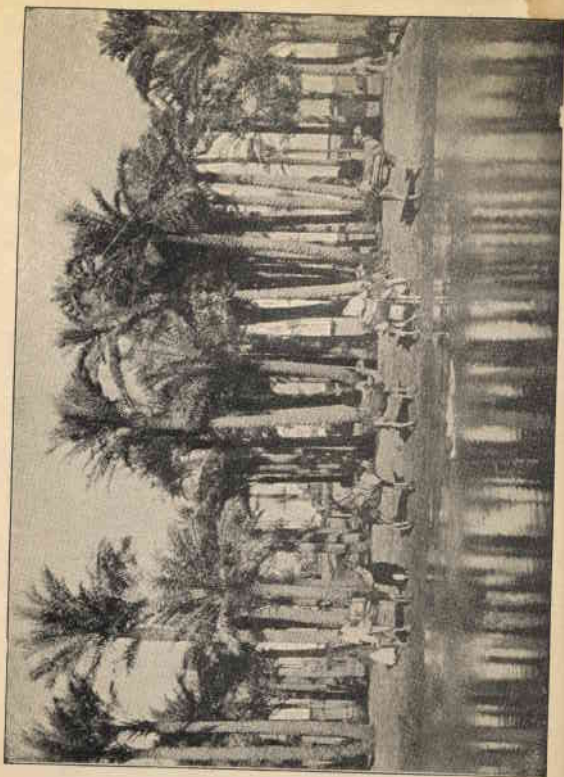




Robert Hawk  
Shady Brook  
Weston, N. Va.



# BLACK ROCK

A TALE OF THE SELKIRKS

BY  
RALPH CONNOR  
AUTHOR OF "SKY PILOT," ETC., ETC.

With an Introduction by GEORGE ADAM SMITH, LL.D.

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## BLACK ROCK.

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THE story of the book is true, and chief of the failures in the making of the book is this, that it is not all the truth. The light is not bright enough, the shadow is not black enough to give a true picture of that bit of Western life of which the writer was some small part. The men of the book are still there in the mines and lumber camps of the mountains, fighting out that eternal fight for manhood, strong, clean, God-conquered. And when the west winds blow, to the open ear the sounds of battle come, telling the fortunes of the fight.

Because a man's life is all he has, and because the only hope of the brave young West lies in its men, this story is told. It may be that the magic pity of a broken life may move some to pray, and that that divine power there is in a single brave heart to summon forth hope and courage may move some to fight. If so, the tale is not told in vain.

C. W. G.



## Introduction.

brothers. Into the Northwest of Canada the  
young men of Great Britain and Ireland have  
been pouring (I was told), sometimes at the rate  
of forty-eight thousand a year. Our brothers  
who left home yesterday—our hearts cannot but  
follow them. With these pages Ralph Connor  
engages our eyes and our minds to follow, too ;  
do I think there is any one who shall read  
this book and not find also that his conscience is  
sharpened. There is a warfare appointed unto  
us upon earth, and its struggles are nowhere  
so intense, nor the victories of the strong nor  
the succors brought to the fallen more heroic than  
the fields described in this volume.

GEORGE ADAM SMITH.

## INTRODUCTION.

I THINK have met "Ralph Connor." In I am sure I have—once in a canoe on the River, once on the Assinaboine, and twice thrice on the prairies to the west. That was the name he gave me, but, if I am right, it was one of the most honest and genial of the characters that are fighting the devil and good work for men all over the world seen with his own eyes the life which he describes in this book, and has himself, for some hard and lonely toil, assisted in the good things which he traces among its wild and hopeless conditions. He writes with truthfulness and accuracy of an eyewitness, in style (as I think his readers will allow) of an artist, and with the tenderness and honesty of a man not only of faith, but of experience who has seen in fulfilment the ideal for his lives.

The life to which he takes us, though very strange to our tame minds, is a

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# BLACK ROCK.

## CHAPTER I.

### CHRISTMAS EVE IN A LUMBER CAMP.

It was due to a mysterious dispensation of providence and a good deal to Leslie Graeme that I found myself in the heart of the Selkirks on my Christmas eve as the year 1882 was dying. It had been my plan to spend my Christmas far away in Toronto, with such bohemian and boon companions as could be found in that cosmopolitan and kindly city. But Leslie Graeme changed all that, for, discovering me in the village of Black Rock, with my traps all packed, waiting for the stage to start for the Landing, thirty miles away, he bore down upon me with irresistible force, and I found myself recovering from my surprise only after we had gone in his lumber sleigh some six miles on our way to his camp up in the mountains. I was surprised and much



delighted, though I would not allow him to tell me so, to find that his old-time power over me was still there. He could always in the old 'various days—dear, wild days—make me do what he liked. He was so handsome and so reckless, so brilliant in his class work, and the prince of backs on the Rugby field, and with such power of fascination as would “extract the heart out of a wheelbarrow,” as Barney Lundy used to say. And thus it was that I found myself just three weeks later—I was to have spent two or three days—on the afternoon of December 24, standing in Graeme's Lumber Camp No. 2, wondering at myself. But I did not regret my change of plans, for in those three weeks I had raided the cinnamon bear's den and had wakened up a grizzly—— But I shall let the grizzly finish the tale; he probably sees more humor in it than I.

The camp stood in a little clearing, and consisted of a group of three long, low shanties with smaller shacks near them, all built of heavy, unhewn logs, with door and window in each. The grub camp, with cook-shed attached, stood in the middle of the clearing; at a little distance was the sleeping camp with the office built against it, and about a hundred yards away on the other side of the clearing stood the stables, and near them the smiddy. The mountains rose grandly

on every side, throwing up their great peaks into the sky. The clearing in which the camp stood was hewn out of a dense pine forest that filled the valley and climbed half way up the mountain sides and then frayed out in scattered and stunted trees.

It was one of those wonderful Canadian winter days, bright, and with a touch of sharpness in the air that did not chill, but warmed the blood like draughts of wine. The men were up in the woods, and the shrill scream of the bluejay flashing across the open, the impudent chatter of the red squirrel from the top of the grub camp, and the pert chirp of the whisky-jack, hopping about in the rubbish-heap, with the long, lone cry of the wolf far down the valley, only made the silence felt the more.

As I stood drinking in with all my soul the glorious beauty and the silence of mountain and forest, with the Christmas feeling stealing into me, Graeme came out from his office, and, catching sight of me, called out: “Glorious Christmas weather, old chap!” And then, coming nearer: “Must you go to-morrow?”

“I fear so,” I replied, knowing well that the Christmas feeling was on him too.

“I wish I were going with you,” he said quietly

student days in the drawing-room at home, listening to his father wailing out "Lochaber" upon the pipes, and I well knew that the awful minor strains were now eating their way into his soul.

Over and over again the Highlander played his lament. He had long since forgotten us, and was seeing visions of the hills and lochs and glens of his far-away native land, and making us, too, see strange things out of the dim past. I glanced at old man Nelson, and was startled at the eager, almost piteous look in his eyes, and I wished Campbell would stop. Mr. Craig caught my eye, and stepping over to Campbell held out his hand for the violin. Lingeringly and lovingly the Highlander drew out the last strain and silently gave the minister his instrument.

Without a moment's pause, and while the spell of "Lochaber" was still upon us, the minister, with exquisite skill, fell into the refrain of that simple and beautiful camp-meeting hymn, "The Sweet By-and-By." After playing the verse through once he sang softly the refrain. After the first verse the men joined in the chorus; at first timidly, but by the time the third verse was reached they were shouting with throats full open, "We shall meet on that beautiful shore." When I looked at Nelson the eager light had gone out of his eyes, and in its place was a kind of deter-

mined hopelessness, as if in this new music he had no part.

After the voices had ceased Mr. Craig played again the refrain, more and more softly and slowly; then laying the violin on Campbell's knees, he drew from his pocket his little Bible and said:

"Men, with Mr. Graeme's permission I want to read you something this Christmas eve. You will all have heard it before, but you will like it none the less for that."

His voice was soft, but clear and penetrating, as he read the eternal story of the angels and the shepherds and the Babe. And as he read, a slight motion of the hand or a glance of an eye made us see, as he was seeing, that whole radiant drama. The wonder, the timid joy, the tenderness, the mystery of it all, were borne in upon us with overpowering effect. He closed the book, and in the same low, clear voice went on to tell us how, in his home years ago, he used to stand on Christmas eve listening in thrilling delight to his mother telling him the story, and how she used to make him see the shepherds and hear the sheep bleating near by, and how the sudden burst of glory used to make his heart jump.

"I used to be a little afraid of the angels, because a boy told me they were ghosts; but my mother told me better, and I didn't fear them any



more. And the Baby, the dear little Baby—we all love a baby.” There was a quick, dry sob; it was from ~~him~~. “I used to peek through under to see the little one in the straw, and wonder what things swaddling clothes were. Oh, it was so real and so beautiful!” He paused, and I could hear the men breathing.

“But one Christmas eve,” he went on in a lower, sweeter tone, “there was no one to tell me the story, and I grew to forget it and went away to college, and learned to think that it was only a child’s tale and was not for men. Then bad days came to me and worse, and I began to lose my grip of myself, of life, of hope, of goodness, till one black Christmas, in the slums of a far-away city, when I had given up all and the devil’s arms were about me, I heard the story again. And as I listened, with a bitter ache in my heart—for I had put it all behind me—I suddenly found myself peeking under the shepherds’ arms with a child’s wonder at the Baby in the straw. Then it came over me like great waves that His name was Jesus, because it was He that should save men from their sins. Save! Save! The waves kept beating upon my ears, and before I knew I had called out, ‘Oh! can He save me?’ It was in a little mission meeting on one of the side streets, and they seemed to be used to that

sort of thing there, for no one was surprised; and a young fellow leaned across the aisle to me and said: ‘Why, you just bet He can!’ His surprise that I should doubt, his bright face and confident tone, gave me hope that perhaps it might be so. I held to that hope with all my soul, and”—stretching up his arms, and with a quick glow in his face and a little break in his voice—“He hasn’t failed me yet; not once, not once!”

He stopped quite short, and I felt a good deal like making a fool of myself, for in those days I had not made up my mind about these things. Graeme, poor old chap, was gazing at him with a [www.genealogy-books.com](http://www.genealogy-books.com) and yearning in his dark eyes; big Sandy was sitting very stiff and staring harder than ever into the fire; Baptiste was trembling with excitement; Blaney was openly wiping the tears away. But the face that held my eyes was that of old man Nelson. It was white, fierce, hungry-looking, his sunken eyes burning, his lips parted as if to cry. The minister went on.

“I didn’t mean to tell you this, men; it all came over me with a rush; but it is true, every word, and not a word will I take back. And, what’s more, I can tell you this: what He did for me He can do for any man, and it doesn’t make any difference what’s behind him, and”—leaning slightly forward, and with a little thrill of pathos



vibrating in his voice—"oh, boys, why don't you give Him a chance at you? Without Him you'll never be the men you want to be, and you'll never get the better of that that's keeping some of you now from going back home. You know you'll never go back till you're the men you want to be." Then, lifting up his face and throwing back his head, he said, as if to himself, "Jesus! He shall save His people from their sins," and then, "Let us pray."

Graeme leaned forward with his face in his hands; Baptiste and Blaney dropped on their knees; Sandy, the Campbells, and some others stood up. Old man Nelson held his eye steadily on the minister.

Only once before had I seen that look on a human face. A young fellow had broken through the ice on the river at home, and as the black water was dragging his fingers one by one from the slippery edges, there came over his face that same look. I used to wake up for many a night after in a sweat of horror, seeing the white face with its parting lips and its piteous, dumb appeal, and the black water slowly sucking it down.

Nelson's face brought it all back; but during the prayer the face changed and seemed to settle into resolve of some sort, stern, almost gloomy, as of a man with his last chance before him.

After the prayer Mr. Craig invited the men to a Christmas dinner next day in Black Rock. "And because you are an independent lot, we'll charge you half a dollar for dinner and the evening show." Then leaving a bundle of magazines and illustrated papers on the table—a godsend to the men—he said good-by and went out.

I was to go with the minister, so I jumped into the sleigh first and waited while he said good-by to Graeme, who had been hard hit by the whole service and seemed to want to say something. I heard Mr. Craig say cheerfully and confidentially: "It's a true bill: try Him."

Sandy, who had been steadying Dandy while that interesting broncho was attempting with great success to balance himself on his hind legs, came to say good-by.

"Come and see me first thing, Sandy."

"Aye! I know; I'll see ye, Mr. Craig," said Sandy earnestly as Dandy dashed off at a full gallop across the clearing and over the bridge, steadying down when he reached the hill.

"Steady, you idiot!"

This was to Dandy, who had taken a sudden side spring into the deep snow, almost upsetting us. A man stepped out from the shadow. It was old man Nelson. He came straight to the

sleigh and, ignoring my presence completely, said:

"Mr. Craig, are you dead sure of this? Will it work?"

"Do you mean," said Craig, taking him up promptly, "can Jesus Christ save you from your sins and make a man of you?"

The old man nodded, keeping his hungry eyes on the other's face.

"Well, here's His message to you: 'The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.'"

"To me? To me?" said the old man eagerly.

"Listen; this, too, is His word: 'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.' That's for you, for here you are, coming."

"You don't know me, Mr. Craig. I left my baby fifteen years ago because——"

"Stop!" said the minister. "Don't tell me, at least not to-night; perhaps never. Tell Him who knows it all now and who never betrays a secret. Have it out with Him. Don't be afraid to trust Him."

Nelson looked at him, with his face quivering, and said in a husky voice:

"If this is no good, it's hell for me."

"If it is no good," replied Craig almost sternly, "it's hell for all of us."

The old man straightened himself up, looked up at the stars, then back at Mr. Craig, then at me, and drawing a deep breath said:

"I'll try Him." As he was turning away the minister touched him on the arm and said quietly:

"Keep an eye on Sandy to-morrow."

Nelson nodded and we went on; but before we took the next turn I looked back and saw what brought a lump into my throat. It was old man Nelson on his knees in the snow, with his hands spread upward to the stars, and I wondered if there was any One above the stars and nearer than the stars who could see. And then the trees hid him from my sight.



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Black Rock.

Black Rock.

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utes had passed I was in a delightful glow,  
of rest and content.

difficulty and allowing others the same privilege

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forward and invited all into the booth for hot coffee which Judy had ordered. As they trooped, and Quatre Bras was won. So sooner were the miners safely engaged with their coffee than I heard a great noise of bells of men shouting, and on reaching the street saw that the men from the lumber camp were coming in. Two immense sleighs, decorated with ribbons and spruce boughs, each drawn by a four-horse team gaily adorned, filled with some fifty men, singing and shouting with all their might, were coming down the hill road at full gallop. Round the corner they swung, dashed at full speed across the bridge and down the street, and pulled up after they had made the circuit of a block, to the great admiration of the on-lookers. Among the miners Slavin sauntered up good-naturedly, mak-

The boys laughed, and Slavin, joining in, turned away with Keefe and Blaney; but by the look in his eye I knew he was playing "Br'er Rabbit" and lying low.

Mr. Craig just then came up.

"Hello, boys! Too late for Punch and Judy, but just in time for hot coffee and doughnuts."

"*Bon.* Dat's fuss rate," said Baptiste heartily. "Where you keep him?"

"Up in the tent next the church there. The miners are all in."

"Ah, dat so? Dat's bad news for the shanty-men, heh, Sandy?" said the little Frenchman dolefully.

"There was a clothes-basket full of doughnuts and a beiler of coffee left as I passed just now," said Craig encouragingly.

