Ey RALPH CONNOR

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CHAPTER X. WHAT CAME TO SLAVIN.

ILLY BREEN'S legacy to the Black Rock mining camp was new league, which was more than the old league remade. The league was new in its spirit and in its methods. The impression made upon the camp by Billy Breen's death was very remarkable, and I have never been quite able to account for it. The mood of the community at the time was peculiarly susceptible. Billy was one of the oldest of the old timers. His decline and fall had been a long process, and his struggle for life and manhood was striking enough to arrest the attention and awaken the sympathy of the whole camp. We instinctively side with a man in his struggle for freedom, for we feel that freedom is native to him and to us. The sudden collapse of the struggle stirred the men with a deep pity for the beaten man and a deep contempt for those who had tricked him to his doom; but, though the pity and the contempt remained, the gloom was refleved and the sense of defeat removed from the men's minds by the transforming glory of Billy's last hour. Mr. Craig, reading of the tragedy of Billy's death, transfigured defeat into victory, and this was gradually accepted by the men as the true reading, though to them it was full of mystery. But they could all understand and appreciate at full value the spirit that breathed through the words of the dying man: "Don't be 'ard on 'em. They didn't mean no larm." And this was the new spirit of the lengue.

It was this spirit that surprised Slavin late sudden tears at the grave's side. He had come braced for curses and vengeenee, for all knew it was he who had doctored Billy's lemonade, and instead of vengeance the message from the dead that echoed through the voice of the living was one of pity and

But the days of the league's negative, defensive warfare were over. The fight was to the death, and now the war was to be carried into the enemy's country. The league men proposed a thoroughly equipped and well conducted coffee room, reading room and hall to parallel the enemy's lines of operation and defeat them with their own weapons upon their own ground. The main outlines of the scheme were clearly defined and were easily seen, but the perfecting of the details called for all Craig's tact and good sense. When, for instance, Vernon Winton, who had charge of the entertainment department, came for Craig's opinion as to a minstrel groupe 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, Vierge et tous les saints for him." shrewdiy adding, "Ask Mrs. Mayor." And so the League Minstrel and Dra- heaven for him." matic company became an established told me, a great means of grace to the

Shaw had charge of the social department, whose special care it was to see that the men were made welcome to the cay, cheerful reading 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 number, who, while earing 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. Mayor, 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 WOTEY.

"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. his answering look the red came into her check and the depths in her eyes tion." glowes, and I marveled and wondered. looking at Craig's cool face, whether asked. his blood were running evenly through shade two quiet, I thought-as he gravely replied:

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

And so the lengue waited for the man to raine who was to be resident manaare the row enterprise a success. And come he did, but the minimize of his coming was so extraordinary that I have believed in the does

trine of a special providence ever since, for, as Craig said, "If he had come stra from heaven, I could not have been more surprised."

While the league was thus waiting, its an rest centered upon Slavin, chiefly because he represented more than any char the forces of the enemy, and, though Billy Breen at od between him and the vengeance of the angry men Who would have made short work of him and his saloon, nothing could save You been in?" him from himself, and after the fu-

But the more he drank the flercer and gloomier he became, and when the men swore deeply and with such threats that they left him alone.

It did not help Slavin either to have Nixon stride in through the crowd

of warning. "It is not your fault, Slavin," he said in a slow, cool voice, "that you and your precious crew didn't send me to my death too. You've won your bet, but I want to say that next time, though you are seven to one or ten times that, when any of you boys offer me a drink I'll take you to mean fight, and I'll not disappoint you, and some one will be killed." And, so saying, he strode out again, leaving a mean looking crowd of men behind him. All who had not been concerned in the business at Nixon's shack expressed approval of his position and hoped be would see it through.

But the impression of Nixon's words upon Slavin was as nothing compared grief. with that made by Geordie Crawford. It was not what he said so much as the manner of awful solemnity he carried. Geordie was struggling conscientiously to keep his promise to "not be 'ard on the boys" and found considerable relief in remembering that he had agreed "to leave them tae the Almichty." But the manner of leaving them was so solemnly awful that I could not wonder that Slavin's superstitious frish nature supplied him with and suffering. I glanced at the bottle supernatural terrors. It was the second day after the funeral that Geordie and I were walking toward Slavin's. There was a great shout of laughter as we drew near.

Georgie stopped short and, saying, my arm and asked:

Well luist many to a manual " years. "What is it? Is the medicine "We'll juist gang in a meenute," passed through the crowd and up to the

"Michael Slavin," began Geordie, and the men stared in dead silence, with their glasses in their hands-"Michael Slavin, I promised the lad I'd bear ye nae ill wull, but juist leave ye tae the Almichty, an' I want the tell ye that I'm keepin' ma wur-r-d. But," and here he raised his hand, and his voice became preternaturally solemn, "his bluid is upon yer han's. Do ye no' see it?" His voice rose sharply, and as he

pointed Slavin instinctively glanced at his hands, and Geordie added;

"Aye, an' the Lord will require it o' ye an' yer hoose."

