them a knowledge of the local geography and general conditions, which was later to prove most useful.

Most of the Fenians were patient and disciplined, and quickly learned the

prison routines. Although, they succeeded in gaining the trust of the prison officers and administrators, they hated Australia. Very few of them were to stay in the country on their release from prison and most regarded it as 'this most miserable of all miserable places'. John 'Galtee Boy' Casey, in letters to his home, expressed their attitude: Western Australia was an 'infernal Country, a desperate fraud offering false inducements to immigrants. The colonists themselves sickened him: these were people who poisoned and shot Aborigines who, if properly developed, would be found superior to the thick-skulled and narrow-minded bigotry of the colonists of W.A.' He went on to allege: 'The Australian Irish were generous in collecting money to enable released Fenian prisoners to return home, but they were people of little consequence or principle, demeaned by lowly origins and the contagion of an environment dominated by sympathy with England.'

Casey's bitter account of Western Australia and its people in the *Irishman* of 4th June, 1870, give a fairly typical Fenian (and Young Ireland) view. He went on:

*The population of Western Australia may be divided into two classes – those actually in prison, and those who more richly deserve to be there' ... all are equally dishonest. What more can be expected from a nation of felons. Murder and murderous assaults are manly sports to the colonists ... they live and die like dogs ... More real depravity, more shocking wickedness, more undisguised vice and immorality is to be witnessed at midday in the most public thoroughfares of Perth, with its population of 1,500, than in any other city of fifty times its population, either in Europe or America.*

In 1869 Boyle O'Reilly was sent to Bunbury, about a hundred miles south of Fremantle, to assist in the administration of a road-clearing project. While there, he made friends with Father Patrick McCabe. With the priest's assis-



tance, he succeeded in escaping by hiding in the bush, and later rowing to an American whaler, the *Gazelle*. The account of his escape is another story. Suffice it to say, that it became the model for the subsequent *Catalpa* rescue. Furthermore, on board the *Gazelle* O'Reilly became friends with the third mate, Henry C. Hathaway, and another link was forged in the chain of events which was about to lead to the rescue.

### Limerick Fenian Convicts Transported to Australia

Of the 62 Fenians who were transported to Australia, 9 were from Limerick. Here is a list of their names and other details:

Daniel Bradley, b. 1847, Kilmallock, Limerick, 10 yrs., CP 1871, left W.A. 1872.

Thomas Daly, b. 1846, Kilmallock, Limerick, 5 yrs., FP 1869, to Ireland 1869.

Maurice Fitzgibbon, b. 1848, Kilmallock, Limerick, 5 yrs., FP 1869, to San Francisco 1869.

Dennis Hennessy, b. 1846, Kilmallock, Limerick, 7 yrs., FP 1869, to San Francisco 1869.

Martin Hogan, b. 1846, Limerick city, life, escaped to U.S.A. 1876.

Michael Noonan, b. 1844, Kilmallock, Limerick, 5 yrs., FP 1869, to Ireland 1869.

Patrick Reardon, b. 1847, Kilmallock, Limerick, 7 yrs., FP 1869, to Ireland d. 1871 Kilmallock.

John Sheehan, b. 1837, Kilmallock, Limerick, 7 yrs., FP 1869, to San Francisco 1869.

John Shine, b. 1827 Douglas, Limerick, 10 yrs., CF 1878, to Melbourne 1882, then probably to U.S.A. Abbreviations: b = born, CF = certificate of freedom, CP = conditional pardon, FP = free pardon, d = died.

On 21st April, 1869, Martin Hogan became the first Fenian to be reported for misconduct in the colony. It was stated that Hogan had abused and threatened Assistant Warder Munday at a quarry by the Swan River, and had walked off to the Swan Convict Station, after declaring that he would no longer work there.

An explanation for Hogan's behaviour was given in a letter to John Devoy from James Wilson. He wrote that Hogan was 'going to kill a warder that spoke slightly of Ireland'. Another possible influence was that the incident occurred five weeks after Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, had been shot and wounded by Henry James O'Farrell, at a picnic at Clontarf on Sydney Harbour, as the first royal tour got under way in a frenzy of colo-



Martin Hogan in Fremantle Prison.

nial patriotism. It appears that Martin Hogan may have been goaded by a loyalist warder who had heard of the O'Farrell's assassination attempt.

In his detailed study *The Fenians in Australia*, Keith Amos describes how loyalist feeling had been whipped up at several protest meetings, the largest of which was chaired by the cruel and corrupt Governor, J.S. Hampton, on 24th April. Keith Amos has written: 'Hampton was loudly cheered when he assured the gathering that Fenianism in any form would be "stamped out quickly" the moment it appeared in the colony'. Hampton went on to state his attitude to the Fenian convicts, and also made an indirect reference to Martin Hogan:

*... We have amongst us a few men who have been transported to this colony as treason-felony convicts; they have endeavoured to call themselves political prisoners. I hope such a distinction will never be conferred upon them (cheers). With the exception of the Military Fenians, the rest have behaved themselves.*

Residential magistrates were bound to accept a warder's evidence rather than a convict's word, as the Fenians were later to learn to their cost. An uneasy three months passed before Martin Hogan was sentenced. Keith Amos has described his fate:

*Hogan was sentenced to six months hard labour in separate confinement: a severe punishment, in some ways more damaging than a flogging (after hard labour, if so sentenced), was served in a dark cell, the prisoner chained and denied bedding - or if bedding provided, then no clothes - strict silence maintained, and a bread and water diet; it was interrupted only upon medical advice that confinees were 'unable to bear such*

*treatment longer without danger to their lives'. In regard to the mental state induced, the Medical Superintendent of Fremantle Prison George Attfield, felt obliged to observe in an annual report: 'solitary confinement ... does, I am well assured, from first to last, exert a gradually increasing wear and tear upon the mind'. When Hogan had served three months, Attfield reported that he was 'suffering somewhat in health', and recommended his removal on medical grounds. He was duly released and transferred to a different work-party at Champion Bay.*

Comptroller-General Henry Wakeford was satisfied that the Fenians had caused relatively little trouble. When called upon by Governor Hampton to give an account of their conduct, he recommended that their good conduct warranted a response in the form of a reduction of their probationary periods before tickets-of-leave were granted. Hampton approved of this recommendation and reported accordingly to the Home Government. There was to be one exception to this general response: Martin Hogan was excluded from the concession.