"*Allons mes amis. Vite !* Never say keel !"

aw Sandy solemnly and emphatically shake his head, saying, "Ah! we'll beat him this day," and gathered that he was added to the vigilance committee.

Old man Nelson was busy with his own team. He turned slowly at Mr. Craig's greeting, "How is it, Nelson?" and it was with a very grave voice he answered: "I hardly know, sir; but I am not gone yet, though it seems little to hold to."

"All you want for a grip is what your hand can cover. What would you have? And besides, do you know why you are not gone yet?"

The old man waited, looking at the minister gravely.

"Because He hasn't let go His grip of you"

"How do you know He's gripped me?"

"Now, look here, Nelson, do you want to quit this thing and give it all up?"

The old man gazed at the minister, a light growing in his eyes.

"You're right. Thank God, you're right."

And then he turned quickly away and went into the stable behind his team. It was a minute before he came out. Over his face was a trembling joy.

"Can I do anything for you to-day?" he asked humbly.

"Indeed you just can," said the minister, taking his hand and shaking it very warmly; and then he told him Slavin's program and ours.

"Sandy is all right till after his race. After that is his time of danger," said the minister.

"I'll stay with him, sir," said old Nelson, in the tone of a man taking a covenant, and immediately set off for the coffee tent.

"Here comes another recruit for your corps,"

y I hardly recognize myself to-day. But here  
 es," and before I knew it I was describing our  
 ans to Graeme, growing more and more en-  
 usiastic as he sat in his sleigh, listening with a  
 nizzical smile I didn't quite like.

"He's got you too," he said. "I feared so"  
 "Well," I laughed, "perhaps so. But I want  
 to lick that man Slavin. I've just seen him, and  
 e's just what Craig calls him, 'a slick son of the  
 evil.' Don't be shocked; he says it is Scrip-  
 ture."

"Revised version," said Graeme gravely, while  
 Craig looked a little abashed.

"What is assigned me, Mr. Craig? for I know  
 that this man is simply your agent."

I repudiated the idea, while Mr. Craig said  
 nothing.

"What's my part?" demanded Graeme.

"That's nothing to the way he touched me.  
 Wait and learn," I answered, while Craig looked  
 quite distressed. "He'll do it, Mr. Craig, never  
 fear," I said, "and any other little duty that may  
 occur to you."

"Now, that's too bad of you. That is all I  
 want, honor bright," he replied; adding as he  
 turned away: "You are just in time for a cup of  
 coffee, Mr. Graeme. Now I must see Mrs.  
 Mavor."

"Who is Mrs. Mavor?" I demanded of  
 Graeme.

"Mrs. Mavor? The miners' guardian angel."

We put up the horses and set off for coffee.  
 As we approached the booth Graeme caught sight  
 of the Punch-and-Judy show, stood still in amaze-  
 ment, and exclaimed: "Can the dead live?"

"Punch and Judy never die," I replied sol-



## Black Rock.

boy, don't mind me," he gasped, "but do you remember the old 'varsity show?"

"Yes, you villain; and I remember your part in it. I wonder how you can, even at this remote date, laugh at it."

For I had a vivid recollection of how, after a chaste and high artistic performance of this "medieval play" had been given before a distinguished Toronto audience, the trap-door by which I had entered my box was fastened, and I was left to swelter in my cage and forced to listen to the suffocated laughter from the wings and the stage whispers of "Hello, Mr. Punch, where's the baby?" And for many a day after I was subjected to anxious inquiries as to the locality and health of "the baby," and whether it was able to be out.

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entered—one from the mines driven by Nixon, Craig's friend, a citizens' team, and Sandy's. The race was really between the miners' team and that from the woods, for the citizens' team, though made up of speedy horses, had not been driven much together and knew neither their driver nor each other. In the miners' team were four bays, powerful, a trifle heavy perhaps, but well matched, perfectly trained, and perfectly handled by their driver. Sandy had his long, rangy roans, and for leaders a pair of half-broken pinto bronchos. The pintos, caught the summer before upon the Alberta prairies, were fleet as deer, but wicked and uncertain. They were Baptiste's special care and pride. If they would only run straight there was little doubt that they would carry the roans and themselves to glory; but one could not tell the moment they might bolt or

d finish at the scratch. There were no vexing regulations as to fouls. The man making the start would find it necessary to reckon with the crowd, which was considered sufficient guarantee for a fair and square race. Owing to the hazards of the course, the result would depend upon the skill of drivers quite as much as upon the speed of the teams. The points of hazard were at the turn round the old fort and at a little ravine which led down to the river, over which the road crossed by means of a long log bridge or causeway.

From a point upon the high bank of the river the whole course lay in open view. It was a scene full of life and vividly picturesque. There were miners in dark clothes and peak caps; citizens in ordinary garb; ranchmen in wide cowboy hats and buckskin shirts and leggings, some with car-

Gradually all became quiet, till, in the midst of absolute stillness, came the words, "Are you ready?" then the pistol-shot, and the great race had begun. Above the roar of the crowd came the shrill cry of Baptiste as he struck his broncho with the palm of his hand and swung himself into the sleigh beside Sandy as it shot past.

Like a flash the bronchos sprang to the front, two lengths before the other teams; but, terrified by the yelling of the crowd, instead of bending to the left bank, up which the road wound, they wheeled to the right and were almost across the river before Sandy could swing them back into the course.

Baptiste's cries, a curious mixture of French and English, continued to strike through all other sounds till they gained the top of the slope, to find the others almost a hundred yards in front, the citizens' team leading, with the miners' fol-

most reached the fort, running hard and drawing away from the bays. But Nixon knew what was about, and was simply steadying his team for the turn. The event proved his wisdom, for the turn the leading team left the track, lost for a moment or two in the deep snow, and before they could regain the road the bays had swept superbly past, leaving their rivals to follow in the rear. On came the pintos, swiftly nearing the turn. Surely at that pace they cannot make the turn. But Sandy knows his leaders. They have their eyes upon the teams in front and need no touch of rein. Without the slightest change in speed the nimble-footed bronchos round the turn, hurling the big roans after them, and fall in behind the citizens' team, which is regaining steadily the ground lost in the turn.

And now the struggle is for the bridge over the ravine. The bays in front, running with mouths

are, waiting and hoping for his chance after the bridge is crossed. Foot by foot the citizens' team creep up upon the flank of the bays, with the pintos in turn hugging them closely, till it seems as if the three, if none slackens, must strike the bridge together; and this will mean destruction to one at least. This danger Sandy perceives, but he dare not check his leaders. Suddenly, within a few yards of the bridge, Baptiste throws himself upon the lines, wrenches them out of Sandy's hands, and with a quick swing faces the pintos down the steep side of the ravine, which is almost sheer ice with a thin coat of snow. It is a daring course to take, for the ravine, though not deep, is full of undergrowth and is partially closed up by a brush-heap at the further end. But with a yell Baptiste hurls his four horses down the slope and into the undergrowth. "*Allons, mes enfants! Courage! Vite! vite!*" cries the



with Baptiste standing on the front bob, the box trailing behind, and Sandy nowhere to be seen.

Three Hundred yards of the course remain. The bays, perfectly handled, have gained at the ridge and in the descent to the ice, and are leading the citizens' team by half a dozen sleigh-lengths. Behind both comes Baptiste. It is now or never for the pintos. The rattle of the trailing box, together with the wild yelling of the crowd rushing down the bank, excites the bronchos to madness, and taking the bits in their teeth they do their best free running that day. Past the citizens' team like a whirlwind they dash, clear the intervening space, and gain the flanks of the bays. Can the bays hold them? Over them leans their driver, plying for the first time the hissing lash. Only fifty yards more. The miners begin to yell

their revolvers into the air in a way that made one nervous.

When the crowd was somewhat quieted Sandy's stiff figure appeared, slowly making toward them. A dozen lumbermen ran to him, eagerly inquiring if he were hurt. But Sandy could only curse the little Frenchman for losing the race.

"Lost! Why, man, we've won it!" shouted a voice, at which Sandy's rage vanished, and he allowed himself to be carried in upon the shoulders of his admirers.

"Where's the lad?" was his first question.

"The bronchos are off with him. He's down at the rapids like enough."

"Let me go!" shouted Sandy, setting off at a run in the track of the sleigh. He had not gone far before he met Baptiste coming back with his team foaming, the roans going quietly, but the

*Voilà!* What's the matter wiz Sandy,  
"

the roar that answered set the bronchos off  
plunging and kicking, and only when Bapt-  
got them by the heads could they be induced  
and long enough to allow Sandy to be pro-  
ced winner of the race. Several of the lum-  
men sprang into the sleigh box with Sandy  
Baptiste, among them Keefe, followed by  
on, and the first part of the great day was  
. Slavin could not understand the new order  
ings. That a great event like the four-horse  
should not be followed by "drinks all around"  
to him at once disgusting and incomprehen-  
; and realizing his defeat for the moment, he  
into the crowd and disappeared. But he left  
nd him his "runners." He had not yet  
own up the game.

lowing him up. He won't stand that—no man  
would. God help us all."

I could hardly recognize myself, for I found in  
my heart an earnest echo to that prayer as I  
watched him go toward the crowd again, his face  
set in strong determination. He looked like the  
captain of a forlorn hope, and I was proud to be  
following him.

## CHAPTER III.

## WATERLOO. OUR FIGHT—HIS VICTORY.

THE sports were over, and there remained still four to be filled in before dinner. It was an hour full of danger to Craig's hopes of victory, the men were wild with excitement and ready for the most reckless means of "winning their money." I could not but admire the skill with which Mr. Craig caught their attention. "Gentlemen," he called out, "we've forgotten to judge of the great race. Three cheers for Connor!"

the immortal and unhappy family in a manner hitherto unapproached—by me at least. I was glad enough when Graeme came to me to send the men in to dinner. This Mr. Punch did in the most gracious manner, and again with cheers for Punch's master they trooped tumultuously into the tent.

We had only well begun when Baptiste came in quietly but hurriedly and whispered to me:

"M'sieu Craig, he's gone to Slavin's, and would lak you and M'sieu Graeme would follow queek. Sandy he's take one leel drink up at the stable, and he's go mad lak one *diable*."

I sent him for Graeme, who was presiding at dinner, and set off for Slavin's at a run. There I found Mr. Craig and Nelson holding Sandy, more than half drunk, back from Slavin, who, stripped to the shirt, was coolly waiting with a taunting smile.



ushed my way in.

"What's up?" I cried.

"Mr. Connor," said Sandy solemnly, "it is a man you are, though your name is against and I am a good Presbyterian, and I can give you the Commandments and Reasons and I told them, but you're a thief, a Papist thief, I am justified in getting my money out of your soul."

"But," I remonstrated, "you won't get it in that way."

"He has my money," reiterated Sandy.

"He is a blank liar, and he's afraid to take it," said Slavin in a low, cool tone.

"With a roar Sandy broke away and rushed at me, but, without moving from his track, Slavin met him with a straight left-hander and laid him

left, staggered him, and before he fell took a step forward and delivered a terrific right-hand blow on his jaw. Poor Sandy went down in a heap amid the yells of Blaney, Keefe, and some others of the gang. I was in despair when in came Baptiste and Graeme.

One look at Sandy, and Baptiste tore off his coat and cap, slammed them on the floor, danced on them, and with a long-drawn "*Sap-r-r-r-rie!*" rushed at Slavin. But Graeme caught him by the back of the neck, saying, "Hold on, little man," and turning to Slavin pointed to Sandy, who was reviving under Nelson's care, and said: "What's this for?"

"Ask him," said Slavin insolently. "He knows."

"What is it, Nelson?"

Nelson explained that Sandy, after drinking some at the stable and a glass at the Black Rock

"You lie!" said Slavin with deliberate emphasis.

"Slavin," said Graeme quietly, "it is a pity I said that, because unless you apologize in one minute I shall make you sorry."

"Apologize?" roared Slavin. "Apologize to me?" calling him a vile name.

Graeme grew white and said even more slowly: [www.genealogy-books.com](http://www.genealogy-books.com)

"Now you'll have to take it; no apology will

He slowly stripped off coat and vest. Mr. Craig proposed, begging Graeme to let the matter

"Surely he is not worth it."

"Mr. Craig," said Graeme with an easy smile, "you don't understand. No man can call me that and walk around afterward feeling well." Then, turning to Slavin, he said:

the nose and eyes, drawing blood, but not disabling him. Gradually there came a look of fear into Slavin's eyes and the beads stood upon his face. He had met his master.

"Now, Slavin, you're beginning to be sorry, and now I am going to show you what you are made of."

Graeme made one or two lightning passes, struck Slavin one, two, three terrific blows, and laid him quite flat and senseless. Keefe and Blaney both sprang forward, but there was a savage kind of growl.

"Hold, there!" It was old man Nelson looking along a pistol barrel. "You know me, Keefe," he said. "You won't do any murder this time."

Keefe turned green and yellow and staggered back, while Slavin slowly rose to his feet.

"Will you take some more?" said Graeme. "You haven't got much: but mind. I have stopped

was too late, for there was a crash of brass, and Graeme fell to the floor with a deep cut on the side of his head. Keefe had a bottle with all too sure an aim and had I thought ~~he~~ he was dead; but we carried him and in a few minutes he groaned, opened his eyes, and sunk again into insensibility. "Where can we take him?" I cried. "To my shack," said Mr. Craig. "Is there no place nearer?" "Yes, Mrs. Mavor's. I shall run on to tell

him to meet us at the door. I had in mind to say a few words of apology, but when I looked upon him I forgot my words, forgot my business at the door, and stood simply looking. "Come in! Bring him in! Please do not delay," she said, and her voice was sweet and soft

In a few moments more Graeme revived, and gazing about asked: "What's all this about?" and then, recollecting, "Ah! that brute Keefe;" then seeing my anxious face he said carelessly: "Awful bore, ain't it? Sorry to trouble you, old fellow."

"You be hanged!" I said shortly; for his old sweet smile was playing about his lips, and was almost too much for me. "Mrs. Mavor and I are in command, and you must keep perfectly still."

"Mrs. Mavor?" he said in surprise.

She came forward, with a slight flush on her face.

"I think you know me, Mr. Graeme."

"I have often seen you and wished to know you. I am sorry to bring you this trouble."

"You must not say so," she replied, "but let me do all for you that I can. And now the

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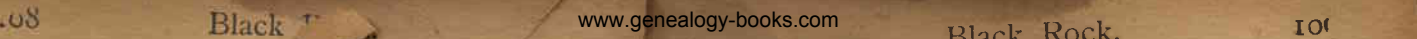
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Angus Campbell, Lachlan's brother,

sending the lumber camps in the contest

looked on

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man lays a finger on me I'll—I'll eat his live



steaming on the stove. It was he that had told Craig, on his arrival from the Landing, of Nixon's fall.

There was nothing of reproach, but only gentlest pity, in tone and touch, as Craig placed the half-drunk, dazed man in his easy-chair, took off his boots, brought him his own slippers, and gave him coffee. Then, as his stupor began to overcome him, Craig put him in his own bed and came forth with a face written over with grief.

"Don't mind, old chap," said Graeme kindly.

But Craig looked at him without a word, and, throwing himself into a chair, put his face in his hands. As we sat there in silence the door was suddenly pushed open and in walked Abe Baker with the words, "Where is Nixon?" and we told him where he was. We were still talking when again a tap came to the door, and Shaw came in looking much disturbed.

"Did you hear about Nixon?" he asked.

We told him what we knew.

"But did you hear how they got him?" he asked excitedly.

