

Black Rock

By RALPH CONNOR

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 felt myself that my letters to friends were more of importance in that congregation were not without influence for I was of the mind that the name of Black Rock would be ready for something more than a mountain mission. That he would resign I had not hesitated to think I ought to have known long ago. He was but little troubled over it. He went with the call and the letters of the resignation to Mrs. Mayor. I was sitting in the last touches to some of my work in the room at the back of Mrs. Mayor's house when he came and handed the letters and the call upon me 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 little to be sure 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 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 for 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," I said. "Why should you waste your talents here?" "Waste?" cried Mrs. Mayor 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. Mayor, "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 resignation. I have determined to stay here. I am yet awfully young."

"How long will be very glad and some of the very, very glad?" "Nonsense," she said, "I know you could take his place as well as any other, and why should you stay here?"

"I am not strong by myself. You have made me strong. I came here a foolish, fat, 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 higher, a more noble life than I had ever known before, and now you send me away?"

She passed abruptly. "Blind, stupid fool!" I said to myself. He held himself resolutely in hand, answering carefully, but his voice had lost its coolness and was sweet and kind.

near and dear as my dead son's wife. My days are not to be many. Come to me, my daughter. I want you and Lewis' child."

"Must I go?" she asked, with white lips. "Do you know her well?" I asked. "I saw her only 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, George, 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 few, and many sketches remained to be filled in. Through my open door I saw Mrs. Mayor lay her letters before Mr. Craig, saying, "I have a call too." They thought not of me.

He went through the papers, carefully laying them down without a word while she waited anxiously, almost 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—"

"The estates seem to trouble you," she replied almost fretfully. He looked up in surprise. I wondered at his slowness. "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. "That life 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."

By this time Craig was standing before her, his face deathly pale. When she came to the end of her words, he said in a voice low, sweet and thrilling with emotion: "Ah, if you only knew! Do not make me forget myself. You do not guess what you are doing."

"What am I doing? What is there to know but 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, looking 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 lifted her eyes to his and looked back at him unflinchingly.

He started, surprised, drew slowly near, put his hands upon her shoulders, surprise giving place to wild joy. She never moved her eyes. They drew him toward her. He took her face between his hands, nuzzled 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 again and then reverently her brow. Then, putting her back from him, but still holding both her hands, he cried:

"No, you shall not go! I shall never let you go!" She gave a little sigh of content and, smiling 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 right for me to go," she replied sadly.

"Do we not love each other?" was his impatient answer. "Ah, yes, my 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."

She could not have recalled him better. He stood silent some moments, then burst out passionately: "Why, then, has love come to us? We did not seek it. Surely love is of God. Does God mock us?"

He thrust 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 pain. "Nothing can make that right." But she only said: "You shall tell me tomorrow. You cannot see tonight, 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.

She stood where he left her for some moments, her 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 shyly and said: "I quite forgot you."

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for these two, to whom love meant so much. Some people take this sort of thing easily and some not so easily, but love for a woman like this comes once only to a man, and then he carries it with him through the length of his life and warms 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 an unknown tongue. So my heart was sore as I saw sitting up at this woman who stood before me, overflowing with the joy of her new love, and dully conscious of the coming pain. But I soon found it was vain to urge my opinion that she 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 desperately. "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 I see it?" I asked. "Go on," he said.

For an hour I talked, eloquently, even vehemently, 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 estates could be managed without her personal supervision. After a few years' work here they would 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 to full length above his head, "I am not sorry. Whatever comes I am not sorry. It is great to have her love, but greater to love her as I do. Thank God, nothing can take that away. I am willing, glad, 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 Landline. 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, a ass, but I hope I may never become a fool. I am willing to be led, or to lead, to be at my wife's side, to be the best and 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. Mayor with no more argument or expostulation, but, as my friend had asked, "be good to her."

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A RIVAL OF MORGAN.

John W. Gates, Promoter and Speculator, Elected a Member of Chicago Board of Trade.

John W. Gates, who has for four years started Wall street by the magnitude and boldness of his operations, was recently elected a member of the Chicago board of trade. His application for membership in the grain exchange was made March 8 and is the result of a ruling of the directors, that all special partners of a house doing business on the board must be members of the exchange. Col. Gates' house, Harris, Gates & Co., has his son for an active partner, and the father as a special. The absence of Mr. Gates from the city prevented earlier action on his application. Twenty-five years ago Col. Gates commenced his speculative career as an operator in oats on the board of trade, but failed to make a success of grain trading. Then he turned his attention to making barbed wire and sold more than any other man who ever went on the road. He was one of the first to introduce it into Texas, and at a convention of cattlemen in San Antonio, built a fence in the plaza to show the stock men how it would work. His operations as a manufacturer of steel, a promoter of railroad interests, an organizer and a speculator have put him in the front of men who were giants when he was a novice. His latest coup in Louisville & Nashville is still fresh in the memories of the speculative world.



JOHN W. GATES
(Chicago Financier Who Is Astonishing Wall Street Gleanings.)

When Bees Swarm. Month of June is the Usual Time, but Sometimes They Go Out as Early as April.

Any one can tell just about the day a colony of bees will swarm, if they go to the trouble of acquainting themselves with the interior of the hive. Some people know so little about bees that they will watch the hives constantly for swarms, perhaps for weeks and months, and then are liable to be off their guard just when the swarms come. In the first place, colonies must get very strong before taking the swarming fever, and usually even then they are not likely to swarm unless they are gathering plenty of honey.

Bees swarm more largely during the month of June in most localities, but may swarm earlier if the colony is strong, even in the month of April. Bees as a rule get ready to swarm some time before swarming. They begin to construct queen cells eight or ten days before, and it is the presence of these queen cells that plainly give their little secret away. Learn first what a queen cell is. The queen cells are quite different from all other cells in the hive. They are built on the outer edges of the combs, or in uneven places on the surface. In beginning them the bees build a heavier base about them than other cells, and in cup shape, and with walls less than an eighth of an inch deep. They are thus ready for the queen to deposit eggs in, and ordinarily there are from ten to a dozen and in some cases more in a colony.

After the eggs are deposited in these cells we may know that the bees are preparing to swarm, and in eight or nine days will come off, if the weather will permit them, or on the first fine day thereafter. At this time these cells will be built out full size, from three-fourths to one inch long. At this age the cells are sealed over, which is always an indication that the swarms are due to come off, and if not already swarmed, the weather perhaps has held them back, but they will come off the first fine day.

This applies to first swarms. Second swarms come after these young queens begin to hatch, eight days later. A. H. Duff, in Farmers' Voice.

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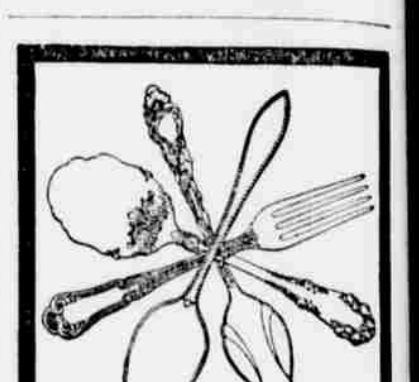
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