'The game of bluff'. Cover of John Denvir's pamphlet, Liverpool, 1882. 'My flag protects me; if you fire on this ship, you fire on the American flag'. Denvir's Penny Irish Illustrated Library.

Assistant Superintendent Joseph Doohan continued to maintain strict order in the prison. The only Irish Catholic among the supervisory officers, he would, in time, have good reason to rue the day the Fenians ever set foot on Fremantle soil. Six years later, the pressure and strain of his office were to force his early retirement on medical grounds, after he had suffered a nervous breakdown.



During Martin Hogan's term in Fremantle there was, at least, one Limerick family in the town. Charles Finnerty, an army officer, had arrived in Western Australia in 1859 from Limerick, with his wife and family. As commandant of the Free Volunteers, the enrolled military pensioners, his path was to cross that of Martin Hogan in a most dramatic way before the latter shook off the brown dust of Western Australia for the last time.

### Amnesty

In 1870, as a result of public opinion in Britain and abroad, the British government declared an amnesty for the Fenians, on condition that the released prisoners would go into exile for the unexpired portion of their sentences. However, the Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, refused to countenance clemency for the military Fenians, including the fifteen in Fremantle. And so, on the morning of the general release, they said farewell to their civilian comrades with heavy hearts. There was, however, a ray of hope. The released prisoners promised to organise a rescue as soon as possible, so Hogan, Wilson, Hassett and the others waited patiently and hopefully, but no word came, or even a sign of release or rescue. Had their comrades in America and Australia—Devoy, O'Reilly, Curran, Cashman and the others—forgotten them? But, when all seemed lost, fate intervened on their side, as it had intervened so often in the past against them.

In 1871 a public reception was given in New York by Clan na Gael for the released Fenians. A newspaper containing a report of the reception found its way into Fremantle Prison, possibly through one of the few prisoners who, when released, had remained in Fremantle, or through Fr. Patrick McCabe, who had moved there. This report contained the New York address of Peter Curran, who, during the round-up of 1866 and '67, had fled the house in Clare Lane. Martin Hogan remembered the night long before at Curran's house in 1866, when he had listened, inspired, to Devoy and McCafferty. He wrote immediately to Curran. This letter, literally a voice from the tomb, was to be the motivating force which moved Devoy and Clan na Gael to initiate the rescue:

Perth, Western Australia,  
May 20th, 1871

My dear Friend:

In order that you may recollect who it is that addresses you, you will remember on the night of January 17th, 1866, some of the Fifth Dragoon Guards being in the old house in Clare Lane with John Devoy and Cap-

tain McCafferty. I am one of that unfortunate band and am now under sentence of life penal servitude in one of the darkest corners of the earth, and as far as we can learn from any small news that chances to reach us, we appear to be forgotten, with no prospect before us but to be left in hopeless slavery to the tender mercies of the Norman wolf.

But, my dear friend, it is not my hard fate I deplore, for I willingly bear it for the cause of dear old Ireland, but I must feel sad at the thought of being forgotten, and neglected by those more fortunate companions in enterprise who have succeeded in eluding the grasp of the oppressor. If I had the means I could get away from here any time. I therefore address you in the hope that you will endeavour to procure and send me pecuniary help for that purpose and I will soon be with you.

Give my love and regards to all old friends—Roantree, Devoy, Burke (General), McCafferty, Captain Holden, O'Donovan Rossa, St. Clair and others, not forgetting yourself and Mrs., and believe me that, even should it be my fate to perish in this villainous dungeon of the world, the last pulse of my heart shall beat "God Save Ireland".

Direct your letter to Rev. Father McCabe, Fremantle. Do not put my name on the outside of the letter.

Yours truly,  
Martin J. Hogan,  
Erin go bragh!

(Gaelic American, 16th July, 1904)

This letter, and others written later by Wilson, show something of the indomitable spirit of the soldier Fenians, left to rot for life in prison, twelve thousand miles from home. As quickly as the post and clandestine methods of communication would allow, they received a reply from Devoy which gave them new hope. He promised to do his utmost on their behalf. But then there was silence. Hassett became impatient and attempted to escape, but was recaptured and put on a chain-gang. Despair began to set in. The hard conditions weakened the prisoners physically and mentally. The Fulham brothers had already died, and Patrick Keating had been given an amnesty through death. These three Fenians were buried in Fremantle.

On 4th September, 1873, James Wilson wrote a sharp letter to Devoy complaining about the delay. But he also suggested a way of escape, which was the plan that was eventually adopted, with some modifications: 'There are some good ports where whalers are in the habit of calling ... it would not be much risk for any vessel, whaler or otherwise, to run in on some pretence or other. And if we had the means of purchasing horses (we) could make

through the bush to the coast where the vessel might be, and so clear out ...'

Martin Hogan had also written to his father at 6 Barrington Street, Limerick, appealing for help in Ireland. Again, Wilson wrote to Devoy: 'Let me tell you that Martin and I expect you to do something for us.' Nine months passed with no reply. Wilson wrote once again, but there was still no reply. It seemed like a desertion to the prisoners. So what was going on in America?

### New Bedford, Massachusetts

On a March, 1875, evening in Massachusetts, George S. Anthony, ship's captain, came to John T. Richardson's store at 18 Water Street New Bedford, which was then the whaling capital of New England. Richardson was his father-in-law. Earlier in the day Captain Anthony's wife Eunice, had given him a message from her father to come to the store that evening. George Anthony, at 29 years of age, was an experienced whaling captain, but had promised his wife that he would go whaling no more, and had settled for a job in a New Bedford engineering works. But he still longed for the sea. Something about Richardson's summons had made him feel instinctively excited. He walked through the chemist's shop, past coils of rope, sheets of sail, hanging brass whaling-lamps, oil-skins, kegs, and barrels and into a private office. As well as being a chandler, Richardson was a ship's agent. The room was wood-panelled. On the walls hung several pictures of whaling ships, old framed bills of lading, a harpoon and a portrait of Richardson's wife. An oil-lamp hung from the ceiling, over a mahogany desk. The corners of the room were dim. Sitting around the desk were Richardson, Henry Hathaway, who was now chief of night police in New Bedford, and three other men. Richardson introduced John Devoy, Jim Reynolds of New Haven and John Goff of New York, all Fenians and the members of the Clan na Gael committee who had been appointed to organise the rescue. It was Devoy who held George Anthony's attention: there was a fierce, determined dedication about the bearded, swarthy man which communicated itself instantly. Captain Anthony's life was about to be changed in an unimaginable way.