As he told us the tale the men stood listening, with faces growing hard.

It appeared that after the making of the league the Black Rock Hotel man had bet Idaho one

hundred to fifty that Nixon could not be got to drink before Easter. All Idaho's schemes had failed, and now he had only three days in which to win his money, and the ball was his last chance. Here again he was balked, for Nixon, resisting all entreaties, barred his shack door and went to bed before nightfall, according to his invariable custom on pay-days. At midnight some of Idaho's men came battering at the door for admission, which Nixon reluctantly granted. For half an hour they used every art of persuasion to induce him to go down to the ball, the glorious success of which was glowingly depicted; but Nixon remained immovable, and they took their departure, baffled and cursing. In two hours they returned drunk enough to be dangerous, kicked at the door in vain, finally gained entrance through the window, hauled Nixon out of bed, and holding a glass of whisky to his lips bade him drink. But he knocked the glass away, spilling the liquor over himself and the bed.

It was drink or fight, and Nixon was ready to fight; but after parley they had a drink all round and fell to persuasion again. The night was cold, and poor Nixon sat shivering on the edge of his bed. If he would take one drink they would leave him alone. He need not show himself so stiff. The whisky fumes filled his nostrils.



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tae dae wi' yon. It's no' that easy, an' it's a sin fu' waste."

But Abe was wild to try it and Shaw was quite willing, while old Nelson sternly approved.

"Nelson, you and Shaw get a couple of our men and attend to the saloon. Slavin and the whole gang are up at the Black Rock, so you won't have much trouble; but come to us as soon as you can."

And so we went our ways.

Then followed a scene the like of which I can never hope to see again, and it was worth a man's seeing. But there were times that night when I wished I had not agreed to follow Graeme in his plot.

As we went up to the hotel I asked Graeme:

"What about the law of this?"

"Law!" he replied indignantly. "They haven't troubled much about law in the whisky business here. They get a keg of high wine and some drugs and begin operations. No!" he went on; "if we can get the crowd out and ourselves in we'll make them break the law in getting us out. The law won't trouble us over smuggled whisky. It will be a great lark, and they won't crow too loud over the league."

I did not like the undertaking at first, but as I thought of the whole wretched illegal business

flourishing upon the weakness of the men in the mines and camps, whom I had learned to regard as brothers, and especially as I thought of the cowards that did for Nixon, I let my scruples go and determined, with Abe, "to get back at 'em."

We had no difficulty getting them out. Abe began to yell. Some men rushed out to learn the cause. He seized the foremost man, making a hideous uproar all the while, and in three minutes had every man out of the hotel and a lively row going on.

In two minutes more Graeme and I had the door to the ball-room locked and barricaded with empty casks. We then closed the door of the bar-room leading to the outside. The bar-room was a strongly built log shack, with a heavy door secured, after the manner of the early cabins, with two strong oak bars, so that we felt safe from attack from that quarter.

The ball-room we could not hold long, for the door was slight and entrance was possible through the windows. But as only a few casks of liquor were left there, our main work would be in the bar, so that the fight would be to hold the passageway. This we barricaded with casks and tables. But by this time the crowd had begun to realize what had happened and were wildly yelling at door and windows. With an ax which







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The fingers had closed upon the knife, the knife was already high in the air, when, with a shriek, Baptiste cleared the room at a bound, and before the knife could fall, the little Frenchman's boot had caught the uplifted wrist and sent the knife flying to the wall.

Then there was a great rushing sound as of wind through the forest, and the lights went out. When I awoke I found myself lying with my head on Graeme's knees and Baptiste sprinkling snow on my face. As I looked up Graeme leaned over me, and, smiling down into my eyes, he said :

"Good boy ! It was a great fight, and we put it up well ;" and then he whispered : "I owe you my life, my boy."

His words thrilled my heart through and through, for I loved him as only men can love men ; but I only answered :

His consternation on waking to see us torn, bruised, and bloody was laughable ; but he hastened to find us warm water and bandages, and we soon felt comfortable.

Baptiste was radiant with pride and light over the fight and hovered about Graeme and me, giving vent to his feelings in admiring French and English expletives. But Abe was disgusted because of the failure at Slavin's ; for when Nelson looked in he saw Slavin's French-Canadian wife in charge, with her baby on her lap, and he came back to Shaw and said, "Come away ; we can't touch this ;" and Shaw, after looking in, agreed that nothing could be done. A baby held the fort.

As Craig listened to the account of the fight he tried hard not to approve, but he could not keep the gleam out of his eyes ; and as I pictured Graeme dashing back the crowd thronging the barricade till he was brought down by the chair,



"Dat's me for sure."

"By the way, how is your foot?" asked Graeme.

"He's fuss rate. Dat's what you call—one bite of—of—dat leel bees. He's dere, you put your finger dere, he's not dere—what you call him?"

"Flea!" I suggested.

"*Oui!*" cried Baptiste. "Dat's one bite of flea."

"I was thankful I was under the barrels," I replied, smiling.

"*Oui!* Dat's mak' me ver' mad. I jump an' swear mos' awful bad. Dat's pardon me, M'sieu Craig, heh?"

But Craig only smiled at him rather sadly.

"It was awfully risky," he said to Graeme, "and it was hardly worth it. They'll get more whisky, and anyway the league is gone."

"Well," said Graeme with a sigh of satisfaction, "it is not quite such a one-sided affair as it was."

And we could say nothing in reply for some

When I awoke, stiff and sore, it was to find breakfast ready and old man Nelson in charge. As we were seated Craig came in, and I saw that he was not the man of the night before. His courage had come back, his face was quiet, and his eye clear; he was his own man again.

"Geordie has been out all night, but has failed to find Billy," he announced quietly.

We did not talk much. Graeme and I worried with our broken bones, and the others suffered from a general morning depression. But after breakfast, as the men were beginning to move, Craig took down his Bible, and saying, "Wait a few minutes, men!" he read slowly, in his beautiful clear voice, that psalm for all fighters—

"God is our refuge and strength,"

and so on to the nobler words—

"The Lord of Hosts is with us;  
The God of Jacob is our refuge."

and there was petition for help, and we all thought of Nixon, and Billy, and the men wakening from their debauch at Slavin's this pure, bright morning. And then he asked that we might be made faithful and worthy of God, whose battle it was. Then we all stood up and shook hands with him in silence, and every man knew a covenant was being made. But none saw his meeting with Nixon. He sent us all away before that.

Nothing was heard of the destruction of the hotel stock in trade. Unpleasant questions would certainly be asked, and the proprietor decided to let bad alone. On the point of respectability the success of the ball was not conspicuous, but the anti-league men were content if not jubilant.

Billy Breen was found by Geordie late in the afternoon in his own old and deserted shack, breathing heavily, covered up in his filthy, moldering bedclothes, with a half-empty bottle of whisky at his side. Geordie's grief and rage were beyond even his Scotch control. He spoke few words, but these were of such concentrated

then of hot milk and coffee, as I had seen a clever doctor in the hospital treat a similar case of nerve and heart depression. But the already weakened system could not recover from the awful shock of the exposure following the debauch, and on Sunday afternoon we saw that his heart was failing fast. All day the miners had been dropping in to inquire after him, for Billy had been a great favorite in other days, and the attention of the town had been admiringly centered upon his fight of these last weeks. It was with no ordinary sorrow that the news of his condition was received. As Mrs. Mavor sang to him his large coarse hands moved in time to the music, but he did not open his eyes till he heard Mr. Craig's voice in the next room; then he spoke his name, and Mr. Craig was kneeling beside him in a moment. The words came slowly:

"Oi tried—to fight it hout—but—Oi got beat. Hit 'urts to think 'E's hashamed o' me. Oi'd like t' a-done better—Oi would."

"Ashamed of you, Billy!" said Craig in a voice that broke. "Not He."

"You hain't ashamed o' me—yore neyes saigt so," he said, looking at her.

"No, Billy," she said, and I wondered at her steady voice, "not a bit. Why, Billy, I am proud of you."

He gazed up at her with wonder and ineffable love in his little eyes, then lifted his hand slightly toward her. She knelt quickly and took it in both of hers, stroking it and kissing it.

"Oi hought t' a-done better. Oi'm hawful sorry Oi went back on 'Im. Hit was the lein [www.genealogy-books.com](http://www.genealogy-books.com) The boys didn't mean no 'arm—but hit started the 'ell hinside."

Geordie hurled out some bitter words.

"Don't be 'ard on 'em, Geordie. They didn't mean no 'arm," he said, and his eyes kept waiting till Geordie said hurriedly:

"Na! na! lad—I'll juist leave them till the Almichty."

Then Mrs. Mavor sang softly, smoothing his hand, "Just as I am," and Billy dozed quietly for half an hour.

When he awoke again his eyes turned to Mr. Craig, and they were troubled and anxious.

"Listen, Billy! You made a great fight and you are going to win yet. And besides, do you remember the sheep that got lost over the mountains?" This parable was Billy's special delight. "He didn't beat it when He got it, did He? He took it in His arms and carried it home. And so He will you."

And Billy, keeping his eyes fastened on Mr. Craig, simply said:

"Will 'E?"

"Craig" said Craig.

"Will 'E?" he repeated, turning his eyes upon Mrs. Mavor.

"Why, yes, Billy," she answered cheerily, though the tears were streaming from her eyes. "I would, and He loves you far more."

He looked at her, smiled, and closed his eyes. I put my hand on his heart; it was fluttering feebly. Again a troubled look passed over his face.

"My—poor—hold—mother," he whispered; "she's—hin—the—wukus."

"I shall take care of her, Billy," said Mrs. Mavor in a clear voice, and again Billy smiled.



"Tell 'er," he said with difficulty, "'E's took me 'ome."

"Yes, Billy!" she cried, gazing into his glazing eyes.

He tried to lift her hand. She kissed him again. He drew one deep breath and lay quite still.

"Thank the blessed Saviour!" said Mr. Craig reverently. "He has taken him home."

But Mrs. Mavor held the dead hand tight and sobbed out passionately:

"Oh, Billy! Billy! You helped me once when I needed help! I cannot forget!"

And Geordie, groaning, "Aye, laddie, laddie," passed out into the fading light of the early evening.

Next day no one went to work, for to all it seemed a sacred day. They carried him into the little church, and there Mr. Craig spoke of his long, hard fight and of his final victory; for he died without a fear and with love to the men who, not knowing, had been his death. And there was no bitterness in any heart, for Mr. Craig read the story of the sheep and told how gently He had taken Billy home; but though no word was

bitterly, brought his sprig, no one stopped him, though all thought it strange.

As we turned to leave the grave the light from the evening sun came softly through the gap in the mountains, and filling the valley touched the trees and the little mound beneath with glory. And I thought of that other glory, which is brighter than the sun, and was not sorry that poor Billy's weary fight was over; and I could not help agreeing with Craig that it was there the league had its revenge.

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charge of the entertainment department, came for Craig's opinion as to a minstrel troupe and private theatricals, Craig was prompt with his answer: "Anything clean goes."

"A nigger show?" asked Winton.

"Depends upon the niggers," replied Craig with a gravely comic look, shrewdly adding: "Ask Mrs. Mavor."

And so the League Minstrel and Dramatic Company became an established fact, and proved, as Craig afterward told me, "a great means of grace to the camp."

Shaw had charge of the social department, whose special care it was to see that the room, where they might chat, smoke, read, write, or play games, according to fancy.

But Craig felt that the success or failure of the scheme would largely depend upon the character of the resident manager, who, while caring for reading-room and hall, would control and operate the important department represented by the coffee-room.

"At this point the whole business may come to grief," he said to Mrs. Mavor, without whose counsel nothing was done.

"Why come to grief?" she asked brightly.

"Because if we don't get the right man that's

what will happen," he replied in a tone that spoke of anxious worry.

"But we shall get the right man, never fear." Her serene courage never faltered. "He will come to us."

Craig turned and gazed at her in frank admiration and said:

"If I only had your courage!"

"Courage!" she answered quickly. "It is not for you to say that."

And at his answering look the red came into her cheek and the depths in her eyes glowed, and I marveled and wondered, looking at Craig's cool face, whether his blood were running evenly through his veins. But his voice was quiet—a shade too quiet, I thought—as he gravely replied:

"I would often be a coward but for the shame of it."

And so the league waited for the man to come who was to be resident manager and make the new enterprise a success. And come he did; but the manner of his coming was so extraordinary that I have believed in the doctrine of a special providence ever since; for as Craig said: "If he had come straight from heaven I could not have been more surprised."

While the league was thus waiting its interest centered upon Slavin, chiefly because he repre-

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blasphemious Herod, an' sic like. Mon, but he's a hot-heided laddie an' lacks discreem'entation."

"What about Herod, Geordie?" I asked.

"Aboot Herod?" with a strong tinge of contempt in his tone. "Aboot Herod? Mon, ha, y, no' read in the Screepturs aboot Herod an' the ar-rms in the wame o' him?"

"Oh, yes, I see," I hastened to answer.

"Aye, a fule can see what's flapped in his face with which bit of proverbial philosophy he suddenly left me.

But Geordie thenceforth contented himself in Mr. Craig's presence at least, with ominous head shakings, equally aggravating and impossible to answer.

That same night, however, Geordie showed that with all his theories he had a man's true heart, for he came in haste to Mrs. Mavor to say:

"Ye'll be needed ower yonder, I'm thinkin'."

"Why? Is the baby worse? Have you been in?"

"Na, na," replied Geordie cautiously, "I'll na gang where I'm no wanted. But yon puir thing ye can hear outside weepin' an' moanin'. She's maybe need ye tae," he went on dubiously to me. "Ye're a kind o' doctor, I hear," not committing

himself to any opinion as to my professional value. But Slavin would have none of me, having got the doctor sober enough to prescribe.

The interest of the camp in Slavin was greatly increased by the illness of his baby, which was to him as the apple of his eye. There were a few who, impressed by Geordie's profound convictions upon the matter, were inclined to favor the retribution theory and connect the baby's illness with the vengeance of the Almighty. Among these few was Slavin himself, and goaded by his remorseful terrors he sought relief in drink. But this brought him only deeper and fiercer gloom, so that between her suffering child and her savagely despairing husband, the poor mother was desperate with terror and grief.

"Ah! madame," she sobbed to Mrs. Mavor, "my heart is broke for him. He's heet notting for tree days, but jis dreenk, dreenk, dreenk."

The next day a man came for me in haste. The baby was dying and the doctor was drunk. I found the little one in a convulsion lying across Mrs. Mavor's knees, the mother kneeling beside it, wringing her hands in a dumb agony, and Slavin standing near, silent and suffering. I glanced at the bottle of medicine upon the table and asked Mrs. Mavor the dose, and found the baby had been poisoned. My look of horror told

Slavin something was wrong, and striding to me he caught my arm and asked :

"What is it? Is the medicine wrong?"

I tried to put him off, but his grip tightened till his fingers seemed to reach the bone.

"The dose is certainly too large; but let me go—I must do something."

He let me go at once, saying in a voice that made my heart sore for him: "He has killed my baby; he has killed my baby." And then he cursed the doctor with awful curses, and with a look of such murderous fury on his face that I was glad the doctor was too drunk to appear.

His wife, hearing his curses and understanding the cause, broke out into wailing hard to bear.

"Ah! *mon petit ange!* It is dat wheesky dat's keel my baby. Ah! *mon chéri, mon amour.* Ah! *mon Dieu!* Ah, Michael, how often I say dat wheesky he's not good ting."

