

# Lazy Liver

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# Black Rock

By RALPH CONNOR

## CHAPTER III. WATERLOO—OUR FIGHT, HIS VICTORY.

THE sports were over, and there remained still an hour to be filled in before dinner. It was an hour full of danger to Craig's hopes of victory, for the men were wild with excitement and ready for the most reckless means of "slinging their dust." I could not but admire the skill with which Mr. Craig caught their attention.

"Gentlemen," he called out, "we've forgotten the judge of the great race. Three cheers for Mr. Connor!"

Two of the shanty men picked me up and hoisted me on to their shoulders while the cheers were given.

"Announce the Punch and Judy," he entreated me in a low voice.

I did so in a little speech and was forthwith borne aloft through the street to the booth, followed by the whole crowd, cheering like mad.

The excitement of the crowd caught me, and for an hour I squeaked and worked the wires of the immortal and unhappy family in a manner hitherto unapproached, by me at least. I was glad enough when Graeme came to tell me to send the men in to dinner. This Mr. Punch did in the most gracious manner, and again with cheers for Mr. Punch's master they trooped tumultuously into the tent.

We had only 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 leek drink up at de 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.

"Let me go, Mr. Craig," Sandy was saying. "I am a good Presbyterian. He is a papist thief, and he's my money, and I will have it out of the soul of him."

"Let him go, preacher," sneered Slavin. "I'll cool him off for you. But you'd better hold him if you want his mug left on to him."

"Let him go!" Keefe was shouting. "Hands off!" Blaney was echoing. I pushed my way in. "What's up?" I cried.

"Mr. Connor," said Sandy solemnly, "it is a gentleman you are, though your name is against you, and I am a good Presbyterian, and I can give you the commands and reasons annexed to them, but you're a thief, a papist thief, and I am justified in getting my money out of his soul."

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

"He has my money," retorted Sandy.

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

With a roar Sandy broke away and rushed at him, but without hearing from his tracks Slavin met him with a straight left hander and laid him flat.

"Hoary!" yelled Blaney. "Ireland forever!" and, seizing the iron pole, swung it around his head, crying, "Back, or, by holy Moses, I'll kill the first man that interferes with the game!"

"Give it to him!" Keefe said savagely.

Sandy rose slowly, gazing round stupidly.

"He don't know what hit him," laughed Keefe.

This roused the highlander, and, saying, "I'll settle you afterward, Mr. Keefe," he rushed in again at Slavin.

Again Slavin met him with his 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 hotel, had come down here with Keefe and the others, had lost his money and was accusing Slavin of robbing him.

"Did you furnish him with liquor?" said Graeme sternly.

"It is none of your business," replied Slavin, with an oath.

"I shall make it my business. It is not the first time my men have lost money in this saloon."

"You lie!" said Slavin, with deliberate emphasis.

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

"Apologize?" roared Slavin. "Apologize to you?" calling him a vile name. Graeme grew white and said, even more slowly:

"Now you'll have to take K. No apology will do."

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

"Surely it is not worth it."

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

Then, turning to Slavin, he said:

"Now, if you want a minute's rest I can wait."

Slavin, with a curse, bid him come.

"Blaney," said Graeme sharply, "you get back." Blaney promptly stepped back to Keefe's side. "Nelson, you and Baptiste can see that they stay there."

The old man nodded and looked at Craig, who simply said:

"Do the best you can."

It was a good fight. Slavin had plenty of pluck and for a time forced the fighting, Graeme guarding easily and tapping him aggravatingly about 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 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 playing with you. Put up your gun, Nelson. No one will interfere now."

Slavin hesitated, then rushed, but Graeme stepped to meet him, and he saw Slavin's heels in the air as he fell back upon his neck and shoulders and lay still, with his toes quivering.

"Bolt!" yelled Baptiste. "Bully boy! De's de best st! De's lara him one good lesson." But immediately he struck. "Gar-r-r-r-a-a-a-a!"

He was too late, for there was a crash of breaking glass, and Graeme fell to the floor with a long, slow cry on the side of his head. Keefe had hurled a bottle with all the force an arm and had got. I thought he was dead, but we carried him out, and in a few minutes he groaned, opened his eyes and laid again into innocent Slavin.

"Where can we take him?" I asked.

"To my shack," said Mr. Connor.

"Is there no place nearer?"

"Mr. Connor's. I shall run so to the bar."

"The bar?" I asked. "I had in mind to say some words of apology, but when I looked upon him from I forgot my words, forget my business of her door, and stood simply looking."

"Come in. Bring him in. Fix him up and wait," she said, and her voice was sweet and soft and firm.