During the despair of the Fremantle Fenians Devoy had not forgotten, and had not been idle. He had not written, because he had nothing positive to tell them. He had put the rescue proposition to the executive of Clan na Gael, but the divisiveness of the organisation had frustrated agreement, and the cost of mounting a rescue attempt halfway across the world, with apparently poor chances of success, deterred them.

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**YOUNG AMERICA AND OLD IRELAND**  
**ONE AND INSEPARABLE!**  
 The **COTTON-LORDS** and **TRAITOR-ALLIES** of ENGLAND Must be Put Down!  
**ONCE FOR ALL--ONCE AND FOR EVER!**  
**IRISHMEN, TO THE FIELD!**  
 Irishmen up, Arm and Strike Victoriously for  
**DEMOCRACY AND LIBERTY!**  
 The Rights and Power of the People.  
**THE GALLANT COLONEL OF THE**  
**69th,**  
Was immediately by Mr. N. J. Brennan, the FIRST OF THE IRISH DRAGOONS.  
**FIFTY ACTIVE YOUNG IRISHMEN.**  
 Apply immediately to Col. Gallagher, at the Head-Quarters of the Irish  
 Dragoons, N. W. corner 7th and Chestnut Sts.

*A special grievance. This Civil War recruiting poster for the Union army appeals to Irishmen not only as defenders of their adopted country, but also as the enemies of England. The Confederate 'cotton lords' are identified as the trading partners and natural allies of Ireland's persecutor. The emphasis upon the rights and power of the people also had a special appeal for labourers nursing a grudge against aristocratic landlords and their counterparts among the southern planters. Other recruiting posters of the time pointed out that training in the American army would serve Irish Americans in Ireland's coming war of liberation. It has been estimated that about a quarter of the soldiers who fought in the Union and Confederate armies in the American Civil War were Irish. These armies had provided the Fenians with the tough, trained officers and soldiers it required. One of these men, Captain John McCafferty, was present in the room on the night of 17th January, 1866. He was the man Hogan and the others from the Fifth Dragoons and Tenth Hussars had come to hear in the crowded parlour. The American-born McCafferty, from Sandusky, Ohio, had fought on the Confederate side as an officer with Morgan's Guerillas, an irregular cavalry unit.*

Devoiy had begun to despair, but when he had read Hogan's and Wilson's letters he decided that a rescue should be attempted, regardless of risks or costs. In this grim mood, he went to the annual convention of Clan na Gael in Baltimore in July, 1874. After a committee hearing agreed to put the proposal to the convention, Devoiy rose to speak. His eloquent and forceful appeal was heard in silence. When he had finished, he did not sit down. The delegates waited for him to continue. Instead, out of his pocket he took Martin Hogan's letter, and began to read it in the tense silence. When he had finished, he sat down. After a second or two of silence, the delegates rose and the slow clapping, stomping and shouts of 'Erin go Bragh' rose to a tumultuous crescendo. Devoiy had won. A committee of ten was appointed to organise the rescue, but the main work was carried out by the three men who had come to Richardson's office - Devoiy, Reynolds and Goff.

In the following months a major fund-raising effort was organised among Clan na Gael members throughout the United States. Security was a major consideration, and it was remarkable that, given the 5,000 Clan na Gael members who were canvassed, no word of the plan ever reached the ears of the British authorities.

The plan was a nebulous affair at this stage; its main objective was to use the money collected to buy a whaler and to call at a port in Western Australia to take the men aboard when a land

rescue had been effected. They had the benefit of the advice and experience of all the returned prisoners, most of whom were now in the United States and, of course, the invaluable experience of John Boyle O'Reilly, the only one to have made a successful escape. It was at O'Reilly's suggestion that they contacted Hathaway, who had befriended him on the *Gazelle*.

On 29th January, 1875, Devoiy left New York for New Bedford. He stopped in Boston, and got a letter of introduction to Hathaway from O'Reilly. In New Bedford, Hathaway's recommendations gave the rescue plan a decisive and firm direction which it had previously lacked. He recommended that they purchase and fit out a whaler, put a trustworthy captain aboard, and send her on, what would be for the most part of the voyage, a genuine whaling expedition to Western Australia. He explained that such a voyage could pay its way, or even make a profit. However, the cost of buying and filling a whaler was more than Devoiy's funds would support. The fund-raising was recommenced. By April, 1875, the *Catalpa* had been purchased with Jim Reynolds, who subsequently became known as 'Catalpa Jim', as managing owner. Hathaway had contacted John Richardson to find a suitable captain, and Richardson instantly recommended his son-in-law, Captain George S. Anthony. Thus it came about that Captain Anthony faced John Devoiy in the little lamp-lit room, late on that March evening in 1875.

Devoiy outlined the history of the Fenian movement, the state of the prisoners in Fremantle Jail and the plan of rescue. Anthony was not bound to Ireland in any way, and knew little of its history, but Devoiy's emotional appeal touched his Yankee love of liberty and his sense of adventure and yearning for the sea, which had been frustrated by a boring land job. He accepted. Later that night, when he returned home, he told his wife what he had decided. She bowed to the inevitable, and gave him her full support.

### The Voyage of the *Catalpa*.

On the evening of Thursday, 29th April, 1879, the *Catalpa* began her voyage, with a crew of Malays, Kanakas, Portuguese Negros, a normal whaling crew. The first mate was Sam Smith, who was later to be told of the real purpose of the voyage, and Dennis Dugan was the Clan na Gael representative aboard.