It was more than Slavin could bear, and with awful curses he passed out. Mrs. Mavor laid the baby in its crib, for the convulsion had passed away; and putting her arms about the wailing little Frenchwoman, comforted and soothed her as a mother might her child.

"And you must help your husband," I heard her say. "He will need you more than ever Think of him."

"Ah! *oui!* I weel," was the quick reply, and from that moment there was no more wailing.

It seemed no more than a minute till Slavin came in again, sober, quiet, and steady; the passion was all gone from his face, and only the grief remained.

As we stood leaning over the sleeping child the little thing opened its eyes, saw its father, and smiled. It was too much for him. The big man dropped on his knees with a dry sob.

"Is there no chance at all, at all?" he whispered, but I could give him no hope.

He immediately rose, and pulling himself together stood perfectly quiet.

A new terror seized upon the mother.

"My baby is not—what you call it?" going through the form of baptism. "An' he will not come to *la sainte Vierge*," she said, crossing herself.

"Do not fear for your little one," said Mrs. Mavor, still with her arms about her. "The good Saviour will take your darling into His own arms."

But the mother would not be comforted by this. And Slavin, too, was uneasy.

"Where is Father Goulet?" he asked.

"Ah! you were not good to the holy *père de las'* tam, Michael," she replied sadly. "The *saints* are not please for you."



"Where is the priest?" he demanded.

"I know not for sure. At de Landin', dat's lak."

"~~I~~ go for him," he said.

But his wife clung to him, beseeching him not to leave her, and indeed he was loath to leave his little one.

I found Craig and told him the difficulty. With his usual promptness he was ready with a solution.

"Nixon has a team. He will go." Then he added: "I wonder if they would not like me to baptize their little one? Father Goulet and I have exchanged offices before now. I remember how he came to one of my people in my absence, when she was dying, read with her, prayed with her, comforted her, and helped her across the river. He is a good soul and has no nonsense about him. Send for me if you think there is need. It will make no difference to the baby, but it will comfort the mother."

Nixon was willing enough to go, but when he came to the door Mrs. Mavor saw the hard look in his face. He had not forgotten his wrong, for day by day he was still fighting the devil within that Slavin had called to life. But Mrs. Mavor, under cover of getting him instructions, drew him into the room. While listening to her his eyes

wandered from one to the other of the group till they rested upon the little white face in the crib. She noticed the change in his face.

"They fear the little one will never see the Saviour if it is not baptized," she said in a low tone.

He was eager to go.

"I'll do my best to get the priest," he said, and was gone on his sixty miles' race with death.

The long afternoon wore on, but before it was half gone I saw Nixon could not win and that the priest would be too late, so I sent for Mr. Craig. From the moment he entered the room he took command of us all. He was so simple, so manly, so tender, the hearts of the parents instinctively turned to him.

As he was about to proceed with the baptism the mother whispered to Mrs. Mavor, who hesitatingly asked Mr. Craig if he would object to using holy water.

"To me it is the same as any other," he replied gravely.

"An' will he make the good sign?" asked the mother timidly.

And so the child was baptized by the Presbyterian minister with holy water and with the sign of the cross. I don't suppose it was orthodox, and it rendered chaotic some of my religious

notions, but I thought more of Craig that moment than ever before. He was more man than minister, or perhaps he was so good a minister that day because so much a man. As he read about the Saviour and the children and the disciples who tried to get in between them, and as he told us the story in his own simple and beautiful way, and then went on to picture the home of the little children and the same Saviour in the midst of them, I felt my heart grow warm, and I could easily understand the cry of the mother:

"Oh, *mon Jésus, prenez moi aussi*—take me wiz *mon mignon*."

The cry wakened Slavin's heart and he said huskily:

"Oh! Annette! Annette!"

"Ah, *oui*! an' Michael too!"

Then to Mr. Craig:

"You tink He's tak me some day? Eh?"

"All who love Him," he replied.

"An' Michael too?" she asked, her eyes searching his face. "An' Michael too?"

But Craig only replied:

"All who love Him."

"Ah, Michael, you must pray *le bon Jésus*. He's *garde notre mignon*."

And then she bent over the babe, whispering:

"Ah, *mon chéri, mon amour*. adieu! adieu!"

*mon ange!*" till Slavin put his arms about her and took her away, for as she was whispering her farewells her baby, with a little answering sigh, passed into the house with many rooms.

"Whisht, Annette darlin'; don't cry for the baby," said her husband. "Shure it's better off than the rest av us, it is. An' didn't ye hear what the minister said about the beautiful place it is? An' shure he wouldn't lie to us at all."

But a mother cannot be comforted for her first-born son.

An hour later Nixon brought Father Goulet. He was a little Frenchman with gentle manners and the face of a saint. Craig welcomed him warmly and told him what he had done.

"That is good, my brother," he said with gentle courtesy, and turning to the mother: "Your little one is safe."

Behind Father Goulet came Nixon softly and gazed down upon the little quiet face, beautiful with the magic of death. Slavin came quietly and stood beside him. Nixon turned and offered his hand. But Slavin said, moving slowly back:

"I did ye a wrong, Nixon, an' it's a sorry man I am this day for it."

"Don't say a word, Slavin," answered Nixon hurriedly. "I know how you feel. I've got a



baby, too. I want to see it again. That's why the break hurt me so."

"As God's above," replied Slavin earnestly, "I'll hinder ye no more."

They shook hands and we passed out.

We laid the baby under the pines, not far from Billy Breen, and the sweet spring wind blew through the gap and came softly down the valley, whispering to the pines and the grass and the hiding flowers of the new life coming to the world. And the mother must have heard the whisper in her heart, for as the priest was saying the words of the service, she stood with Mrs. Mavor's arms about her, and her eyes were looking far away beyond the purple mountain tops, seeing what made her smile. And Slavin, too, looked different. His very features seemed finer. The coarseness was gone out of his face. What had come to him I could not tell.

But when the doctor came into Slavin's house that night it was the old Slavin I saw, but with a look of such deadly fury on his face that I tried to get the doctor out at once. But he was half drunk and after his manner was hideously humorous.

"How do, ladies! How do, gentlemen!" was his loud-voiced salutation. "Quite a professional gathering, clergy predominating. Lion and

lamb, too. Ha! ha! Which is the lamb, eh! Ha! ha! ha! Very good! Awfully sorry to hear of your loss, Mrs. Slavin. Did our best, you know. Can't help this sort of thing."

Before any one could move Craig was at his side, and saying in a clear, firm voice, "One moment, doctor," caught him by the arm and had him out of the room before he knew it. Slavin, who had been crouching in his chair with hands twitching and eyes glaring, rose and followed, still crouching as he walked. I hurried after him, calling him back. Turning at my voice, the doctor saw Slavin approaching. There was something so terrifying in his swift, noiseless, menacing motion that the doctor, crying out in fear, "Keep him off!" fairly turned and fled. He was too late. Like a tiger Slavin leaped upon him, and without waiting to strike had him by the throat with both hands, and bearing him to the ground, worried him there as a dog might a cat.

Immediately Craig and I were upon him, but though we lifted him clear off the ground we could not loosen that two-handed strangling grip. As we were struggling there a light hand touched my shoulder. It was Father Goulet.

"Please let him go and stand away from us," he said, waving us back.

We obeyed. He leaned over Slavin and spoke a few words to him. Slavin started as if struck a heavy blow, looked up at the priest with fear in his face, but still keeping his grip.

"Let him go," said the priest. Slavin hesitated. "Let him go! quick!" said the priest again, and Slavin with a snarl let go his hold and stood sullenly facing the priest.

Father Goulet regarded him steadily for some seconds and then asked:

"What would you do?" His voice was gentle enough, even sweet, but there was something in it that chilled my marrow. "What would you do?" he repeated.

"He murdered my child," growled Slavin.

"Ah! How?"

"He was drunk and poisoned him."

"Ah! Who gave him drink? Who made him a drunkard two years ago? Who has wrecked his life?"

There was no answer, and the even-toned voice went relentlessly on:

"Who is the murderer of your child now?"

Slavin groaned and shuddered.

"Go!" and the voice grew stern. "Repent of your sin and add not another."

Slavin turned his eyes upon the motionless figure on the ground and then upon the priest.

Father Goulet took one step toward him and, stretching out his hand and pointing with his finger, said:

"Go!"

And Slavin slowly backed away and went into his house. It was an extraordinary scene, and it is often with me now; the dark figure on the ground, the slight, erect form of the priest with outstretched arm and finger, and Slavin backing away, fear and fury struggling in his face.

It was a near thing for the doctor, however, and two minutes more of that grip would have done for him. As it was, we had the greatest difficulty in reviving him.

What the priest did with Slavin after getting him inside I know not; that has always been a mystery to me. But when we were passing the saloon that night after taking Mrs. Mavor home we saw a light and heard strange sounds within. Entering, we found another whisky raid in progress, Slavin himself being the raider. We stood some moments watching him knocking in the heads of casks and emptying bottles. I thought he had gone mad and approached him cautiously. "Hello, Slavin!" I called out. "What does this mean?"

He paused in his strange work, and I saw that his face, though resolute, was quiet enough



"It means I'm done wid the business, I am," he said in a determined voice. "I'll help no more to kill anny man or," in a lower tone, "anny man's baby."

The priest's words had struck home.

"Thank God, Slavin!" said Craig, offering his hand. "You are much too good a man for the business."

"Good or bad, I'm done wid it," he replied going on with his work.

"You are throwing away good money, Slavin," I said as the head of a cask crashed in.

"It's meself that knows it, for the price of whisky has riz in town this week," he answered, giving me a look out of the corner of his eye. "Bedad! it was a rare clever job," referring to our Black Rock Hotel affair.

"But won't you be sorry for this?" asked Craig.

"Beloike I will; an' that's why I'm doin' it before I'm sorry for it," he replied, with a delightful grin.

"Look here, Slavin," said Craig earnestly, "if I can be of use to you in any way, count on me."

"It's good to me the both of yez have been, an' I'll not forget it to yez," he replied with like earnestness.

As we told Mrs. Mavor that night—for Craig

thought it too good to keep—her eyes seemed to grow deeper and the light in them to glow more intense as she listened to Craig pouring out his tale. Then she gave him her hand and said:

"You have your man at last."

"What man?"

"The man you have been waiting for."

"Slavin?"

"Why not?"

"I never thought of it."

"No more did he, nor any of us." Then, after a pause, she added gently: "He has been sent to us."

"Do you know, I believe you are right?" Craig said slowly, and then added: "But you always are."

"I fear not," she answered; but I thought she liked to hear his words.

The whole town was astounded next morning when Slavin went to work in the mines, and its astonishment only deepened as the days went on and he stuck to his work. Before three weeks had gone the league had bought and remodeled the saloon and had secured Slavin as resident manager.

The evening of the reopening of Slavin's saloon, as it was still called, was long remembered in Black Rock. It was the occasion of the first

appearance of the League Minstrel and Dramatic Troupe in what was described as a "hair-lifting tragedy with appropriate musical selections."

Then there was a grand supper and speeches and great enthusiasm, which reached its climax when Nixon rose to propose the toast of the evening—"Our saloon." His speech was simply a quiet, manly account of his long struggle with the deadly enemy. When he came to speak of his recent defeat he said:

"And while I am blaming no one but myself, I am glad to-night that this saloon is on our side, for my own sake and for the sake of those who have been waiting long to see me. But before I sit down I want to say that while I live I shall not forget that I owe my life to the man that took me that night to his own shack and put me in his own bed, and met me the next morning with an open hand; for I tell you I had sworn to God that that morning would be my last."

Geordie's speech was characteristic. After a brief reference to the "mysterious ways o' Providence," which he acknowledged he might sometimes fail to understand, he went on to express his unqualified approval of the new saloon.

"It's a cozy place, an' there's nae sulphur aboot. Besides a' that," he went on enthusiastically, "it'll be a terrible savin'. I've juist been coontin'."

"You bet!" ejaculated a voice with great emphasis.

"I've juist been coontin'," went on Geordie, ignoring the remark and the laugh which followed, "an' it's an awfu'-like money ye pit ower wi' the wansky. Ye can see, ye canna dae wi' ane bit glass; ye maun hae twa or three at the verra least, for it's no' verra forrit ye get wi' ane glass. But wi' yon coffee ye juist get a saxpence worth an' ye want nae mair."

There was another shout of laughter, which puzzled Geordie much.

"I dinna see the jowk, but I've slippit ower in mair nor a hunner dollars."

Then he paused, looking hard before him and twisting his face into extraordinary shapes till the men looked at him in wonder.

"I'm rale glad o' this saloon, but it's ower late for the lad that canna be helpit the noo. He'll not be needin' help o' oors, I doot, but there are ithers"—and he stopped abruptly and sat down, with no applause following.

But when Slavin, our saloon-keeper, rose to reply, the men jumped up on the seats and yelled till they could yell no more. Slavin stood, evidently in trouble with himself, and finally broke out:

"It's spacheless I am entirely. What's come



## Black Rock.

to me I know not, nor how it's come. But I'll do my best for yez."

And then the yelling broke out again.

I did not yell myself. I was too busy watching the varying lights in Mrs. Mavor's eyes as she looked from Craig to the yelling men on the benches and tables and then to Slavin, and I found myself wondering if she knew what it was that came to Slavin.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE TWO CALLS.

WITH the call to Mr. Craig I fancy I had something to do myself. The call came from a young congregation in an Eastern city, and was based partly upon his college record and more upon the advice of those among the authorities who knew his work in the mountains. But I flatter myself, that my letters to friends who were of importance in that congregation were not without influence, for I was of the mind that the man who could handle Black Rock miners as he could was ready for something larger than a mountain mission. That he would refuse I had not imagined, though I ought to have known him better. He was but little troubled over it. He went with the call and the letters urging his acceptance to Mrs. Mavor. I was putting the last touches to some of my work in the room at the back of Mrs. Mavor's house when he came in. She read the letters and the call quietly and waited for him to speak.

"Well?" he said "Should I go?"

She started and grew a little pale. His question suggested a possibility that had not occurred to her. That he could leave his work in Black Rock she had hitherto never imagined; but there was other work, and he was fit for good work anywhere. Why should he not go? I saw the fear in her face, but I saw more than fear in her eyes as for a moment or two she let them rest upon Craig's face. I read her story, and I was not sorry for either of them. But she was too much of a woman to show her heart easily to the man she loved, and her voice was even and calm as she answered his question.

"Is this a very large congregation?"

"One of the finest in all the East," I put in to him. "It will be a great thing for Craig."

Craig was studying her curiously. I think she noticed his eyes upon her, for she went on even more quietly:

"It will be a great chance for work, and you are able for a larger sphere, you know, than poor Black Rock affords."

"Who will take Black Rock?" he asked.

"Let some other fellow have a try at it," said. "Why should you waste your talent here?"

"Waste?" cried Mrs. Mavor indignantly.

"Well, 'bury,' if you like it better," I replied.

"It would not take much of a grave for that funeral," said Craig, smiling.

"Oh," said Mrs. Mavor, "you will be a great man, I know, and perhaps you ought to go now." But he answered coolly:

"There are fifty men wanting that Eastern charge and there is only one wanting Black Rock, and I don't think Black Rock is anxious for a change, so I have determined to stay where I am yet awhile."

Even my deep disgust and disappointment did not prevent me from seeing the sudden leap of joy in Mrs. Mavor's eyes, but she, with a great effort, answered quietly:

"Black Rock will be very glad, and some of us very, very glad."

Nothing could change his mind. There was no one he knew who could take his place just now, and why should he quit his work? It annoyed me considerably to feel he was right. Why is it that the right things are so frequently unpleasant?