We laid him in a large room at the back of the shop over which Mrs. Mavor kept. Together we dressed the wound, her firm white fingers skillful as if with long training. Before the dressing was finished I sent Craig off, for the time had come for the magic lantern in the church, and I knew how critical the moment was in our fight.

"Go," I said. "He is coming to, and we do not need you."

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: "A wful bore, isn't it? Sorry to trouble you, old fellow."

"You be banged!" 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 frown 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 doctor says you are to lie still."

"The doctor? Oh, you mean Connor! He is hardly there yet. You don't know each other. Permit me to present Mr. Connor, Mrs. Mavor."

As she bowed slightly her eyes looked into mine with a serious gaze, not inquiring, yet searching my soul. As I looked into her eyes I forgot everything about me, and when I recalled myself it seemed as if I had been away in some far place. It was not their color or their brightness. I do not yet know their color, and I have often looked into them, and they were not bright, but they were clear, and one could look far down into them and in their depths see a glowing, steady light. As I went to get some drugs from the Black Rock doctor I found myself wondering about that far down light and about her voice—how it could get that sound from far away.

I found the doctor quite drunk, as indeed Mr. Craig had warned, but his drugs were good, and I got what I wanted and quickly returned.

While Graeme slept Mrs. Mavor made me tea. As the evening wore on I told her the events of the day, dwelling admiringly upon Craig's generalship.

She smiled at this.

"He got me, too," she said. "Nixon was sent to me just before the sports, and I don't think he will break down today, and I am so thankful." And her eyes glistened.

"I am quite sure he won't." I thought to myself, but I said no word.

After a long pause she went on, "I have promised Mr. Craig to sing tonight if I am needed," and then, after a moment's hesitation, "It is two years since I have been able to sing—two years," she repeated "since," and then her brave voice trembled, "my husband was killed."

"I quite understand," I said, having no other word on my tongue.

"And," she went on quietly, "I fear I have been selfish. It is hard to sing the same songs. We were very happy. But the miners like to hear me sing, and I think perhaps it helps them to feel less lonely and keeps them from evil. I shall try tonight if I am needed. Mr. Craig will not ask me unless he must."

I would have seen every miner and lumberman in the place hideously drunk before I would have asked her to sing one song while her heart ached. I wondered at Craig and said rather angrily:

"He thinks only of those wretched miners and shanty men of his."

She looked at me with wonder in her eyes and said gently:

"And are they not Christ's too?"

And I found no word to reply.

It was nearing 10 o'clock and I was wondering how the fight was going on and hoping that Mrs. Mavor would not be needed when the door opened and old man Nelson and Sandy, the latter much battered and ashamed, came in with the word for Mrs. Mavor.

"I will come," she said simply. She saw me preparing to accompany her and asked, "Do you think you can leave him?"

"He will do quite well in Nelson's care."

"Then I am glad, for I must take my little one with me. I did not get her to bed in case I should need to go, and I may not leave her."

We entered the church by the back door and saw at once that even yet the battle might easily be lost.

Some miners had just come from Slavin's, evidently bent on breaking up the meeting in revenge for the collapse of the dance, which Slavin was unable to enjoy, much less direct. Craig was gallantly holding his ground, sending it hard work to keep his men in good humor and to prevent a fight, for there were cries of "Put him out! Put the beast out!" at a voice half drunk and wholly outrageous.

The look of relief that came over his face when Craig caught sight of us told how difficult he had been and reconciled us to Mrs. Mavor's singing.

"Thank the good God!" he said, with what came-near being a sob. "I was about to sing."

He immediately walked to the front and called out:

"Gentlemen, if you wish to, Mrs. Mavor will sing."

There was a dead silence. Some one began to applaud, but a miner said savagely:

"Stop that, you fool!"

There was a delay of a few moments when from the crowd a voice called out:

"Does Mrs. Mavor wish to sing?" followed by cries of "Aye, that's it!"

Then Shaw, the foreman of the union, stood up in the audience and said:

"Mr. Connor and gentlemen, you know that three years ago I was known as 'Old Ricketts' and that I owe all I am tonight, under God, to Mrs. Mavor, and," with a little quiver in his voice, "her baby. And we all know why. And what I say is that if she does not feel like singing tonight she is not going to sing to keep any drunk brute of Slavin's crowd quiet."

There were deep growls of approval all over the church. I could have hugged Shaw then and there. Mr. Craig went to Mrs. Mavor and after a word with her came back and said:

"Mrs. Mavor wishes me to thank her dear friend Mr. Shaw, but says she would like to sing."

The response was perfect stillness. Mr. Craig sat down at the organ and played the opening bars of the touching melody, "Oft in the Silly Night."