The question of effecting the land rescue, which had to be organised on the ground in Australia, was next considered. Devoiy knew the man for the job. For John Devoiy to have gone himself, which he had wished to do, would have attracted too much attention. But John J. Breslin had all the qualifications for the task. It was Breslin who had planned the escape of James Stephens from Richmond Prison in Dublin. He had a commanding appearance,



impeccable manners, a fine intellect, and a decisive mind. Breslin left New York, where he was then living, on 19th July, 1875, and travelled to San Francisco. There, he picked up Tom Desmond, who was to accompany him at the request of the California Clan na Gael members who had contributed half of the total amount collected. Desmond was to prove a courageous and invaluable aide.

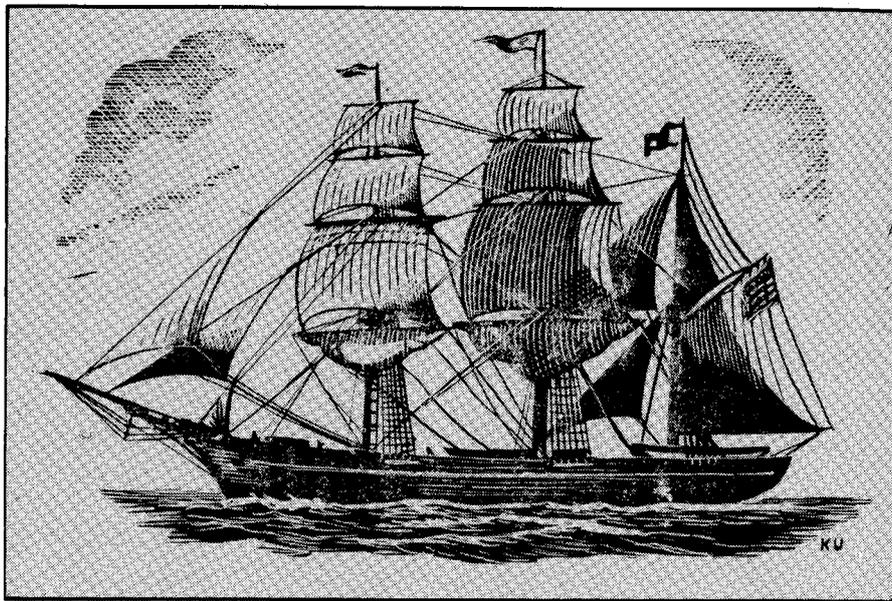
In Los Angeles, Breslin was given a detailed briefing about the prison, its routines, and the local topography by John Kenealy, one of the prisoners released in the amnesty. Breslin and Desmond set sail from San Francisco on Monday, 13th September, bound for Sydney. The final links in the chain of rescue, which had started with O'Reilly's friendship with Hathaway on board the *Gazelle*, were about to be forged.

On the high seas, the *Catalpa* had been about the dangerous business of hunting and killing whales. At the same time, Captain Anthony kept a fairly steady course for his main objective – Western Australia. The crew killed a whale early in the voyage, but gales prevented them from firing the trypots to boil the hand-shredded spermaceti, which produces the most prized of all the oils a whale can yield. By September they had reached the Azores, where they refitted the ship and replenished their provisions.

Breslin and Desmond arrived in Sydney on 15th October, 1875. Breslin was travelling under the alias, 'James Collins', with papers to pass himself off as a wealthy businessman. Desmond's alias was 'Tom Johnson', and he passed himself off as a man in search of work in Australia. Immediately they contacted John Edward Kelly and John King, two of the most senior Fenians in Australia. To their astonishment, they learned that the Australian Fenians were also planning to rescue the Fremantle Six, but their scheme was not as elaborately organised at the 'Americans'. The Australian Fenians threw their weight and their money behind the *Catalpa* plan. King was assigned to Fremantle. Breslin and Desmond travelled to Melbourne, and hence to Albany, arriving there on 13th November, 1875, having agreed not to acknowledge each other on the journey.

From Albany, they took the coastal steamer, the *Georgette*, and arrived in Fremantle on 16th November. Breslin, alias Collins, the wealthy speculator, called loudly for a carriage, while Desmond, of humbler status, trudged towards the centre of town, where he boarded the stagecoach for Perth.

In Fremantle, Breslin checked into the Emerald Isle Hotel, demanded the best room, and insisted on a first-class service. He also left letters and refer-



A drawing of the *Catalpa*, from 'The Story of the *Catalpa* and the Rescue of the Fenian Prisoners', Irish Book Bureau, Dublin.

ences on the small writing table in his room, purporting to show his extensive financial interests.

The week after he arrived in Fremantle, Breslin learned that one of the Fenians released on amnesty, William Foley, was living in Fremantle. He was in bad health, and lived by doing odd jobs and running errands. All the prison officers and guards knew him, and he often had occasion to go into prison. Breslin gave him a note to smuggle to Wilson, to alert the prisoners to be ready for a rescue attempt. We can only imagine how Hogan, Wilson and the others felt when they read the note. The long wait and frustrations had not been in vain.

During the following weeks 'Collins' became well known in Fremantle. Much sought after because of his manifest interest in business opportunities, his manner, learning and social skills made him popular. He met Doonan, the prison superintendent, on a social occasion and was invited to see the prison. Doonan presumably conducted him on a guided tour of 'The Establishment', and this gave him an invaluable insight into the workings of the prison. With this information, and, through further communication with the prisoners, Breslin finalised the plan. But the time could not be set until the *Catalpa* arrived. Three months passed with no sign of the ship and 'Collins' found it increasingly difficult to maintain his credibility. At various times he evinced interest in wool, sheep-farming, timber and gold projects. But he was running out of ideas and time, with still no sight of the *Catalpa*.

A whaling ship usually charts a lonely course, cruising endlessly and erratically in search of whales, going wherever the mammal is to be found. That was

what the *Catalpa* crew had expected as a matter of course, as they made their wages on the number of catches made. But the *Catalpa* was a whaler with a different purpose, and maintained her course off the coast of Africa and on towards Cape Town. The crew had become suspicious, and Captain Anthony was worried. Winds were poor, and progress was slow. By the captain's reckoning, it would be early April before they reached Australia. *En route* there occurred an extraordinary coincidence. On 16th February a British merchantmen the *Ocean Bounty* came within hailing distance. Captain Anthony thought that she might have some accurate charts of the Australian coast, and signalled that he would like to come aboard. When he returned to the *Catalpa* after about an hour, he called Sam Smith to his cabin. 'Mr. Smith, you'll never believe it, but that ship's skipper was Captain Cousins, and he was captain of the *Hougoumont* when she took the men we seek to prison in Australia. The charts he gave me were the very ones he used on that voyage'. After that encounter, the ship coursed briskly along, knowing that she was in the home stretch. On 27th March the masthead look-out shouted the welcome words 'land dead ahead.'