And if I had had any doubt about the matter next Sabbath evening would have removed it. For the men came about him after the service and let him feel in their way how much they approved his decision, though the self-sacrifice involved did not appeal to them. They were too true Western to imagine that any inducements



East could offer could compensate for his loss of the West. It was only fitting that the West should have the best, and so the miners took almost as a matter of course, and certainly as their right, that the best man they knew should stay with them. But there were those who knew how much of what most men consider worth while he had given up, and they loved him no less for it.

Mrs. Mavor's call was not so easily disposed of. It came close upon the other, and stirred Black Rock as nothing else had ever stirred it before.

I found her one afternoon gazing vacantly at some legal documents spread out before her on the table, and evidently overcome by their contents. There was first a lawyer's letter informing her that by the death of her husband's father she had come into the whole of the Mavor estates and all the wealth pertaining thereto. The letter asked for instructions, and urged an immediate return with a view to a personal superintendence of the estates. A letter, too, from a distant cousin of her husband urged her immediate return.

With these two came another letter from her mother-in-law herself. The crabbed, trembling characters were even more eloquent than the words with which the letter closed.

"I have lost my boy, and now my husband is gone, and I am a lonely woman. I have many servants and some friends, but none nearer to me, none so near and dear as my dead son's wife. My days are not to be many. Come to me, my laughter. I want you and Lewis' child."

"I go?" she asked with white lips.

"Do you know her well?" I asked.

"I only saw her once or twice," she answered, "but she has been very good to me."

"She can hardly need you. She has friends. And surely you are needed here."

She looked at me eagerly.

"Do you think so?" she said.

"Ask any man in the camp—Shaw, Nixon, young Winton, Geordie. Ask Craig," I replied.

"Yes, he will tell me," she said.

Even as she spoke Craig came up the steps. I passed into my studio and went on with my work, for my days at Black Rock were getting

He went through the papers, turning them down without a word while she waited impatiently, for him to speak.

"Well?" she asked, using his own words to her. "Should I go?"

"I do not know," he replied. "That is for you to decide—you know all the circumstances."

"The letters tell all."

Her tone carried a feeling of disappointment. He did not appear to care.

"The estates are large?" he asked.

"Yes, large enough—twelve thousand a year."

"And has your mother-in-law any one with her?"

"She has friends, but, as she says, none near of kin. Her nephew looks after the works—iron works, you know. He has shares in them."

"She is evidently very lonely," he answered gravely.

"What shall I do?" she asked, and I knew she was waiting to hear him urge her to stay; but he did not see, or at least gave no heed.

"I cannot say," he repeated quietly. "There are many things to consider. The estates—"

"Yes, the estates," he went on, "and tenants, I suppose—your mother-in-law; your little Marjorie's future, your own future."

"The estates are in capable hands, I should suppose," she urged, "and my future depends upon what I choose my work to be."

"But one cannot shift one's responsibilities," he replied gravely. "These estates, these tenants, have come to you, and with them come duties."

"I do not want them," she cried.

"But she has great possibilities of good," he said kindly.

"I had thought that perhaps there was work for me here," she suggested timidly.

"Great work," he hastened to say. "You have done great work. But you will do that wherever you go. The only question is where your work lies."

"You think I should go," she said suddenly and a little bitterly.

"I cannot bid you stay," he answered steadily.

"How can I go?" she cried, appealing to him.

"Must I go?"

How he could resist that appeal I could not



"I cannot go. I shall stay here. My work is here: my heart is here. How can I go? You thought it worth your while to stay here and work. Why should not I?"

The momentary gleam in his eyes died out, and again he said coldly:

"This work was clearly mine. I am needed here."

"Yes! yes!" she cried, her voice full of pain. "You are needed, but there is no need of me."

"Stop! stop!" he said sharply. "You must not say so."

"I will say it! I must say it!" she cried, her voice vibrating with the intensity of her feelings. "I know you do not need me. You have your work, your miners, your plans; you need no one; you are strong. But," and her voice rose to a cry, "I am not strong by myself; you have made me strong. I came here a foolish girl, foolish and selfish and narrow. God sent me grief. Three years ago my heart died. Now I am living again. I am a woman now, no longer a girl. You have done this for me. Your life, your words, yourself—you have shown me a better, a

He held himself resolutely in hand, answering carefully, but his voice had lost its coldness and was sweet and kind.

"Have I done this for you? Then surely God has been good to me. And you have helped me more than any words could tell you."

"Helped!" she repeated scornfully.

"Yes, helped," he answered, wondering at her scorn.

"You can do without my help," she went on. "You make people help you. You will get many to help you; but I need help, too."

She was standing before him with her hands tightly clasped; her face was pale and her eyes deeper than ever. He sat looking up at her in a kind of maze as she poured out her words hot and fast.

"I am not thinking of you." His coldness had hurt her deeply. "I am selfish; I am thinking of myself. How shall I do? I have grown to depend on you, to look to you. It is nothing to you that I go, but to me——"

She did not dare to finish.

For a time, again was standing before her.

forget myself. You do not guess what you are doing."

"What am I doing? What is there to know at that you tell me easily to go?"

She was struggling with the tears she was too proud to let him see.

He put his hands resolutely behind him, looked at her as if studying her face for the first time. Under his searching look she dropped her eyes and the warm color came slowly up into her neck and face; then, as if with a sudden resolve, she hid her eyes to his and looked back at him flinchingly.

He started, surprised, drew slowly near, and laid his hands upon her shoulders, surprise giving way to wild joy. She never moved her eyes; he drew him toward her. He took her face between his hands, smiled into her eyes, kissed her lips. She did not move; he stood back from her, threw up his head, and laughed aloud. She came to him, put her head upon his breast, and, lifting up her face said: "Kiss me." He put his arms about her, bent down and kissed her lips and then reverently her brow. Then out-

She gave a little sigh of content, and, smiling up at him, said:

"I can go now," but even as she spoke the flush died from her face and she shuddered.

"Never!" he almost shouted; "nothing shall take you away. We shall work here together."

"Ah, if we could, if we only could," she said piteously.

"Why not?" he demanded fiercely.

"You will send me away. You will say it is time for me to go," she replied sadly.

"Do we not love each other?" was his impatient answer.

"Ah! yes, love," she said, "but love is not all."

"No!" cried Craig; "but love is the best."

"Yes!" she said sadly; "love is the best, and it is for love's sake we will do the best."

"There is no better work than here. Surely this is best," and he pictured his plans before her. She listened eagerly.

"Oh! if it should be right," she cried, "I will do what you say. You are good, you are wise. You shall tell me."

seek it. Surely love is of God. Does God  
 rock us?"

He threw himself into his chair, pouring out his  
 words of passionate protestation. She listened,  
 smiling, then came to him, and, touching his hair  
 as a mother might her child's, said:

"Oh, I am very happy! I was afraid you  
 would not care, and I could not bear to go that  
 way."

"You shall not go," he cried aloud, as if in  
 vain. "Nothing can make that right."

But she only said:

"You shall tell me to-morrow. You cannot  
 do to-night, but you will see, and you will tell  
 me."

He stood up and, holding both her hands,  
 looked long into her eyes, then turned abruptly  
 away and went out.

He stood where he left her for some moments,  
 his face radiant and her hands pressed upon her  
 heart. Then she came toward my room. She  
 found me busy with my painting, but as I looked  
 up and met her eyes she flushed slightly and said:  
 "I quite forgot you."

"So it appeared to me."

"You heard?"

"Oh, I am so glad and thankful."

"Yes. It was rather considerate of me."

"Oh, I don't mean that," the flush deepening

"I am glad you know."

"I have known some time."

"How could you? I only knew to-day my  
 self."

"I have eyes."

She flushed again.

"Do you mean that people——" she began anx-  
 iously.

"No. I am not 'people.' I have eyes, and my  
 eyes have been opened."

"Opened?"

"Yes, by love."

Then I told her openly how, weeks ago, I strug-  
 gled with my heart and mastered it, for I saw it  
 was vain to love her, because she loved a better  
 man who loved her in return. She looked at me  
 shyly and said:

"I am sorry."

"Don't worry," I said cheerfully. "I didn't  
 break my heart, you know. I stopped it in time."

"Oh!" she said, slightly disappointed; then  
 her lips began to twitch, and she went off into a  
 fit of hysterical laughter.

"Forgive me," she said humbly; "but you



ever is nothing to it," I said solemnly. "It is a near thing."

which she went off again. I was glad to see her laugh. It gave me time to recover my equilibrium and it relieved her intense emotional strain. So I rattled on some nonsense about myself and myself till I saw she was giving up and was only thinking her own thoughts; and what was it was not hard to guess.

Suddenly she broke in upon my talk: "I will tell me that I must go from

"I hope he is no such fool," I said emphatically. "I am somewhat rudely, I fear; for I confess I was not without the very possibility of separation between these two, to whom love meant so much. People take this sort of thing easily and do not so easily; but love for a woman like this comes once only to a man, and then he carries her with him through the length of his life and his heart with it in death. And when a man smiles or sneers at such love as this, I pity him and say no word, for my speech would be in vain on his own tongue. So my heart was sore as I looked up at this woman who stood before me overflowing with the joy of her new love and unconscious of the coming pain. But I soon

should remain and share the work and life of the man she loved. She only answered:

"You will help him all you can, for it will hurt him to have me go."

The quiver in her voice took out all the anger from my heart, and before I knew I had pledged myself to do all I could to help him.

But when I came upon him that night, sitting in the light of his fire, I saw he must be let alone. Some battles we fight side by side, with comrades cheering us and being cheered to victory; but there are fights we may not share, and these are deadly fights where lives are lost and won. So I could only lay my hand upon his shoulder without a word. He looked up quickly, read my face, and said with a groan:

"You know?"

"I could not help it. But why groan?"

"She will think it right to go," he said despairingly.

"Then you must think for her. You must bring some common sense to bear upon the question."

"I cannot see clearly yet," he said. "The light will come."

"May I show you how to see it?" I asked.

"Go on," he said.



mently urging the reason and right of my opinion. She would be doing no more than every woman does, no more than she did before; her mother-in-law had a comfortable home, all that wealth could procure, good servants, and friends; the states could be managed without her personal supervision; after a few years' work here they could go East for little Marjorie's education; why should two lives be broken?—and so I went on.

He listened carefully, even eagerly.

"You make a good case," he said with a slight smile. "I will take time. Perhaps you are right. The light will come. Surely it will come. But," and here he sprang up and stretched his arms full length above his head, "I am not sorry; whatever comes I am not sorry. It is great to have your love, but greater to love her as I do. Thank God! nothing can take that away. I am willing, and to suffer for the joy of loving her."

Next morning, before I was awake, he was gone, leaving a note for me:

MY DEAR CONNOR:

"I am due at the Landing. When I see you again I think my way will be clear. Now all is dark. At times I am a coward, and often, as you sometimes kindly inform me, an ass: but I hope

rate. I must do the best—not second best—for her, for me. The best only is God's will. What else would you have? Be good to her these days, dear old fellow. Yours,

"CRAIG."

How often those words have braced me he will never know, but I am a better man for them: "The best only is God's will. What else would you have?" I resolved I would rage and fret no more, and that I would worry Mrs. Mavor with argument or expostulation, but, as my friend had asked, "be good to her."

## CHAPTER XII.

LOVE IS NOT ALL.

THOSE days when we were waiting Craig's return we spent in the woods or on the mountains or down in the canyon beside the stream that flowed down to meet the Black Rock River, I was sketching and sketching and reading, and she listening and dreaming, with often a happy smile upon her face. But there were moments when a cloud of shuddering fear would sweep the smile away, and then I would talk of Craig till the smile came back again.

But the woods and the mountains and the river were her best, her wisest friends during these days. How sweet the ministry of the woods to her! The trees were in their summer leaves, fresh and full of life. They swayed and rustled above us, flinging their interlacing shadows upon us, and their swaying and their

and purples, stood calmly, solemnly about us, uplifting our souls into regions of rest. The changing lights and shadows flitted swiftly over their rugged fronts, but left them ever as before in their steadfast majesty. "God's in His heaven." "What would you have? And ever the little river sang its cheerful courage, fearing not the great mountains that threatened to bar its passage to the sea. Mrs. Mavor heard the song and her courage rose.

"We too shall find our way," she said, and I

But through these days I could not make her out, and I found myself studying her as I might a new acquaintance. Years had fallen from her; she was a girl again, full of young, warm life. She was as sweet as before, but there was a soft shyness over her, a half-shamed, half-frank consciousness in her face, a glad light in her eyes that made her all new to me. Her perfect trust in Craig was touching to see.

"He will tell me what to do," she would say, till I began to realize how impossible it would be for him to betray such trust and be anything but true to the best.

So much did I dread Craig's home-coming that

friend. They were both highly excited by the story I had to tell, for I thought it best to tell them all; but I was not a little surprised and disgusted that they did not see the matter in my light. In vain I protested against the madness of allowing anything to send these two from each other. Graeme summed up the discussion in his own emphatic way, but with an earnestness in his words not unusual with him.

"Craig will know better than any of us what is right to do, and he will do that, and no man can turn him from it; and," he added, "I should be sorry to try."

Then my wrath rose and I cried:

"It's a tremendous shame! They love each other. You are talking sentimental humbug and nonsense!"

"He must do the right," said Nelson in his deep, quiet voice.

"Right! Nonsense! By what right does he send from him the woman he loves?"

"He pleased not Himself," quoted Nelson reverently.

"Nelson is right," said Graeme. "I should not like to see him weakened."

"Look here," I stormed; "I didn't bring you

"Now, Connor," said Graeme, "don't rage—leave that for the heathen; it's bad form, and useless besides. Craig will walk his way where his light falls; and by all that's holy, I should hate to see him fail; for if he weakens like the rest of us my North Star will have dropped from my sky."

"Nice selfish spirit," I muttered.

"Entirely so. I'm not a saint, but I feel like steering by one when I see him."

When, after a week had gone, Craig rode up one early morning to his shack door, his face told me that he had fought his fight and had not been beaten. He had ridden all night and was ready to drop with weariness.

"Connor, old boy," he said, putting out his hand, "I'm rather played. There was a bad row at the Landing. I have just closed poor Colley's eyes. It was awful. I must get sleep. Look after Dandy, will you, like a good chap?"

"Oh, Dandy be hanged!" I said, for I knew it was not the fight, nor the watching, nor the long ride that had shaken his iron nerve and given him that face. "Go in and lie down. I'll bring you something."

"Wake me in the afternoon," he said. "She is waiting. Perhaps you will go to her"—his



h a very wan smile he added: "I am giving a lot of trouble."

You go to thunder!" I burst out, for my hat was hot and sore with grief for him.

I think I'd rather go to sleep," he replied, smiling.

could not speak, and was glad of the chance being alone with Dandy.

When I came in I found him sitting with his head in his arms upon the table fast asleep. I gave him tea, forced him to take a warm bath, and sent him to bed, while I went to Mrs. Graeme. I went with a fearful heart, but that only because I had forgotten the kind of woman she was.

She was standing in the light of the window looking for me. Her face was pale but steady, and there was a proud light in her fathomless eyes, and a smile parted her lips, and she carried her head like a queen.

"Come in," she said. "You need not fear to tell me. I saw him ride home. He has failed, thank God! I am proud of him. I am sure he would be true. He loves me"—she drew in her breath sharply and a faint color came to her cheeks—"but he knows love is not all. Love is not all! Oh! I am glad he

"Glad!" I gasped, amazed.

"You would not have him prove faithless!" she said with proud defiance.