Mrs. Mavor came to the front and, with a smile of exquisite sweetness upon her sad face and looking straight at us with her glorious eyes, began to sing.

Her voice, a rich soprano, even and true, rose and fell, now soft, now strong, but always filling the building, pouring around us floods of music. I had heard Patti's "Home, Sweet Home," and of all singing that alone affected me as did this.

At the end of the first verse the few women in the church and some of the men were weeping quietly, but when she began the words,

"When I remember all The friends once linked together," sobs came on every side from these tender hearted fellows, and Shaw quite lost his grip. But she sang steadily on, the tone clearer and sweeter and fuller at every note, and when the sound of her voice died away she stood looking at the men as if in wonder that they should weep. No one moved. Mr. Craig played softly on and, wandering through many variations, arrived at last at—

"Jesus, lover of my soul."

As she sang the appealing words her face was lifted up, and she saw none of us, but she must have seen some one, for the cry in her voice could only come from one who could see and feel help close at hand. On and on went the glorious voice, searching my soul's depths, but when she came to the words,

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want," she stretched up her arms—she had quite forgotten us; her voice had borne her to other worlds—and sang with such a passion of abandon that my soul was ready to surrender anything, everything.

Again Mr. Craig wandered on through his changing chords till again he came to familiar ground, and the voice began in low, thrilling tones Bernard's great song of home, "Jerusalem, the Golden."

Every word, with all its weight of meaning, came winging to our souls till we found ourselves gazing afar into those stately halls of Zion, with their daylight serene and their jubilant throngs. When the singer came to the last verse, there was a pause. Again Mr. Craig softly played the interlude, but still there was no voice. I looked up. She was very white, and her eyes were glowing with their deep light. Mr. Craig looked quickly about, saw her, stopped and half rose, as if to go to her, when, in a voice that seemed to come from a faroff land, she went on:

"Oh, sweet and blessed country!"

The longing, the yearning, in the second "Oh" were indescribable. Again and again as she held that word and then dropped down with the cadence in the music my heart ached for I knew not what.

The audience were sitting as in a trance. The grimy faces of the miners, for they never get quite white, were furrowed with the tear courses. Shaw by this time had his face, too, lifted high, his eyes gazing far above the singer's head, and I knew by the rapture in his face that he was seeing, as she saw, the throbbing, stately halls and the white robed conquerors. He had felt and was still feeling all the stress of the fight, and to him the vision of the conquerors in their glory was soul drawing and soul stirring. And Nixon, too—he had his vision, but what he saw was the face of the singer with the shining eyes, and, by the look of him, that was vision enough.

Immediately after her last note Mrs. Mavor stretched out her hands to her little girl, who was sitting on my knee, caught her up and, holding her close to her breast, walked quickly behind the curtain. No sound followed the singing. No one moved till she had disappeared, and then Mr. Craig came to the front and, motioning to me to follow Mrs. Mavor, began in a low, distinct voice:

"Gentlemen, it was not easy for Mrs. Mavor to sing for us, and you know she sang because she is a miner's wife and her heart is with the miners. But she sang, too, because her heart is his who came to earth this day so many years ago to save us all, and she would make you love him, too, for in loving him you are saved from all base sins, and you know what I mean."

"And before we say good night, men, I want to know if the time is not come when all of you, as men, it is better than you are should join in putting down this thing that has brought sorrow and shame to do—and to 10000 we loved. Yes, know what I mean. Many of you are wrong. I will stand by and see whether men robbed of the money they have for these far away and robbed of the manhood that up money can buy or help?"

"Will the strong men help? Shall we join hands to stand? What do you say? Is this town to have, when seen from here, and just a moment ago we were all looking into heaven, the sweet and blessed country? Oh, men, and his voice rang in an agony through the building—oh, men, which shall be ours? For heaven's dear sake, let us help one another! Who will?"

I have witnessed some thrilling scenes in my life, but never anything to equal that the one man on the platform standing at full height, with his hand thrown up to heaven, and the hundred men below standing straight, with arms up at full length, silent and almost motionless.

For a moment Craig held them so, and again his voice rang out, louder, sterner than before:

"All who mean it say, 'By God's help, I will.'"

And back from a hundred throats came deep and strong the words, "By God's help, I will."

At this point Mrs. Mavor, whom I had quite forgotten, put her hand on my arm, "Go and tell him," she said,

"I want them to come on Thursday night, as they used to in the other days—go—quick!" And she almost pushed me out. I gave Craig her message. He held up his hand for silence.

"Mrs. Mavor wishes me to say that she will be glad to see you all, as in the old days, on Thursday evening, and I can think of no better place to give formal expression to our pledge of this night."

