

Far up among the pines we could see the smoke of the engine at the works, and so still and so clear was the mountain air that we could hear the puff of the steam, and from far down the river the murmur of the rapids. The majestic silence, the tender beauty, the peace, the loneliness, too, came stealing in upon us, as we three, leaving Mrs. Mavor behind us, marched arm-in-arm down the street. We had not gone far on our way, when Graeme, turning round, stood a moment looking back, then waved his hand in farewell. Mrs. Mavor was at her window, smiling and waving in return. They had grown to be great friends these two; and seemed to have arrived at some understanding. Certainly, Graeme's manner to her was not that he bore to other women. His half-quizzical, somewhat superior air of mocking devotion gave place to a simple, earnest, almost tender, respect, very new to him, but very winning.

As he stood there waving his farewell, I glanced at his face and saw for a moment what I had not seen for years, a faint flush on Graeme's cheek and a light of simple, earnest faith in his eyes. It reminded me of my first look of him when he had come up for his matriculation to the Varsity. He stood on the campus looking up at the noble old pile, and there was the same bright, trustful, earnest look on his boyish face.

I know not what spirit possessed me: it may have been the pain of the memory working in me, but I said, coarsely enough, 'It's no use, Graeme, my boy; I would fall in love with her myself, but there would be no chance even for me.'

The flush slowly darkened as he turned and said deliberately—

'It's not like you, Connor, to be an ass of that peculiar kind. Love!—not exactly! she won't fall in love unless'—and he stopped abruptly with his eyes upon Craig.

But Craig met him with unshrinking gaze, quietly remarking, 'Her heart is under the pines'; and we moved on, each thinking his own thoughts, and guessing at the thoughts of the others.

We were on our way to Craig's shack, and as we passed the saloon Slavin stepped from the door with a salutation. Graeme paused. 'Hello, Slavin! I got rather the worst of it, didn't I?'

Slavin came near, and said earnestly, 'It was a dirty thrick altogether; you'll not think it was moine, Mr. Graeme.'

'No, no, Slavin! you stood up like a man,' said Graeme cheerfully.

'And you bate me fair; an' bedad it was a nate one that laid me out; an' there's no grudge in me heart till ye.'

'All right, Slavin; we'll perhaps understand each other better after this.'

'An' that's thrue for yez, sor; an' I'll see that your byes don't get any more than they ask for,' replied Slavin, backing away.

'And I hope that won't be much,' put in Mr. Craig; but Slavin only grinned.

When we came to Craig's shack Graeme was glad to rest in the big chair.

Craig made him a cup of tea, while I smoked, admiring much the deft neatness of the minister's house-keeping, and the gentle, almost motherly, way he had with Graeme.

In our talk we drifted into the future, and Craig let us see what were his ambitions. The railway was soon to come; the resources were, as yet, unexplored, but enough was known to assure a great future for British Columbia. As he talked his enthusiasm grew, and carried us away. With the eye of a general he surveyed the country, fixed the strategic points which the Church must seize upon. Eight good men would hold the country from Fort Steele

to the coast, and from Kootenay to Cariboo.

'The Church must be in with the railway; she must have a hand in the shaping of the country. If society crystallises without her influence, the country is lost, and British Columbia will be another trap-door to the bottomless pit.'

'What do you propose?' I asked.

'Organising a little congregation here in Black Rock.'

'How many will you get?'

'Don't know.'

'Pretty hopeless business,' I said.

'Hopeless! hopeless!' he cried; 'there were only twelve of us at first to follow Him, and rather a poor lot they were. But He braced them up, and they conquered the world.'

'But surely things are different,' said Graeme.

'Things? Yes! yes! But He is the same.' His face had an exalted look, and his eyes were gazing into far-away places.

'A dozen men in Black Rock with some real grip of Him would make things go. We'll get them, too,' he went on in growing excitement. 'I believe in my soul we'll get them.'

'Look here, Craig; if you organize I'd like to join,' said Graeme impulsively. 'I don't believe much in your creed or your Church, but I'll be blowed if I don't believe in you.'

Craig looked at him with wistful eyes, and shook his head. 'It won't do, old chap, you know. I can't hold you. You've got to have a grip of some one better than I am; and then, besides, I hardly like asking you now'; he hesitated—'well, to be out-and-out, this step must be taken not for my sake, nor for any man's sake, and I fancy that perhaps you feel like pleasing me just now a little.'