"Oh, it is high sentimental nonsense," I could not help saying.

"You should not say so," she replied, and her voice rang clear. "Honor, faith, and duty are sentiments, but they are not nonsense."

In spite of my rage I was lost in amazed admiration of the high spirit of the woman who stood up so straight before me. But as I told her how worn and broken he was she listened with changing color and swelling bosom, her proud courage all gone, and only love, anxious and pitying, in her eyes.

"Shall I go to him?" she asked with timid eagerness and deepening color.

"He is sleeping. He said he would come to you," I replied.

"I shall wait for him," she said softly, and the tenderness in her tone went straight to my heart, and it seemed to me a man might suffer much to be loved with love such as this.

In the early afternoon Graeme came to her. She met him with both hands outstretched, saying in a low voice:

"I am very happy."

"Oh, yes," she said, but her voice was like a ; "quite, quite sure."

They talked long together till I saw that Craig was soon to be coming, and I called Graeme away. He held her hands, looking steadily into her eyes. He said:

"You are better even than I thought. I'm glad to be a better man."

Her eyes filled with tears, but her smile did not fade as she answered:

"Yes! you will be a good man, and God will give you work to do."

He bent his head over her hands and stepped back from her as from a queen, but he spoke no words till we came to Craig's door. Then he spoke with humility that seemed strange in him. "Connor, that is great, to conquer one's self is worth while. I am going to try."

He would not have missed his meeting with me. Nelson was busy with tea. Craig was sitting near the window. He looked up as we came in and nodded an easy good-evening; but Graeme strode to him and, putting one arm on his shoulder, held out his hand for Craig to shake.

After a moment's surprise Craig rose to his feet, facing him, and the two men stood for a moment

Graeme was the first to speak, and his voice was deep with emotion:

"You are a great man, a good man. I'd give something to have your grit."

Poor Craig stood looking at him, not daring to speak for some moments; then he said quietly:

"Not good nor great, but, thank God, not quite a traitor."

"Good man!" went on Graeme, patting him on the shoulder. "Good man! But it's tough."

Craig sat down quickly, saying:

"Don't do that, old chap!"

www.genealogy-books.com with Craig to Mrs. Mavor's door. She did not hear us coming, but stood near the window gazing up at the mountains. She was dressed in some rich soft stuff and wore at her breast a bunch of wild flowers. I had never seen her so beautiful. I did not wonder that Craig paused with his foot upon the threshold to look at her. She turned and saw us. With a glad cry, "Oh! my darling! you have come to me," she came with outstretched arms. I turned and fled, but the cry and the vision were long with me.

It was decided that night that Mrs. Mavor should go the next week. A miner and his wife were going East, and I too would join the party.



was understood that any display of grief before Mrs. Mavor was bad form. She was not to be annoyed.

But when I suggested that she should leave quietly and avoid the pain of saying good-by, she flatly refused.

"I must say good-by to every man. They love me and I love them."

It was decided, too, at first, that there should be nothing in the way of a testimonial, but when I found out that the men were coming to her with all sorts of extraordinary gifts, he agreed that it would be better that they should unite in a gift. So it was agreed that I should buy a ring for her. And were it not that the contributions were strictly limited to one dollar, the purse Mrs. Slavin handed her when Shaw read the address at the farewell supper would have been many times filled with the gold that was pressed into the committee. There were no speeches at the supper, except one by myself in reply on Mrs. Mavor's behalf. She had given me the words to say and I was thoroughly prepared, else I should not have got through. I began in the usual way: "Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen: Mrs. Mavor is——" But I got no further, for at the mention of her name the men stood on the chairs

were over two hundred and fifty of them, and the effect was overpowering. But I got through my speech.

I remember it well. It began: "Mrs. Mavor is greatly touched by this mark of your love, and she will wear your ring always with pride." And it ended with: "She has one request to make, that you will be true to the league and that you stand close about the man who did most to make it. She wishes me to say that however far away she may have to go, she is leaving her heart in Black Rock, and she can think of no greater joy than to come back to you again."

Then they had "The Sweet By and By," but the men would not join in the refrain, unwilling to lose a note of the glorious voice they loved to hear. Before the last verse she beckoned to me. I went to her standing by Craig's side as he played for her.

"Ask them to sing," she entreated. "I cannot bear it."

"Mrs. Mavor wishes you to sing in the refrain," I said, and at once the men sat up and cleared their throats. The singing was not good, for at the first sound of the hoarse notes of the men Craig's head went down over the organ, for he was thinking, I suppose, of the days before them

re that soared high over their own hoarse tones. After the voices died away he kept on playing half turning toward him, she sang alone once the refrain in a voice low and sweet and clear, as if for him alone. And so he took it, he smiled up at her his old smile full of courage full of love.

Then for one whole hour she stood saying good-bye to those rough, gentle-hearted men whose introduction to goodness she had been for five years. It was very wonderful and very quiet. It was understood that there was to be no nonsense, and he had been heard to declare that he would throw out any cotton-backed fool who couldn't hold himself down," and further, he had enjoined her to remember that her arm "wasn't a pump-handle."

At last they were all gone, all but her guard of honor—Shaw, Vernon, Winton, Geordie, Nixon, Nelson, Craig, and myself.

This was the real farewell; for though in the bright light of the next morning two hundred men stood silent about the stage, and then as it moved they waved their hats and yelled madly, this was the last touch they had of her hand. Her place was up on the driver's seat between Abe and Mr. Graeme, who held little Mariorie on his knee. The

Graeme's team. It was Winton's fine sense that kept Graeme from following them close. "Let her go out alone," he said, and so we held back and watched her go.

She stood with her back toward Abe's plunging four-horse team, and steadying herself with one hand on Abe's shoulder, gazed down upon us. Her head was bare, her lips parted in a smile, her eyes glowing with their own deep light; and so, facing us, erect and smiling, she drove away, waving us farewell till Abe swung his team into the canyon road and we saw her no more. A sigh shuddered through the crowd, and, with a sob in his voice, Winton said: "God help us all."

I close my eyes and see it all again. The waving crowd of dark-faced men, the plunging horses, and, high up beside the driver, the swaying, smiling, waving figure, and about all the mountains, framing the picture with their dark sides and white peaks tipped with the gold of the rising sun. It is a picture I love to look upon, albeit it calls up another that I can never see but through tears.

I look across a strip of ever-widening water at a group of men upon the wharf, standing with heads uncovered, every man a hero, though not a

and, gazing long, I think I see him turn again to his place among the men of the mountains, not forgetting, but every day remembering the great love that came to him, and remembering, too, that love is not all. It is then the tears come. But for that picture two of us at least are better to-day.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### HOW NELSON CAME HOME.

THROUGH the long summer the mountains and the pines were with me. And through the winter too, busy as I was filling in my Black Rock sketches for the railroad people who would still consider them by the dozen, the memory of that stirring life would come over me, and once more I would be among the silent pines and the mighty snow-peaked mountains. And before me would appear the red-shirted shantymen or dark faced miners, great, free, bold fellows, driving me almost mad with the desire to seize and fix those swiftly changing groups of picturesque figures. At such times I would drop my sketch, and with eager brush seize a group, a face, a figure, and that is how my studio comes to be filled with the men of Black Rock. There they are all about me. Graeme and the men from the woods, Sandy, Baptiste, the Campbells, and in many attitudes and groups old man Nelson; Craig, too, and his



It seemed as if I lived among them, and the illusion was greatly helped by the vivid letters Graeme sent me from time to time. Brief notes came now and then from Craig, too, to whom I had sent a faithful account of how I had brought Mrs. Mavor to her ship, and of how I had watched her sail away with none too brave a face as she held up her hand that bore the miner's ring and smiled with that deep light in her eyes. Ah! those eyes have driven me to despair and made me fear that I am no great painter, after all, in spite of what my friends tell me who come in to smoke my good cigars and praise my brush. I can get the brow and hair and mouth and pose, but the eyes! the eyes elude me—and the faces of Mrs. Mavor on my wall, that the men praise and rave over, are not such as I could show to any of the men from the mountains.

Graeme's letters tell me chiefly about Craig and his doings and about old man Nelson; while from Craig I hear about Graeme, and how he and Nelson are standing at his back and doing what they can to fill the gap that never can be filled. The three are much together, I can see, and I am glad for them all, but chiefly for Craig, whose face, grief-stricken but resolute, and often gentle

The note of thanks he sent me was entirely characteristic. There were no heroics, much less pining or self-pity. It was simple and manly, not ignoring the pain, but making much of the joy. And then they had their work to do. That note, so clear, so manly, so nobly sensible, stiffens my back yet at times.

In the spring came the startling news that Black Rock would soon be no more. The mines were to close down on April 1. The company, having allured the confiding public with enticing descriptions of marvelous drifts, veins, assays, and prospects, and having expended vast sums of the public's money in developing the mines till the assurance of their reliability was absolutely final, calmly shut down and vanished. With their vanishing vanishes Black Rock, not without loss and much deep cursing on the part of the men brought some hundreds of miles to aid the company in its extraordinary and wholly inexplicable game.

Personally it grieved me to think that my plan of returning to Black Rock could never be carried out. It was a great compensation, however, that the three men most representative to me of that life were soon to visit me actually in my own

east he and Nelson were soon to come, and Craig would soon follow.

On receiving the great news I at once looked up young Nelson and his sister, and we proceeded to celebrate the joyful prospect with a specially good dinner. I found the greatest delight in picturing the joy and pride of the old man in his children, whom he had not seen for fifteen or sixteen years. The mother had died some five years before, then the farm was sold, and the brother and sister came into the city; and any father might be proud of them. The son was a well-made young fellow, handsome enough, thoughtful and solid-looking. The girl reminded me of her father. The same resolution was seen in mouth and jaw and the same passion slumbered in the dark gray eyes. She was not beautiful, but she married herself well, and one would always look at her twice. It would be worth something to see the meeting between father and daughter.

But fate, the greatest artist of us all, takes little count of the careful drawing and the bright colorings of our fancy's pictures, but with rude hand deranges all, and with one swift sweep paints out the bright and paints in the dark. And this trick he served me when, one June

and Graeme walked in upon me like a specter, gray and voiceless. My shout of welcome was choked back by the look in his face, and I could only gaze at him and wait for his word. He gripped my hand, tried to speak, but failed to make words come.

"Sit down, old man," I said, pushing him into my chair, "and take your time."

He obeyed, looking up at me with burning, sleepless eyes. My heart was sore for his misery, and I said, "Don't mind, old chap; it can't be so bad. You're here safe and sound, at any rate," and so I went on to give him time. But he shuddered and looked round and groaned.

"Now, look here, Graeme, let's have it. When did you land here? Where is Nelson? Why didn't you bring him up?"

"He is at the station in his coffin," he answered slowly.

"In his coffin?" I echoed, my beautiful pictures all vanishing. "How was it?"

"Through my cursed folly," he groaned bitterly.

"What happened?" I asked.

But ignoring my question he said:



but I can't rest till I see his children. I promised him. Get them for me."

"To-morrow will do. Go to sleep now, and we shall arrange everything to-morrow," I urged.

"No!" he said fiercely; "to-night—now!"

In half an hour they were listening, pale and grief-stricken, to the story of their father's death.

Poor Graeme was relentless in his self-condemnation as he told how, through his "cursed folly," old Nelson was killed. The three—Craig, Graeme, and Nelson—had come as far as Victoria together. There they left Craig and came to San Francisco. In an evil hour Graeme met a companion of other and evil days, and it was not long till the old fever came upon him.

In vain Nelson warned and pleaded. The reaction from the monotony and poverty of camp life to the excitement and luxury of the San Francisco gaming palaces swung Graeme quite off his feet, and all that Nelson could do was to follow from place to place and keep watch.

"And there he would sit," said Graeme in a hard bitter voice, "waiting and watching often till the gray morning light, while my madness held me fast to the table. One night"—here he

might my partner and I were playing two men who had done us up before. I knew they were cheating, but could not detect them. Game after game they won, till I was furious at my stupidity in not being able to catch them. Happening to glance at Nelson in the corner, I caught a meaning look, and looking again, he threw me a signal. I knew at once what the fraud was, and next game charged the fellow with it. He gave me the lie; I struck his mouth, but before I could draw my gun, his partner had me by the arms. What followed I hardly knew. While I was struggling to get free I saw him reach for his weapon, but as he drew it Nelson sprang across the table and bore him down. When the row was over three men lay on the floor. One was Nelson; he took the shot meant for me."

Again the story paused.

"And the man that shot him?"

I started at the intense fierceness in the voice, and, looking upon the girl, saw her eyes blazing with a terrible light.

"He is dead," answered Graeme indifferently.

"You killed him?" she asked eagerly.

Graeme looked at her curiously and answered

She drew a sigh of satisfaction and waited.

"I got him to a private ward, had the best doctor in the city, and sent for Craig to Victoria. For three days we thought he would live—he was keen to get home; but by the time Craig came we had given up hope. Oh, but I was thankful to see Craig come in, and the joy in the old man's eyes was beautiful to see. There was no pain at last, and no fear. He would not allow me to reproach myself, saying over and over, 'You would have done the same for me'—as I would, fast enough—'and it is better me than you. I am old and done; you will do much good yet for the boys.' And he kept looking at me till I could only promise to do my best.

"But I am glad I told him how much good he had done me during the last year, for he seemed to think that too good to be true. And when Craig told him how he had helped the boys in the camp, and how Sandy and Baptiste and the Campbells would always be better men for his life among them, the old man's face actually shone, as if light were coming through. And with surprise and joy he kept on saying, 'Do you think so? Do you think so? Perhaps so; perhaps so.' At the last he talked of Christmas night at the

happened. I don't know what, but they both knew."

"I know," I said, and I saw again the picture of the old man under the pine, upon his knees in the snow, with his face turned up to the stars.

"Whatever it was, it was in his mind at the very last, and I can never forget his face as he turned it to Craig. One hears of such things: I had often, but had never put much faith in them; but joy, rapture, triumph, these are what were in his face as he said, his breath coming short: 'You said—He wouldn't—fail me—you were right—not once—not once—He stuck to me—I'm glad he told me—thank God—for you—you showed—me—I'll see Him—and—tell Him——' And Craig, kneeling beside him so steady—I was behaving like a fool—smiled down through his streaming tears into the dim eyes so brightly till they could see no more. Thank him for that! He helped the old man through, and he helped me too, that night, thank God!"

And Graeme's voice, hard till now, broke in a sob.

He had forgotten us and was back beside his passing friend, and all his self-control could not keep back the flowing tears.



but spoke no word, though I knew Graeme was waiting for them.

I took up the word and told of what I had known of Nelson and his influence upon the men of Black Rock. They listened eagerly enough, but still without speaking. There seemed nothing to say till I suggested to Graeme that he must get some rest. Then the girl turned to him, and impulsively putting out her hand, said :

"Oh, it is all so sad ; but how can we ever thank you ?"

"Thank me !" gasped Graeme. "Can you forgive me ? I brought him to his death."

"No ! no ! You must not say so," she answered hurriedly. "You would have done the same for him."

"God knows I would," said Graeme earnestly ; "and God bless you for your words !"

And I was thankful to see the tears start in his dry, burning eyes.

We carried him to the old home in the country, that he might lie by the side of the wife he had loved and wronged. A few friends met us at the wayside station and followed in sad procession along the country road that wound past farms and through woods, and at last up to the ascent where the quaint old wooden church, black with

its silent graves. The little graveyard sloped gently toward the setting sun, and from it one could see, far on every side, the fields of grain and meadow-land that wandered off over softly undulating hills to meet the maple woods at the horizon, dark, green, and cool. Here and there white farmhouses, with great barns standing near, looked out from clustering orchards.