Meanwhile Martin Hogan continued to write regularly to his father in Limerick:

Fremantle Prison,  
Western Australia,  
17th March, 1876.

My Dearest Father,  
I received your letter of November which gave me some comfort to hear from you and I am so happy that you enjoy your health. You say, dear father, write every mail, if possible. I am not able to do that. I will do my



best to write every two months. Months and days pass away from me in my long suffering that often I wish to Heaven that the day I received sentence of life that it was death. It would keep me out of long years of misery. Dear Father, you ask me did I get the ticket of leave. I will not for some years to come. Dear Father, send me nothing; no matter what kind it may be. Anything my dear mother has left me keep it till I get it in my own hands. Keep good heart, dear father, I will write a long letter next time.

Your fond son,  
Martin J. Hogan.

Write soon.

When Martin Hogan's father received this letter on 15th June, his son was already a free man on the high seas to America.

### The Arrival of the Catalpa.

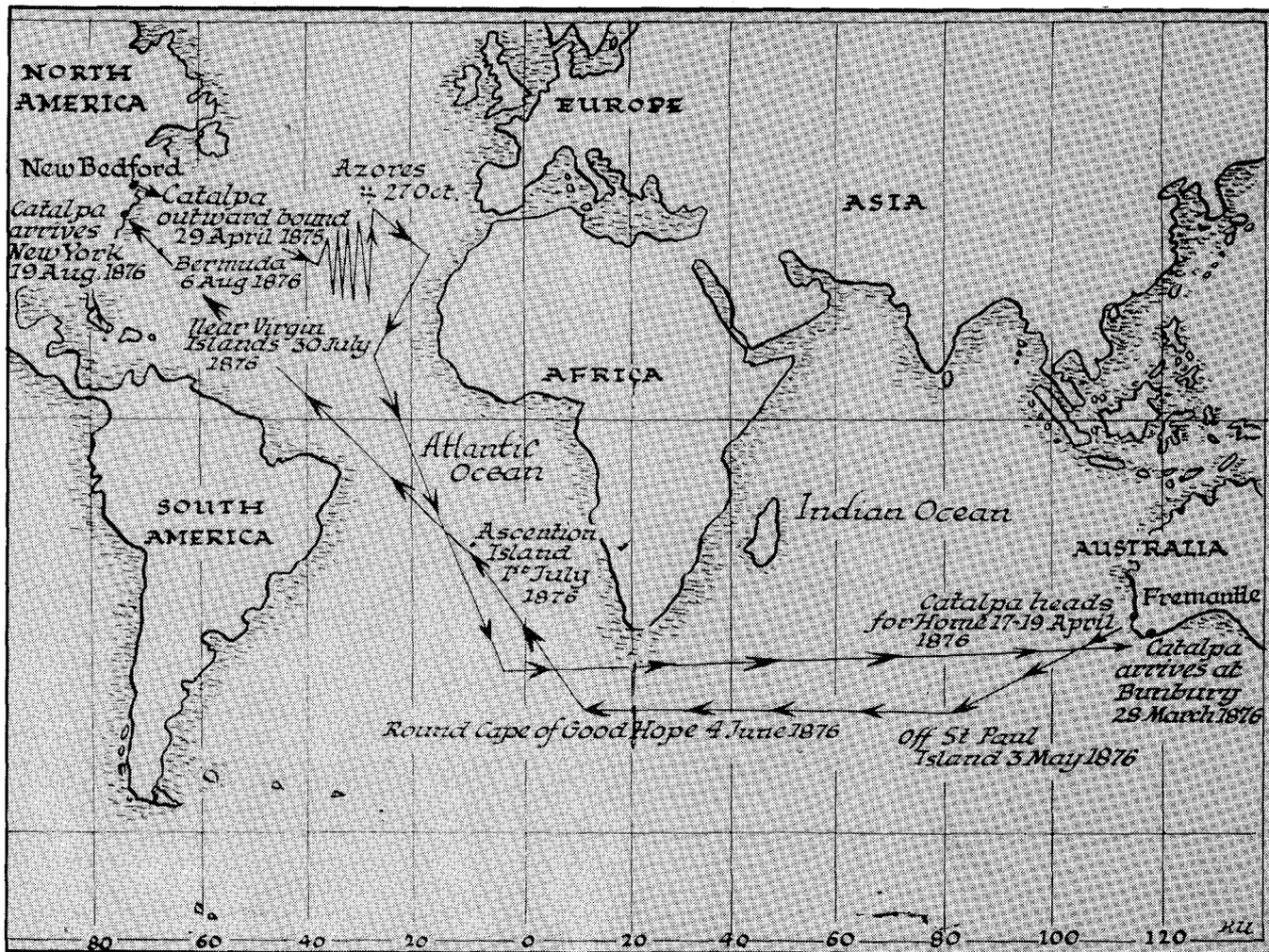
The prisoners were all located in Fremantle at this time, except Wilson, and were engaged in building a reservoir to supply water to shipping in the harbour. Wilson was training a horse for the prison doctor, and was in and out of the prison several times a day. He was

thus able to keep in touch with Foley and Breslin. King had arrived from Sydney with more money. So, too, had Denis McCarthy from Cork, and John Walsh from Durham, sent by the I.R.B. in Ireland, in yet another coincidence, to effect a rescue. All remained to assist in the rescue. But where was the *Catalpa*?