They told me that Slavin shivered as if taken with ague after Geordie went out, and, though he laughed and swore, he did not stop drinking till he sank in a drunken stupor and had to be carried to bed. His little French Canadian wife could not understand the change that had one over her husband.

"He's li... one bear," she confided to her baby of a year old. "He's not kees me one to a dis day. He's mos' hawful t even look at de baby." bad. He

And the seemed sufficient proof that someth a was seriously wrong, for she went on to say:

"He's tink more for dat leel baby dan for de whole worl'. He's tink more for no more wailing. dat baby dan for me." But she shrugged her pretty little shoulders in deprecation of her speech.

"You must pray for him," said Mrs. Mayor, "and all will come right." "Ah, madame," she replied earnestly,

"every day, every day, I pray la sainte

"You must pray to your Father in

"Ah, oul. I weel pray." And Mrs. fact and proved, as Craig afterward Mayor sent her away bright with hope. He immediately rose and, pulismiles and with new hope and courage ing himself together, stood perfectly in her heart.

> She had very soon need of all her courage, for at the week's end her baby fell dangerously ill. Slavin's anx- going through the form of baptism. fety and fear were not relieved much by the reports the men brought him Vierge," she said, crossing herself, from time to time of Geordie's ominous foreboldings, for Geordie had no doubt Mrs. Mayor, still with her arms about vor's arms about her, and her eyes that the Avenger of blood was hot upon Slavin's trail, and as the sickness grew he became confirmed in this conviction. While he could not be said to find satisfaction in Slavin's impending affliction, he could hardly hide his complacency in the promptness of Providence in vindicating his theory of retri-

But Geordie's complacency was somewhat rudely shocked by Mr. Craig's answer to this theory one day.

"You read your Bible to little profit. it seems to me, Geordie, or perhaps you have never read the Master's tenching about the tower of Siloam. Better read that and take that warn-

ing to yourself." Geordie gazed after Mr. Craig as he

turned away and muttered: "The toor o' Shoam, is it? Aye, I ken fine about the toor o' Siloam an' about the toor o' Babel as week an' I've read, too, about the biaspheemious "It is not for you to say that." And at Herod an' sic like. Mon, but he's a hot ber how he came to one of my people

"About Herod?" with a strong tinge his vains. But his voice was quiet-n of contempt in his tone, "About Herod? you think there is need. It will make Mon, hae ye no' read in the Screep- no difference to the baby, but it will crouching as he walked. turs about Herod an' the wur-r-ms in comfort the mother." the wame o' him?"

"Oh, yes, I see," I hastened to an-

"Aye, a fule can see what's flapped In his face," with which bit of proverblal philosophy he suddenly left in that Slavin had called to life. But me. But Geordie thenceforth contentoil Linvolf, in Mr. Craig's presence at least, with ominous head shakings, equally aggravating and impossible to Bushel.

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. Mayor to say: "Ye'll be needed ower yonder, I'm

thislint." "Why? Is the baby worse? Have

"Na, na," replied Geordie cautiously;

whisky as he had never drunk before, but you puir thing ye can hear ootside

weepln' an' moanin'. "She'll maybe need ve the," he went drinking with him chaffed him he on dubiously to me. "Ye're a kin' o' doctor. I hear," not committing himself to any opinion as to my professional value.

But Slavin would have none of me, drinking at his bar and give him words having got the dector sober enough to

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 conpect 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

"Ah, madame," she sobbed to Mrs. Mayor, "my heart is broke for him. He's heet noting 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. Mayor's knees, the mother kneeling beside it, wringing her hands in dumb agony, and Slavin standing near, silent of medicine upon the table and asked Mrs. Mayor the dose and found the baby had been poisoned. My look of horror told Slavin something was wrong, and, striding to me, he caught

Wrong?

I tried to put him off, but his grip tightened till his fingers seemed to teach 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 mon baby. Ah, mon cheri, mon amour! Ah, mon Dieu! Ah, Michael! How often I say that wheesky he's not good ting."

It was more than Slavin could bear, and with awful curses he passed out. Mrs. Mayor laid the baby in its crib, for the convulsion had passed away, and, putting her arms about the wail-Mrs. Mayor, to whom she was showing ing 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, oul, I weel," was the quick reply, and from that moment there was

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 nestly, "I'll hinder you no more." on his knees with a dry sob.

"Is there no chance at all, at all?" be whispered, but I could give him no

. new terror seized upon the mother. "My baby is not-what you call it?" "An' he will not come to la sainte

"Do not fear for your little one," said 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 pere de las tam, Michael," she replied | not tell. sadly. "The saints are not please for

"Where is the priest?" he demanded, "I know not for sure. At de Landin', dat's lak."