Up the grass-grown walk and through the crowding mounds, over which waves, uncut, the long, tangling grass, we bear our friend, and let him gently down into the kindly bosom of mother earth, dark, moist, and warm. The sound of a distant cow-bell mingles with the voice of the last prayer ; the clods drop heavily with heart-startling echo ; the mound is heaped and shaped by kindly friends, sharing with one another the task ; the long rough sods are laid over and patted into place ; the old minister takes farewell in a few words of gentle sympathy ; the brother and sister, with lingering looks at the two graves side by side, the old and the new, step into the farmer's carriage and drive away ; the sealer locks the gate and goes home, and we are left outside alone.

Then we went back and stood by Nelson's grave

"Connor, he did not grudge his life to me, and I think"—and here the words came slowly—"I understand now what that means, 'Who loved me and gave Himself for me.'"

Then taking off his hat he said reverently:

"By God's help Nelson's life shall not end, but shall go on. Yes, old man!" looking down upon the grave, "I'm with you;" and lifting up his face to the calm sky, "God help me to be true."

Then he turned and walked briskly away, as one might who had pressing business or as soldiers march from a comrade's grave to a merry tune, not that they have forgotten, but they have still to fight.

And this was the way old man Nelson came home.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### GRAEME'S NEW BIRTH.

THERE was more left in that grave than old man Nelson's dead body. It seemed to me that Graeme left part, at least, of his old self there with his dead friend and comrade in the quiet country churchyard. I waited long for the old careless, reckless spirit to appear, but he was never the same again. The change was unmistakable, but hard to define. He seemed to have resolved his life into a definite purpose. He was hardly so comfortable a fellow to be with; he made me feel even more lazy and useless than was my wont; but I respected him more and liked him none the less. As a lion he was not a success. He would not roar. This was disappointing to me and to his friends and mine, who had been waiting his return with eager expectation of tales of thrilling and bloodthirsty adventure.

His first days were spent in making right, or



more respect for the humanity of lawyers <sup>ever</sup> since) behaved really well. They proved the restoration of their confidence in his integrity and ability by offering him a place in the firm, which, however, he would not accept. Then, when he felt clean, as he said, he posted off home, taking me with him. During the railroad journey of four hours he hardly spoke; but when we had left the town behind and had fairly got upon the country road that led toward the home ten miles away, his speech came to him in a great flow. His spirits ran over. He was like a boy returning from his first college term. His very face wore the boy's open, innocent, earnest look that used to attract men to him in his first college year. His delight in the fields and woods in the sweet country air and the sunlight was without bound. How often had we driven this road together in the old days!

Every turn was familiar. The swamp where the tamaracks stood straight and slim out of their beds of moss; the brule, as we used to call it, where the pine stumps, huge and blackened, were half hidden by the new growth of poplars and soft maples; the big hill where we used to get out and walk when the roads were bad; the orchards where the harvest apples were best and

it was one of those perfect afternoons that so often come in the early Canadian summer, before nature grows weary with the heat. The white gravel road was trimmed on either side with turf of living green, close cropped by the sheep that wandered in flocks along its whole length. Beyond the picturesque snake-fences stretched the fields of springing grain, of varying shades of green, with here and there a dark brown patch, marking a turnip field or summer fallow, and far back were the woods of maple and beech and elm, with here and there the tufted top of a mighty pine, the lonely representative of a vanished race, standing clear above the humbler trees.

As we drove through the big swamp, where the yawning, haunted gully plunges down to its gloomy depths, Graeme reminded me of that night when our horse saw something in that same gully and refused to go past; and I felt again, though it was broad daylight, something of the grue that shivered down my back as I saw in the moonlight the gleam of a white thing far through the pine trunks.

As we came nearer home the houses became familiar. Every house had its tale: we had eaten or slept in most of them; we had sampled apples, and cherries, and plums from their orchards.

cover of night—the more delightful way, I fear. Ah! happy days, with these innocent crimes and fleeting remorse, how bravely we faced them, and how gaily we lived them, and how yearningly we look back at them now! The sun was just dipping into the tree-tops of the distant woods behind as we came to the top of the last hill that overlooked the valley in which lay the village of Riverdale. Wooded hills stood about it on three sides, and where the hills faded out there lay the mill-pond sleeping and smiling in the sun. Through the village ran the white road, up past the old frame church, and on to the white manse standing among the trees. That was Graeme's home, and mine too, for I had never known another worthy of the name. We held up our team to look down over the valley, with its rampart of wooded hills, its shining pond, and its nestling village, and on past to the church and the white manse hiding among the trees. The beauty, the peace, the warm, loving homeliness of the scene came about our hearts, but, begotten men, we could find no words.

"Let's go," cried Graeme, and down the hill we tore and rocked and swayed, to the amazement of the steady team, whose education from the earliest years had impressed upon their minds the

walk carefully down a hill, at least for two-thirds of the way. Through the village, in a cloud of dust, we swept, catching a glimpse of a well-known face here and there and flinging a salutation as we passed, leaving the owner of the face rooted to his place in astonishment at the sight of Graeme whirling on in his old-time, well-known reckless manner. Only old Dunc M'Leod was equal to the moment, for as Graeme called out, "Hello, Dunc!" the old man lifted up his hands and called back in an awed voice: "Bless my soul! Is it yourself?"

"Stands his whisky well, poor old chap!" was Graeme's comment.

As we neared the church he pulled up his team, and we went quietly past the sleepers there, then again on the full run down the gentle slope, over the little brook, and up to the gate. He had hardly got his team pulled up before flinging me the lines, he was out over the wheel, for coming down the walk, with her hands lifted high, was a dainty little lady with the face of an angel. In a moment Graeme had her in his arms. I heard the faint cry, "My boy! my boy!" and got down on the other side to attend to my off horse, surprised to find my hands trembling and my eyes full of tears. Back upon the steps stood



ard, handsome, straight, and stately—Graeme's  
rather, waiting his turn.

"Welcome home, my lad," was his greeting as  
he kissed his son, and the tremor of his voice  
and the sight of the two men kissing each other  
the women sent me again to my horses' heads.

"There's Connor, mother!" shouted out  
Graeme, and the dainty little lady, in her black  
and white lace, came out to me quickly with  
outstretched hands.

"You, too, are welcome home," she said, and  
kissed me.

I stood with my hat off, saying something  
about being glad to come, but wishing that I  
could get away before I should make quite a fool  
of myself. For as I looked down upon that  
beautiful face, pale except for a faint flush upon  
each faded cheek, and read the story of pain en-  
dured and conquered, and as I thought of all the  
long years of waiting and of vain hoping, I found  
my throat dry and sore, and the words would  
not come. But her quick sense needed no  
words, and she came to my help.

"You will find Jack at the stable," she said,  
smiling. "He ought to have been here."

The stable! Why had I not thought of that  
before? Thankfully now my words came.

"suppose he's as much of a scapegrace as ever,"  
and off I went to look up Graeme's young brother,  
who had given every promise in the old days of  
development into as stirring a rascal as one could  
desire; but who, as I found out later, had not  
lived these years in his mother's home for noth-  
ing.

"Oh, Jack's a good boy," she answered, smil-  
ing again as she turned toward the other two,  
now waiting for her upon the walk.

The week that followed was a happy one for  
us all; but for the mother it was full to the brim  
with joy. Her sweet face was full of content  
and in her eyes rested a great peace. Our days  
were spent driving about among the hills, or  
strolling through the maple woods, or down into  
the tamarack swamp, where the pitcher plants  
and the swamp lilies and the marigold waved  
above the deep moss. In the evenings we sat  
under the trees on the lawn till the stars came  
out and the night dews drove us in. Like two  
lovers, Graeme and his mother would wander  
off together, leaving Jack and me to each other.  
Jack was reading for divinity and was really a  
fine, manly fellow, with all his brother's turn for  
Rugby, and I took to him amazingly; but after  
the day was over we would gather about the

under heaven—art, football, theology. The mother would lead in all. How quick she was, how bright her fancy, how subtle her intellect, and through all a gentle grace, very winning and beautiful to see!

Do what I would, Graeme would talk little of the mountains and his life there.

"My lion will not roar, Mrs. Graeme," I complained; "he simply will not."

"You should twist his tail," said Jack.

"That seems to be the difficulty, Jack," said his mother, "to get hold of his tale."

"Oh, mother," groaned Jack; "you never did such a thing before! How could you? Is it this baleful Western influence?"

"I shall reform, Jack," she replied brightly.

"But, seriously, Graeme," I remonstrated, "you ought to tell your people of your life—that free, glorious life in the mountains."

"Free! Glorious! To some men, perhaps!" said Graeme, and then fell into silence.

But I saw Graeme as a new man the night he talked theology with his father. The old minister was a splendid Calvinist, of heroic type, and as he discoursed of God's sovereignty and election his face glowed and his voice rang out.

Graeme listened intently, now and then putting

into a foe. But the old man knew his ground and moved easily among his ideas, demolishing the enemy as he appeared with jaunty grace. In the full flow of his triumphant argument Graeme turned to him with sudden seriousness.

"Look here, father! I was born a Calvinist, and I can't see how any one with a level head can hold anything else than that the Almighty has some idea as to how He wants to run His universe, and He means to carry out His idea and is carrying it out; but what would you do in a case like this?"

He told him the story of poor Billy Breen, his fight and his defeat.

"Would you preach election to that chap?"

The mother's eyes were shining with tears.

The old gentleman blew his nose like a trumpet and then said gravely:

"No, my boy. You don't feed babies with meat. But what came to him?"

Then Graeme asked me to finish the tale. After I had finished the story of Billy's final triumph and of Craig's part in it they sat long silent, till the minister, clearing his throat hard and blowing his nose more like a trumpet than ever, said with great emphasis:

"Thank God for such a man in such a place!"



"I should like to see you out there, sir," said Graeme admiringly. "You'd get them, but you wouldn't have time for election."

"Yes! yes!" said his father warmly. "I should love to have a chance just to preach election to these poor lads. Would I were twenty years younger!"

"It is worth a man's life," said Graeme earnestly.

His younger brother turned his face eagerly toward the mother. For answer she slipped her hand into his and said softly, while her eyes shone like stars:

"Some day, Jack, perhaps! God knows," [www.genealogy-books.com](http://www.genealogy-books.com)

But Jack only looked steadily at her, smiling a little and patting her hand.

"You'd shine there, mother," said Graeme, smiling upon her. "You'd better come with me."

She started and said firmly:

"With you?" It was the first hint he had given of his purpose. "You are going back?"

"What! as a missionary?" said Jack.

"Not to preach, Jack. I'm not orthodox enough," looking at his father and shaking his head; "but to build railroads and lend a hand to some poor chap, if I can."

"Could you not find work nearer home, my boy?" asked the father. "There is plenty of both

"Lots of work, but not mine, I fear," answered Graeme, keeping his eyes away from his mother's face. "A man must do his own work."

His voice was quiet and resolute, and glancing at the beautiful face at the end of the table, I saw in the pale lips and yearning eyes that the mother was offering up her first-born, that ancient sacrifice. But not all the agony of sacrifice could wring from her entreaty or complaint in the hearing of her sons. That was for other ears and for the silent hours of the night. And next morning when she came down to meet us her face was wan and weary, but it wore the peace of victory and a glory not of earth. Her greeting was full of dignity, sweet and gentle; but when she came to Graeme she lingered over him and kissed him twice. And that was all that any of us ever saw of that sore fight.

At the end of the week I took leave of them, and last of all of the mother.

She hesitated just a moment, then suddenly put her hands upon my shoulders and kissed me, saying softly:

"You are his friend. You will sometimes come to me?"

"Gladly, if I may," I hastened to answer, for the sweet brave face was too much to bear; and



part I kept my word, to my own great and lasting good. When Graeme met me in the city at the end of the summer he brought me her love, and then burst forth:

"Connor, do you know, I have just discovered my mother! I have never known her till this summer."

"More fool you," I answered, for often had I, who had never known a mother, envied him his.

"Yes, that is true," he answered slowly; "but you cannot see until you have eyes."

Before he set out again for the West I gave him a supper, asking the men who had been with him in the old 'varsity days. I was doubtful as to the wisdom of this, and was persuaded only by Graeme's eager assent to my proposal.

"Certainly, let's have them," he said. "I shall be awfully glad to see them; great stuff they are."

"But, I don't know, Graeme. You see—well hang it!—you know—you're different, you know."

He looked at me curiously.

"I hope I can still stand a good supper, and if boys can't stand me, why, I can't help it. I'll do anything but roar, and don't you begin to kick off your menagerie act—now, you hear."

"Well, it is rather hard lines that when I have been talking up my lion for a year, and then finally secure him, he will not roar."

"Serve you right," he replied quite heartlessly. But I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll feed! Don't you worry," he adds soothingly; "the supper will go."

And go it did. The supper was of the best; the wines first class. I had asked Graeme about the wines.

"Do as you like, old man," was his answer. "I'll do your supper, but," he added, "are the men all straight?"

I ran them over in my mind.

"Yes; I think so."

"If not, don't you help them down; and anyway, you can't be too careful. But don't mind me. I am quit of the whole business from this out."

So I ventured wines, for the last time, as it happened.

We were a quaint combination. Old "Beetles," whose nickname was prophetic of his future fame as a bugman, as the fellows irreverently said; "Stumpy" Smith, a demon bowler; Polly Lindsay, slow as ever and as sure as when he held the

tion. But he was never known to fumble nor to funk, and somehow he always got us out safe enough. Then there was Rattray—"Rat" for short—who, from a swell, had developed into a cynic with a sneer, awfully clever and a good enough fellow at heart. Little "Wig" Martin, the sharpest quarter ever seen, and big Barney Lundy, center scrimmage, whose terrific roar and rush had often struck terror to the enemy's heart, and who was Graeme's slave. Such was the party.

As the supper went on my fears began to vanish, for if Graeme did not "roar" he did the next best thing—ate and talked quite up to his old form. Now we played our matches over again, bitterly lamenting the "ifs" that had lost us the championships, and wildly approving the tackles that had saved, and the runs that had made the varsity crowd go mad with delight and had won for us. And as their names came up in talk we learned how life had gone with those who had been our comrades of ten years ago. Some success had lifted to high places; some failure had left upon the rocks; and a few lay in their graves.

But as the evening went on I began to wish

the man he had been. But Graeme smoked and talked and heeded not, till Rattray swore by that name most sacred of all ever borne by man. Then Graeme opened upon him in a cool, slow way:

"What an awful fool a man is to damn things as you do, Rat. Things are not damned. It is men who are; and that is too bad to be talked much about. But when a man flings out of his foul mouth the name of Jesus Christ"—here he lowered his voice—"it's a shame—it's more, it's a crime."

There was dead silence, then Rattray replied: "I suppose you're right enough, it is bad form; but crime is rather strong, I think."

"Not if you consider who it is," said Graeme with emphasis.

"Oh, come now," broke in Beetles. "Religion is all right, is a good thing, and I believe a necessary thing for the race, but no one takes seriously any longer the Christ myth."

"What about your mother, Beetles?" put in Wig Martin.

Beetles consigned him to the pit and was silent, for his father was an Episcopal clergyman and



take the devil out of a man on a myth. That won't do the trick. I don't want to argue about it, but I am quite convinced the myth theory is not reasonable, and, besides, it won't work."

"Will the other work?" asked Rattray with a sneer.

"Sure!" said Graeme. "I've seen it."

"Where?" challenged Rattray. "I haven't seen much of it."