Restless and awake at dawn on 29th March, Breslin stepped out of the hotel and walked listlessly towards the telegraph office, as he had done morning after morning. Approaching the telegraph office, he noticed several new notices tacked to the bulletin-board, which gave details of the arrival times of ships. He quickly scanned the notices and saw to his intense excitement that the *Catalpa* had arrived at Bunbury, just south of Fremantle. They had made it! The relief was almost overpowering as he raced back to the hotel and retrieved the codes Devoy had given him to use in communicating with the *Catalpa*. He returned to the telegraph office and sent a message to Anthony requesting the time of the arrival in Fremantle. Next, he roused William Foley to give him a message for Wilson to alert the prisoners. He sent King to Perth to inform Tom Desmond, who was then working in a sausage fac-

tory. Walsh and McCarthy were also informed. Breslin went to Bunbury on the mail-car and met Captain Anthony to work out further plans. The men, on being rescued, were to be driven by horse-and-buggy to Rockingham, twenty miles south of Fremantle, where a boat from the *Catalpa* was to be waiting on the beach for them.

The *Catalpa* would stand well out to sea, off Garden Island, and wait for the whaleboat to return with the prisoners. Breslin suggested that Captain Anthony should see the coast off Rockingham, so that he would know exactly where to position the *Catalpa*, and so they travelled to Fremantle on the *Georgette* on Sunday, 2nd April. On arrival at Fremantle, they were dismayed to find the gunboat *Convict*, 'carrying 2 guns and 30 men schooner-rigged and fast sailing', in the harbour. The escape was postponed again, this time for a week until the gunboat left. They used the week to fine-tune the plan. Anthony went to Rockingham and noted its topography; Walsh and McCarthy studied the telegraph lines they were to cut; Breslin and Desmond, who were to take the prisoners to the rendezvous in horse-and-traps, rehearsed the pick-up and the ride to Rockingham.



The route of the *Catalpa*, from 'The Story of the *Catalpa* and the Rescue of the Fenian Prisoners', Irish Book Bureau, Dublin.



Another nerve-stretching delay occurred when the *Catalpa* was prevented from leaving Bunbury due to stormy weather. Finally, the escape was set for Easter Monday, 17th April, 1876. So, on Easter Saturday, Breslin walked to Fremantle jetty and approached near enough for Wilson, who was waiting there, to hear him whisper, 'Monday morning'.

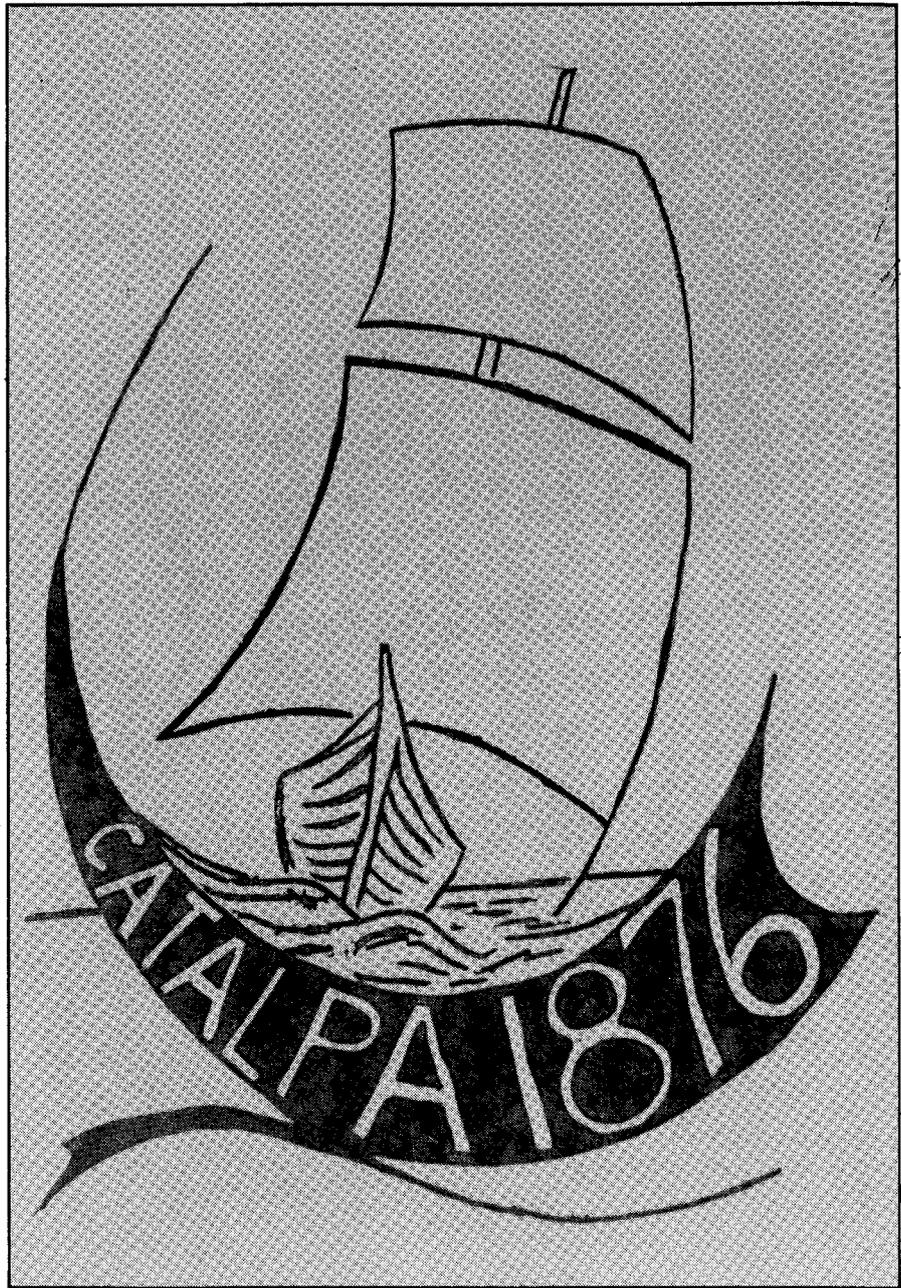
Cranston was to tell the jail guard that Harrington and Wilson were to accompany him to shift some furniture at the Governor's House, and so get him outside. Hogan, a coachpainter, was engaged in painting the residence of the Acting Comptroller-General of Convicts, William Fauntleroy, and was to bring Darragh and Hassett with him. Apart from Hogan, they had all been 'constables' or 'trusties' for years.