There was a shout of acceptance, and then, at some one's call, the long pent-up feelings of the crowd found vent in three mighty cheers for Mrs. Mavor.

"Now for our old hymn," called out Mr. Craig, "and Mrs. Mavor will lead us."

He sat down at the organ, played a few bars of "The Sweet By and By," and then Mrs. Mavor began. But not a soul joined till the refrain was reached, and then they sang as only men with their hearts on fire can sing. But after the last refrain Mr. Craig made a sign to Mrs. Mavor, and she sang alone, slowly and softly and with eyes looking far away:

"In the sweet by and by We shall meet on that beautiful shore."

There was no benediction—there seemed no need—and the men went quietly out. But over and over again the voice kept singing in my ears and in my heart, "We shall meet on that beautiful shore." And after the sleigh loads of men had gone and left the street empty, as I stood with Craig in the radiant moonlight that made the great mountains about come near us, from Sandy's sleigh we heard in the distance Baptiste's French-English song, but the song that floated down with the sound of the bells from the miners' sleigh was:

"We shall meet on that beautiful shore." "Poor old Shaw!" said Craig softly.

When the last sound had died away, I turned to him and said:

"You have won your fight."

"We have won our fight. I was beaten," he replied quickly, offering me his hand. Then, taking off his cap and looking up beyond the mountain tops and the silent stars, he added softly, "Our fight, but his victory."

And, thinking it all over, I could not say but perhaps he was right.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.

# DOULTRY & BEES

## PIGEON NEST CABINET.

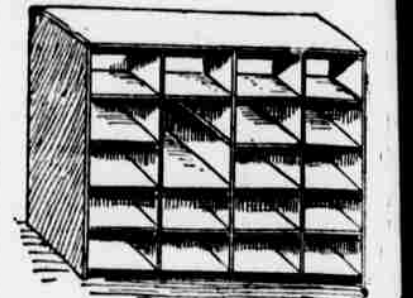
Style Here Described Has Been Adopted by Noted Poultry After Years of Experimenting.

After experimenting for years with various nesting apartments for pigeons, and examining those of other experienced breeders, we have adopted the style set forth in the accompanying illustration as being the best, cheapest and most convenient for the attendant as well as the birds.

The dimensions are seven feet two inches high, eight feet long and two feet deep. Partitions are two feet apart, making each nest shelf, which rests on cleats nailed to the partitions, two feet square. Shelves are one foot apart, giving ample room for nest pan about three and a half or four inches high.

Few birds will need more than one nest pan or box at a time; but should the hen wish to lay before the squabs are old enough to leave the nest, another nest may be placed in the opposite corner. It would be better to have the apartments two and a half or even three feet long where two nest boxes are to be used.

The illustration shows the top row of nest boxes in position, also one of the shelves removed in the second row.



PIGEON NEST CABINET.

The bottom row of nests is raised from the floor by a base-board two inches wide, this allows a space for the end cleats on which the bottom shelves rest.

The cabinet here illustrated is made for 20 pairs of birds. Two such cabinets, one on each side of a room ten by twelve feet, would comfortably accommodate 30 to 35 pairs, allowing a few nests for birds that may claim two sections.

Only the upright partitions are made secure to the building. The top and shelves should not be fastened, and may easily be moved when cleaning-out time comes. One point must be remembered, no nest cabinet should be built more than five nests high, and where one is not cramped for room four nests high would be better.

The top of the cabinet makes a good resting place for birds not on the nest, and no other perches are needed. In nearly every pen there will be a pair or two that will persist in building on top of the cabinet, and, if they are to be humored, the attendant should give them a nest pan or box, for in most cases they will succeed in raising a good pair of squabs.—Farm Journal.

## DUCK RAISER'S WAY.

Competition Being Very Keen, There is No Profit in Keeping Small Number of Pekins.

When you have for mating Pekins 25 or 30 females and five or six males, in case your duck eggs do not hatch well, it is almost impossible to trace the trouble, while of course in the single mating you can tell at once where the trouble is and remedy it; where there are so many in together they are apt to interfere with one another and I do not think the result is so good. The expense of single mating is greater, but it is astonishing to see how little it takes to counter-balance anyway, a mere pecking one with do just as well as an elaborate building. The only objection I see to the single mating is that you have to have a larger pen, but it is a small matter to have a larger pen. I have had a pen of 25 females and five males. I estimate that you would have a better result than you could get from 25 females and five males. There is no profit in keeping a small number of Pekins. I have had a pen of 25 females and five males. I estimate that you would have a better result than you could get from 25 females and five males. There is no profit in keeping a small number of Pekins.

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