"Yes, you have, Rattray, you know you have," said Wig again.

But Rattray ignored him.

"I'll tell you, boys," said Graeme. "I want you to know, anyway, why I believe what I do."

Then he told them the story of old man Nelson, from the old coast days, before I knew him, to the end. He told the story well. The stern fight, and the victory of the life, and the self-sacrifice, and the pathos of the death appeal to these men, who loved fight and could understand sacrifice.

"That's why I believe in Jesus Christ, and that's why I think it a crime to fling His name about!"

"I wish to heaven I could say that," said Beetles.

"Look here, old chap," said Rattray, "you're quite right about this; I'm willing to own up Wig is correct. I know a few, at least, of that stamp, but most of those who go in for that sort of thing are not much account."

"For ten years, Rattray," said Graeme in a downright, matter-of-fact way, "you and I have tried this sort of thing"—tapping a bottle—"and we got out of it all there is to be got, paid well for it, too, and—faugh! you know it's not good and the more you go in for it the more you curse yourself. So I have quit this and I am going in for the other."

"What! going in for preaching?"

"Not much—railroading—money in it—and lending a hand to fellows on the rocks."

"I say, don't you want a center forward?" said big Barney in his deep voice.

"Every man must play his game in his place, old chap. I'd like to see you tackle it, though, right well," said Graeme earnestly.

And so he did, in the after years, and good tackling it was. But that is another story.

"But I say, Graeme," persisted Beetles, "about this business. Do you mean to say you go the

haven't much of a creed, Beetles; don't know how much I believe. But," by this he was standing, "I do know that good is and bad is bad, and good and bad are not the

And I know a man's a fool to follow the one wise man to follow the other, and," lower voice, "I believe God is at the back of a who wants to get done with bad. I've tried at folly," sweeping his hand over the glasses bottles, "and all that goes with it, and I've with it."

"I'll go you that far," roared big Barney, bringing his old captain as of yore.

"Good man," said Graeme, striking hands with

and me down," said little Wig cheerfully.

When I took up the word, for there rose before me the scene in the league saloon, and I saw the full face with the deep shining eyes, and I was speaking for her again. I told them of Craig and his fight for these men's lives. I told them, and how I had been too indolent to begin.

"But," I said, "I am going this far from to-"  
"and I swept the bottles into the chamber-tub.

And so we did. We didn't sign anything, but every man shook hands with Graeme.

And as I told Craig about this a year later, when he was on his way back from his old-land trip to join Graeme in the mountains, he threw up his head in the old way and said, "It was well done. It must have been worth seeing. Old man Nelson's work is not done yet. Tell me again," and he made me go over the whole scene with all the details put in.

But when I told Mrs. Mavor, after two years had gone, she only said, "Old things are passed away, all things are become new:" but the light glowed in her eyes till I could not see their color. But all that, too, is another story.



## CHAPTER XV.

## COMING TO THEIR OWN.

A MAN with a conscience is often provoking, sometimes impossible. Persuasion is lost upon him. He will not get angry, and he looks at one with such a faraway expression in his face that, striving to persuade him one feels earthly and even fiendish. At least this was my experience with Craig. He spent a week with me just before he sailed for the old land, for the purpose, as he said, of getting some of the coal dust and other things out of him.

He made me angry the last night of his stay, all the more that he remained quite sweetly unmoved. It was a strategic mistake of mine to tell him how Nelson came home to us, and how Nelson stood up before 'varsity chaps at my suggestion, and made his confession and confused Rat's easy-stepping profanity, and started his five-year league. For all this stirred in Craig

nothing but the one thing, and about that we said not a word till, bending low to poke my fire and to hide my face, I plunged:

"You will see her, of course?"

He made no pretense of not understanding, but answered:

"Of course."

"There's really no sense in her staying over there," I suggested.

"And yet she is a wise woman," he said, as if carefully considering the question.

"Heaps of landlords never see their tenants, and they are none the worse."

"The landlords?"

"No—the tenants."

"Probably, having such landlords."

"And as for the old lady, there must be some one in the connection to whom it would be a Godsend to care for her."

"Now, Connor," he said quietly, "don't. We have gone over all there is to be said. Nothing new has come. Don't turn it all up again."

Then I played the heathen and raged, as Graeme would have said, till Craig smiled a little wearily and said:

"You haven't yourself, old chap. Have you?"



from my feet. Should I quit it? I could not disappoint you—and all of them.”

And I knew he was thinking of Graeme and the lads in the mountains he had taught to be true men. It did not help my rage, but it checked my speech; so I smoked in silence till he was moved to say:

“And after all, you know, old chap, there are great compensations for all losses; but for the loss of a good conscience toward God, what can make up?”

But, all the same, I hoped for some better result from his visit to Britain. It seemed to me that something must turn up to change such an unbearable situation.

The year passed, however, and when I looked into Craig's face again I knew that nothing had been changed, and that he had come back to take up again his life alone, more resolutely hopeful than ever.

But the year had left its mark upon him, too. He was a broader and deeper man. He had been living and thinking with men of larger ideas and richer culture, and he was far too quick in sympathy with life to remain untouched by his surroundings. He was more tolerant of opinions

heartedness and self-indulgence. He was full of reverence for the great scholars and the great leaders of men he had come to know.

“Great, noble fellows they are, and extraordinarily modest,” he said—“that is, the really great are modest. There are plenty of the other sort, neither great nor modest. And the books to be read! I am quite hopeless about my reading. It gave me a queer sensation to shake hands with a man who had written a great book. To hear him make commonplace remarks, to witness a faltering in knowledge—one expects these men to know everything—and to experience respectful kindness at his hands!”

“What of the younger men?” I asked.

“Bright, keen, generous fellows. In things theoretical, omniscient; but in things practical, quite helpless. They toss about great ideas as the miners lumps of coal. They can call them by their book names easily enough, but I often wondered whether they could put them into English. Some of them I coveted for the mountains. Men with clear heads and big hearts, and built after Sandy M'Naughton's model. It does seem a sinful waste of God's good human stuff to see these fellows potter away their lives among theories living and dead and end up by producing a book!

book. A good thing we haven't to read them. But here and there among them is some quiet chap who will make a book that men will tumble over each other to read."

Then we paused and looked at each other.

"Well?" I said.

He understood me.

"Yes!" he answered slowly, "doing great work. Every one worships her just as we do, and he is making them all do something worth while, as she used to make us."

He spoke cheerfully and readily, as if he were repeating a lesson well learned, but he could not amuse me. I felt the heartache in the cheerful one.

"Tell me about her," I said, for I knew that if I would talk it would do him good. And talk he did, often forgetting me, till, as I listened, I found myself looking again into the fathomless eyes and hearing again the heart-searching voice. I saw her go in and out of the little red-tiled cottages and down the narrow back lanes of the village; I heard her voice in a sweet, low song by the bed of a dying child, or pouring forth floods of music in the great new hall of the factory town and by. But I could not see, though he tried to show me the stately, grand old house, the

that scene, but went back again to the gate cottage where she had taken him one day to see Billy Breen's mother.

"I found the old woman knew all about me," he said simply enough, "but there were many things about Billy she had never heard, and I was glad to put her right on some points, though Mrs. Mavor would not hear it."

He sat silent for a little, looking into the coals; then went on in a soft, quiet voice:

"It brought back the mountains and the old days to hear again Billy's tones in his mother's voice and to see her sitting there in the very dress she wore the night of the league, you remember—some soft stuff with black lace about it—and to hear her sing as she did for Billy—ah! ah!"

His voice unexpectedly broke, but in a moment he was master of himself and begged me to forgive his weakness. I am afraid I said words that should not be said—a thing I never do, except when suddenly and utterly upset.

"I am getting selfish and weak," he said. "I must get to work. I am glad to get to work."



of my life beside his and trying to get command of my voice, so as not to make quite a fool of myself. And for many a day those words goaded me to work and to the exercise of some mild self-denial. But more than all else, after Craig had gone back to the mountains, Graeme's letters from the railroad construction camp stirred one to do unpleasant duty long postponed and rendered uncomfortable my hours of most luxurious ease. Many of the old gang were with him, both of lumbermen and miners, and Craig was their minister. And the letters told of how he labored by day and by night along the line of construction, carrying his tent and kit with him, preaching straight sermons, watching by sick men, writing their letters, and winning their hearts, making strong their lives, and helping them to die well when their hour came. One day these letters proved too much for me, and I packed away my paints and brushes and made my vow unto the Lord that I would be "useless and lazy" no longer, but would do something with myself. In consequence, I found myself within three weeks walking the London hospitals, finishing my course, that I might join that band of men who

the useless and luxurious kind. The letter that came from Graeme, in reply to my request for a position on his staff, was characteristic of the man, both new and old, full of gayest humor and of most earnest welcome to the work.

Mrs. Mavor's reply was like herself:

"I knew you would not long be content with the making of pictures, which the world does not really need, and would join your friends in the dear West, making lives that the world needs so sorely."

His last words touched me strangely:

"But be sure to be thankful every day for your privilege. . . . It will be good to think of you all, with the glorious mountains about you, and Christ's own work in your hands. . . . Ah! how we would like to choose our work and the place in which to do it!"

The longing did not appear in the words, but I needed no words to tell me how deep and how constant it was. And I take some credit to myself that in my reply I gave her no bidding to join our band, but rather praised the work she was doing in her place, telling her now I had heard of it from Craig.

The summer found me religiously doing Paris

rance, and so fully occupied in this interesting and wholesome occupation that I fell out with all my correspondents, with the result of weel' of silence between us.

Two letters among the heap waiting on my table in London made my heart beat quick, but with how different feelings: one from Graeme telling me that Craig had been very ill and that he was to take him home as soon as he could be moved. Mrs. Mavor's letter told me of the death of the old lady who had been her care for the past two years, and of her intention to spend some months in her old home in Edinburgh. And this letter it is that accounts for my presence in a miserable, dingy, dirty little hall running off a close in the historic Cowgate, redolent of the glories of the splendid past and of the various odors of the evil-smelling present. I was there to hear Mrs. Mavor sing to the crowd of gamins that thronged the closes in the neighborhood and that had been gathered into a club by "a fine eddie frae the West End," for the love of Christ and His lost. This was an "at home" night, and the mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, of all ages and sizes, were present. Of all the sad faces I had ever seen, those mothers carried the

tiful, the cultured, the heaven-exalted city of Edinburgh? Will it not for this be cast down to hell some day if it repent not of its closes and their dens of defilement? Oh! the utter weariness, the dazed hopelessness of the ghastly faces! Do not the kindly, gentle church-going folk of the crescents and the gardens see them in their dreams, or are their dreams too heavenly for these ghastly faces to appear?"

I cannot recall the program of the evening, but in my memory gallery is a vivid picture of that face, sweet, sad, beautiful, alight with the deep glow of her eyes as she stood and sang to that dingy crowd. As I sat upon the window-edge listening to the voice with its flowing song, my thoughts were far away, and I was looking down once more upon the eager, coal-grimed faces in the rude little church in Black Rock. I was brought back to find myself swallowing hard by an audible whisper from a wee lassie to her mother:

"Mither! See till yon man. He's greetin'."

When I came to myself she was singing "The Land o' the Leal," the Scotch "Jerusalem the Golden," immortal, perfect. It needed experi-



"There's nae sorrow there, Jean,  
There's neither could nor care, Jean,  
The day is aye fair in  
The Land o' the Leal."

A land of fair, warm days, untouched by sorrow and care, would be heaven indeed to the dwellers of the Cowgate.

The rest of that evening is hazy enough to me now, till I find myself opposite Mrs. Mavor at her fire, reading Graeme's letters; then all is vivid again.

I could not keep the truth from her. I knew it would be folly to try. So I read straight on till I came to the words:

"He has had mountain fever, whatever that may be, and he will not pull up again. If I can shall take him home to my mother"—when she suddenly stretched out her hand, saying, "Oh, let me read!" and I gave her the letter. In a minute she had read it and began almost breathlessly:

"Listen! My life is much changed. My mother-in-law is gone; she needs me no longer. My solicitor tells me, too, that owing to unfortunate investments there is need of money, so great that it is possible that either the estates or my works must go. My cousin, however, has

wrong to have him suffer. I shall give up the estates—that is the best."

She paused.

"And come with me!" I cried.

"When do you sail?"

"Next week," I answered eagerly.

She looked at me a few moments, and into her eyes there came a light soft and tender as she said:

"I shall go with you."

She did; and no old Roman in all the glory of a triumph carried a prouder heart than I as I bore her and her little one from the train to Graeme's carriage, crying:

"I've got her!"

But his was the better sense, for he stood waving his hat and shouting, "He's all right," at which Mrs. Mavor grew white; but when she shook hands with him the red was in her cheek again.

"It was the cable did it," went on Graeme. "Connor's a great doctor! His first case will make him famous. Good prescription—after mountain fever try a cablegram!"

And the red grew deeper in the beautiful face



brown fields were bathed in a purple haze; the air was sweet and fresh with a suspicion of the coming frosts of winter. But in spite of all the road seemed long, and it was as if hours had gone before our eyes fell upon the white manse standing among the golden leaves.

"Let them go!" I cried as Graeme paused to take in the view, and down the sloping dusty road we flew on the dead run.

"Reminds one a little of Abe's curves," said Graeme as we drew up at the gate. But I answered him not, for I was introducing to each other the two best women in the world. As I was about to rush into the house Graeme seized me by the collar, saying:

"Hold on, Connor! You forget your place. You're next."

"Why, certainly," I cried, thankfully enough. "What an ass I am!"

"Quite true," said Graeme solemnly.

"Where is he?" I asked.

"At this present moment?" he asked in a shocked voice. "Why, Connor, you surprise me."

"Oh, I see."

"Yes," he went on gravely, "you may trust

I had no doubt of it, for at that moment she came out to us with little Marjorie in her arms.

"Yes," he went on gravely, "you may trust my mother, I hope," said Graeme; but she only smiled and said:

"Run away with your horses, you silly boy," at which he solemnly shook his head.

"Ah, mother, you are deep—who would have thought it of you?"

That evening the manse overflowed with joy, and the days that followed were like dreams set to sweet music.

But for sheer wild delight, nothing in my memory can quite come up to the demonstration organized by Graeme, with assistance from Nixon, Shaw, Sandy, Abe, Geordie, and Baptiste, in honor of the arrival in camp of Mr. and Mrs. Craig. And, in my opinion, it added something to the occasion that after all the cheers for Mr. and Mrs. Craig had died away, and after all the hats had come down, Baptiste, who had never taken his eyes from that radiant face, should suddenly have swept the crowd into a perfect storm of cheers by excitedly seizing his toque and calling out in his shrill voice:

"By gar! tree cheer for Mrs. Mavor!"

And for many a day the men of Black Rock

name; but up and down the line of construction, in all the camps beyond the Great Divide, the new name became as dear as the old had ever been in Black Rock.

Those old wild days are long since gone into the dim distance of the past. They will not come again, for we have fallen into quiet times. But often in my quietest hours I feel my heart pause in its beat to hear again that strong, clear voice, like the sound of a trumpet, bidding us to be men; and I think of them all—Graeme, their chief, Sandy, Baptiste, Geordie, Abe, the Campbells, Nixon, Shaw, all stronger, better for their knowing of him, and then I think of Billy sleep under the pines, and of old man Nelson with the long grass waving over him in the quiet churchyard, and all my nonsense leaves me, and I bless the Lord for all His benefits, but chiefly for the day I met the missionary of Black Rock in the lumber camp among the Selkirks.

THE END.