### The Rescue.

Breslin's account of the final escape was published in the *Gaelic American* in 1904, and it reads:

*At half-past seven a.m., I drove slowly up the principal street, and, turning to the right, walked my horses by the warders quarters and pensioners' barracks. The men were beginning to assemble for parade. I had arranged with our men that I would have the traps in position on the road at a quarter to eight, and would remain so, the nearest being within 5 minutes' run of the prison, until nine o'clock a.m. Being ahead of my time I drove slowly along the Rockingham road, and Desmond coming up shortly after, drove by me. Coming to a shaded part of the road we halted and, having divided the hats and coats 3 to each trap, I commenced to drive back to Fremantle, Desmond following; time 5 minutes to eight. A few moments later I saw 3 men in prison dress wheel round and march down the Rockingham road. Driving up to them I found they were Wilson, Cranston and Harrington. I directed them to pass on and get into the trap with Desmond and drive away. Desmond wheeled his horses around, and they were only seated and ready to start when the other three came in sight, and, on driving up to them I found one man carrying a spade and another a large kerosine can. As soon as I came near enough to recognise them, he who carried the spade flung it with vim into the bush and the holder of the kerosine can bestowed a strong kick upon it in good football fashion...*

*At half-past 10 a.m. we made the beach and got aboard the whale-boat. The men had been instructed to stow themselves in the smallest possible space, so as not to interfere with*



The cover of 'The Fenian Escape from Fremantle, Western Australia', edited by John Watson, University of Western Australia, 1876.

those at the oars, and in a few minutes all was ready and the word was given, "Shove off, men; shove off."

Now fairly afloat the word was "Out oars and pull for your lives! Pull as if you were pulling after a whale!..."

When about two miles off shore we saw the mounted police ride up to the spot where we had embarked, and then slowly drive the horses and wagons we had used up the beach towards the Rockingham Jetty...

About half-past 5 p.m. Toby raised the ship 15 miles ahead of us, and the men bent to their oars in order to get as near to her as possible before dark; at half-past six we had gained

on the ship and could see her topsails quite plain from the crests of the waves. Made sail on the boat. At this time the weather had become gloomy, with rain squalls, and we were pretty thoroughly soaked.

The boat made good headway under sail and we were rapidly overhauling the ship, carrying all sail and the whole boats crew - sixteen men in all - perched on the weather gun-whale, with the water rushing in on us from time to time, when, about, seven o'clock as squall struck us, carrying away the mast, which broke short off at the thwart, and, by the time we had the mast and sail stowed away, the ship had disappeared in the increasing darkness...



Fenian escapees at Rockingham, 1876, from 'Australasian Sketcher', 8th July, 1876. (Mitchell Library).

On the following morning the whaleboat sighted the *Catalpa* again, but also saw the *Georgette*, obviously on course to intercept her. Fortunately, the British ship passed without seeing the whaleboat. *Georgette* failed to board the *Catalpa* and began a search for the whaleboat. They ceased rowing and laid low, and the ship passed on. About 2pm the *Catalpa* sighted the whaleboat. Simultaneously a police cutter appeared. It was a race between the two as to who would reach the *Catalpa* first. Breslin's account continued 'We ran up to her side, and scrambled on board in double quick time ... The Stars and Stripes were flying at the peak, our boat was hoisted and in its place at the davits the ship wore, and was standing on her course inside of two minutes.....'

Early next morning the *Georgette* arrived again, with eight constables, eighteen pensioners, led by Major Finerty, and a loaded cannon. She fired a shot across the whaler's bows, and then hailed Captain Anthony: 'I telegraphed to your government; don't you know that you are amenable to British law in the Colony?'

Breslin told Anthony that this was a bluff, because the land-party had cut the telegraph wires out of Fremantle. The *Georgette* then threatened to blow the mast off the *Catalpa*. Captain Anthony, knowing they were in territorial waters, decided to throw the bluff

back. Standing high in the bow, he proclaimed: 'That's the American flag; I am on the high seas; my flag protects me; if you fire on this ship, you fire on the American flag.'

The *Georgette* steamed slowly across the stern of the whaler but did not fire a shot. The bluff had run its course. The *Catalpa* and her prisoners, now free men, set course for America. At sea, John Breslin had the last word. He posted a letter by 'ocean mail' - on a piece of floating wood:

*Rockingham, April 17, 1876  
To His Excellency the British Governor of Western Australia:-*

*This is to certify that I have this day released from the clemency of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, Queen of Great Britain, etc., etc., six Irishmen, condemned to imprisonment for life by the enlightened and magnanimous government of Great Britain, for having been guilty of the atrocious and unpardonable crimes, known to the unenlightened portion of mankind as 'love of country' and 'hatred of tyranny'. For this act of 'Irish assurance' my birth and blood being my full and sufficient warrant. Allow me to add that -*

*In taking my leave now, I've only to say,  
A few cells I've emptied (a sell in its way);  
I've the honour and pleasure to bid*