'That I do, old fellow,' said Graeme, putting out his hand. 'I'll be hanged if I won't do anything you say.'

'That's why I won't say,' replied Craig. Then reverently he added, 'The organization is not mine. It is my Master's.'

'When are you going to begin?' asked Graeme.

'We shall have our communion service in two weeks, and that will be our roll-call.'

'How many will answer?' I asked doubtfully.

'I know of three,' he said quietly.

'Three! There are two hundred miners and one hundred and fifty lumbermen! Three!' and Graeme looked at him in amazement. 'You think it worth while to organize three?'

'Well,' replied Craig, smiling for the first time, 'the organization won't be elaborate, but it will be effective, and, besides, loyalty demands obedience.'

We sat long that afternoon talking, shrinking from the breaking up; for we knew that we were about to turn down a chapter in our lives which we should delight to linger over in after days. And in my life there is but one brighter. At last we said good-bye and drove away; and though many farewells have come in between that day and this, none is so vividly present to me as that between us three men. Craig's manner with me was solemn enough. "He that loveth his life"; good-bye, don't fool with this,' was what he said to me. But when he turned to Graeme his whole face lit up. He took him by the shoulders and gave him a little shake, looking into his eyes, and saying over and over in a low, sweet tone—

'You'll come, old chap, you'll come, you'll come. Tell me you'll come.'

And Graeme could say nothing in reply, but only looked at him. Then they silently shook hands, and we drove off. But long

after we had got over the mountain and into the winding forest road on the way to the lumber-camp the voice kept vibrating in my heart, 'You'll come, you'll come,' and there was a hot pain in my throat.

We said little during the drive to the camp. Graeme was thinking hard, and made no answer when I spoke to him two or three times, till we came to the deep shadows of the pine forest, when with a little shiver he said—

'It is all a tangle—a hopeless tangle.'

'Meaning what?' I asked.

'This business of religion—what quaint varieties—Nelson's, Geordie's, Billy Breen's—if he has any—then Mrs. Mavor's—she is a saint, of course—and that fellow Craig's. What a trump he is!—and without his religion he'd be pretty much like the rest of us. It is too much for me.'

His mystery was not mine. The Black Rock varieties of religion were certainly startling; but there was undoubtedly the streak of reality through them all, and that discovery I felt to be a distinct gain.

(To be continued.)

A Life Saved by Steadiness.

Dinner was just finished, and several English officers were sitting around the table. The conversation had not been animated, and there came a lull, as the night was too hot for small talk. The major of the regiment, a clean-cut man of fifty-five, turned toward his next neighbor, a young subaltern, who was leaning back in his chair with his hands clasped behind his head, staring through the cigar-smoke at the ceiling.

The major was slowly looking the man over, from his handsome face down, when, with sudden alertness and in a quiet steady voice, he said, 'Don't move, please, Mr. Caruthers, I want to try an experiment with you. Don't move a muscle.' 'All right, major,' replied the subaltern, without even turning his eyes; 'hadn't the least idea of moving, I assure you. What's the game?' By this time all the others were listening in a lazily expectant way.

'Do you think,' continued the major—and his voice trembled just a little—that you can keep absolutely still for, say, two minutes, to save your life?' 'Are you joking?' 'On the contrary, move a muscle and you are a dead man. Can you stand the strain?' The subaltern barely whispered, 'Yes,' and his face paled slightly. 'Burke,' said the major, addressing an officer across the table, 'pour out some of that milk into a saucer, and set it on the floor here just at the back of me. Gently, man! Quiet!'

Not a word was spoken as the officer quietly filled the saucer, walked with it carefully around the table, and set it down where the major had indicated on the floor.

Like a marble statue sat the young subaltern in his white linen clothes, while a cobra di capello, which had been crawling up the leg of his trousers, slowly raised its head, then turned, descended to the floor, and glided toward the milk.

Suddenly the silence was broken by the report of the major's revolver, and the snake lay dead on the floor.

'Thank you, major,' said the subaltern, as the two men shook hands warmly; 'you have saved my life!' 'You're welcome, my boy,' replied the senior, 'but you did your share.'—'Scottish American.'