"I'll 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 diffi-

culty. 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 Coulet and I have exchanged offices before now. I rememheided laddle an' lacks discreemeens- in my absence, when she was dying. read with her, prayed with her, com-"What about Herod, Geordic?" I forted her and helped her across the river. He is a good soul and has no nonsense about him. Send for me if

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 with-Mrs. Mayor, 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 mile

race with death. The long afternoon wore on, but be-

neral Slavin went to his bar and drank "I'll no' gang where I'm no' wanted, fore 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 be 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

As he was about to proceed with the baptism the mother whispered to Mrs. Mayor, 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 be 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 render-. haotic some of my religious notions but I thought more of Craig that moment than ever before. He was more man than minister, or perhaps be 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 under-

stand the cry of the mother: "Oh, mon Jesu, prenez moi aussi, take me wiz mon mignon!" The cry wakened Slavin's heart, and

he said buskily: "Ob, Annette, Annette!" "Ah, oul, 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 es searching his face. "An' Michael

But Craig only replied, "All who love him."

"Ah, Michael, you must pray le bon Jesu! He's garde notre mignon." And then she bent over the babe, whispering, "Ah, mon cheri, mon amour, adieu, adieu, mon angel" 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, darling, don't cry for the baby," said her husband, "Sure it's better off than the rest of us it is, And didn't you hear what the minister said about the beautiful place it is? And sure he wouldn't lie to us at all." But a mother cannot be comforted

for her firstborn son. An hour later Nixon brought Father Goulet. He was a little Prenchman 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, moving slowly back, said:

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

"Don't say a word, Slavin," answer ed 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 ear-

They shook hands, and we passed

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 saving the words of the service she stood with Mrs. Mawere 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

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 his manner was hideously humorous.

"How do, ladles? How do, gentlemen?" was his loud voiced salutation. "Quite a professional gathering, clergy predominating. Lion and lamb too! Ha, ha! Which is the lamb, ch? 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 I burried after him, calling him back,

Turning at my voice, the doctor saw Slavin approaching. There was something so terrifying in his swift, noiseless, crouching 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 Coulet:

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

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 besitated.

"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

Blavin. "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 grouned and shuddered. "Go." And the voice grew stern.

"Repent of your sin and add not another. Slavin turned his eyes upon the mo-

tionless 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 strug-

gling in his face. It was a near thing for the dector, 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 aft. er 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. Mayor 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 with the business, I am," he said in a determined "I'll help no more to kill any voice.

man, or," in a lower tone, "any 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 with it," he replied, going on with his work. "You are throwing away good mon-

cask crashed in. "It's myself that knows it, for the price of whisky has gone up in town this week," he answered, giving me a look out of the corner of his eye. "Be dad, it was a rare clever job," referring to our Black Rock hotel affair.

ey, Slavin," I said as the head of a

"But won't you be sorry for this?" asked Craig. "Belike I will, and that's why I'm doing it before I'm sorry for it." he re-

plied, with a delightful bull. "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 you have been, and I'll not forget it to you," he replied, with like earnestness. As we told Mrs. Mayor 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

"Slavin?" "Why not?"

"I never thought of it."

ed. "But you always are."

"No more did he or 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 add-

"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 fragedy, with appropriate musical selections." Then there was a grand supper, with 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 blamin' no one but myself, I am glad tonight this saloon is on our side, for my own sake and for the sake of those who have and for the sake of those who have been waitin' 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 gwn shack and put



CANDY HEY WORK WHILE YOU

EAT 'EM LIKE CANDY CEEP YOUR BLOOD GIR

me in his own bed and met me mornin' with an open hand, for 1 you I had sworn to God that me would be my last."

Geordie's speech was characterie After a brief reference to the "me rious ways o' Providence," which acknowledged he might sometimes to understand, he went on to ena saloon.

"It's a cozy place, an' there's nace phur aboot. Besides a' that," he w on enthusiastically, "It'll be a te savin'. I've juist been coontin'.

"You bet!" ejaculated a voice r

great emphasis. "I've juist been coontin'." west Geordie, ignoring the remark and laugh which followed, "an' it's anang like money ye pit ower wi' the wh Ye see ye canna dae wi' ane bit Ye mann hae twa or three at the least, for it's no verra forrit ye get ane glass. But wi' you coffee ye get a saxpence worth an' ye want s mair."

There was another shout of language

which puzzled Geordie much "I dinna see the jowk, but fred pit ower in whusky mair nor a be dollars."

Then he paused, looking hard before

him and twisting his face into extend dinary shapes till the men looked him in wonder. "I'm rale glad o' this saloon, but ower late for the lad that cann helpit the noo. He'll not be need help o' oors, I doot, but there are

ers." And he stopped abruptly and

down, with no applause following But when Slavin, our saloon keep tose to reply the men jumped m the seats and yelled till they could trouble with himself, and finally be

out: "It's speechless I am entirely. What come to me I know not nor how! come, but I'll do my best for you."

And then the yelling broke out an I did not yell myself. I was toob watching the varying lights in Mrs. vor's eyes as she looked from Crig the yelling men on the benches and bles and then to Slavin, and I for myself wondering if she knew what was that came to Slavin.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.





and SMOK