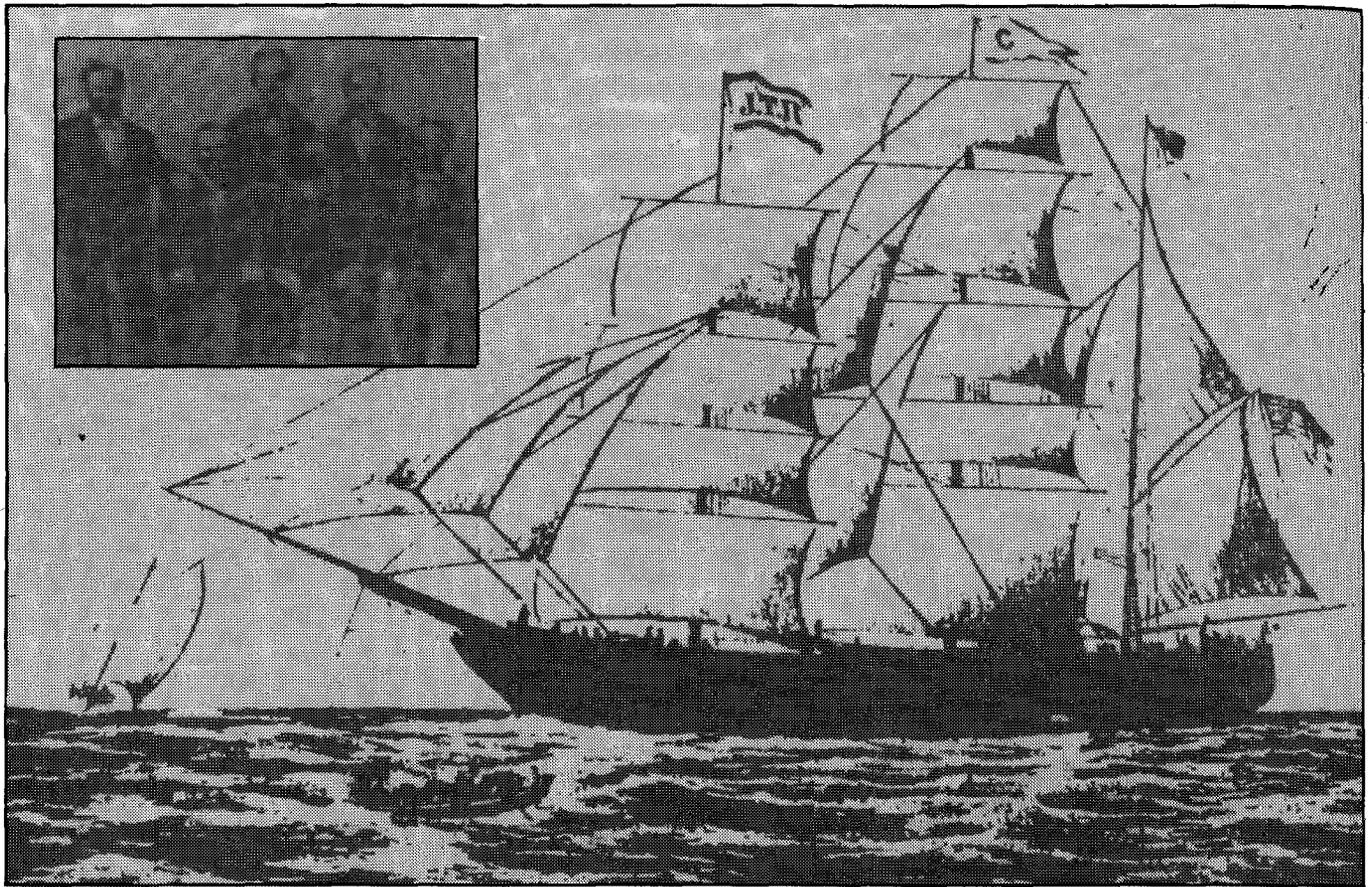
*you good day:  
From all future acquaintance excuse me, I pray*

*In the service of my country  
John J. Breslin*

But the four months homeward voyage turned out to be a more difficult test for Breslin than he could have ever envisaged. Grievances over the food, general discontent and a change of plan, which was to have financial repercussions later, led to bitter disagreements on board the ship. All the Fenians, except Breslin, wanted the ship to head straight to New York without delay. However, a key factor in the venture was the understanding that the *Catalpa* would take time out on the voyage to America to kill some whales in order to raise 10,000 dollars to pay the ships crew and meet other costs. But the men did not relish this delay: after their long period in captivity, they did not consider that they could be free men until they reached American soil.

Because of this internecine squabbling, there was confusion when the ship unexpectedly arrived in New York. However, on 24th August, 1876, the *Catalpa* sailed triumphantly into her home port of New Bedford, Massachusetts, to the cheers of a great crowd and the booming of cannons.

Meanwhile, back in Australia, descriptions of the six escapees were published in the *Police Gazette* of Western Australia. (*The Irishman*, 26th



The race for the Catalpa, from a drawing by E.N. Russell in *The Catalpa Expedition* (Mitchell Library). Inset: The Catalpa Six, on their arrival in America.

August, 1876 – reprinted from the Boston Pilot) Martin Hogan was described as follows:

*Martin Hogan, Imperial Convict, Reg. No. 9767; arrived in the Colony per convict ship Hougoumont; received a life sentence, 21st August, 1866. Description – Stout, age 37 years, height 5 feet 6 inches, dark brown hair, dark hazel eyes, long visage, dark complexion. Marks – D left side; cut left elbow, walks firmly; has the gait and appearance of a cavalry soldier; is a coachpainter; Fenian. Absconded from Fremantle 8.30 a.m., 17th April, 1876.*

Among the Irish in Australia the escape was celebrated in the 'Ballad of the Catalpa':

*She was a Yankee whale ship and  
commander  
Called the 'Catalpa' by name,  
Came out to Western Australia  
And stole six of our convicts away.*

*So come all you screw warders and  
gaolers,  
Remember Perth regatta day;  
Take care of the rest of your Fenians,  
Or the Yankees will take them away!*

But for all the daring, bravery and suffering endured in the Catalpa Rescue and in the transportation of the Fenians, these events were not accorded a central place in the Irish Australian world.

Again in his book *The Irish in Australia*, Patrick O'Farrell has given a sober assessment of the Fenians in Australia:

*The bold Fenian men soon marched (or rather, sailed) out of Australian history, America-bound. The rescue of six of them, at Easter 1876, by the American whaler, Catalpa was an adventure story of splendid dash. Organised from America, costing \$25,000, involving preorganisation in Fremantle by spies in disguise, escape in an open boat, a chase at sea by a gunboat, bickering among those rescued, a happy ending in a delirious Boston – this was all too exciting, too heady, for sober Irish-Australian history, even Australian Irish history, for a century. With the humdrum, Australians could cope, those who had laid down their Fenian banners in Australia. In 1904 a West Australian committee was formed to assist two of the remaining Fenian ex-prisoners: one, aged eighty-two, was in a destitute men's home, the other, aged seventy-six was living in a tent. Two others were still alive, but did not need such assistance. A national appeal was launched. In total keeping with the Australian reception of Fenianism from its beginning, the appeal never met its target.*

*Fenianism was too strong a meat for the average Irish-Australian stomach. They had come to Australia, convict or free, in peril of the deep, praying for God's protection and mercy, and for His care of their loved ones. The Fenians were made of different sterner stuff.*

But despite their mistakes and failures, many of the Fenians were brave and noble-minded. Martin Hogan, at least, deserves to be remembered in his native place – and not only in Australia's bicentennial year.

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