

# THE ALAMANCE GLEANER.

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NO. 43



I have had occasion to use your Black-Draught Stock and Poultry Medicine and am pleased to say that I never used anything for stock that gave half as good satisfaction. I heartily recommend it to all owners of stock.

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## Black Rock

By RALPH CONNOR

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 awfully 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: 'I must see his children. I have not slept for four nights. I hardly know what I am doing, but I can't rest till I see his children. I promised him. Get them for me.'"

"Tomorrow will do. Go to sleep now, and we shall arrange everything tomorrow," I urged.

"No," he said fiercely; "tonight, 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 on 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 gambling 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 paused a moment, put his face in his hands and shuddered, but quickly he was master of himself again and went on in the same hard voice: "One night 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 know. 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 passed.

"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 slowly:

"I did not mean to. He came at me. I struck him harder than I knew. He never moved."

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 all, and he died peacefully, 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 that too 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 than 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 not. At the last he talked of Christmas so, and something about holding a service, and something 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, with his knees in the snow, with his face turned up to the stars.

"Whatever it was, I can never forget his face as he turned it to Craig. One day he had been to the camp, but had never pit 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 fall me—you weren't right—not once—not once—bestuck to me—I'm glad he told me—I'll God-for you—you signed me—I'll be with you—myself—And Craig, he was—and—well—well—I was behaving like a fool—smiled down through his streaming tears into the dim eyes so brightly till the tears ran more. Thank him for me—he helped me. I do, that night, thank him."

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.

"It was his life for mine," he said huskily.

The brother and sister were quietly weeping, but spoke no word, though I knew Graeme was waiting for them.

I took up the voice 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?" I 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 the rains and snows of many years, stood among 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 meadowland 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 unceasing the long, tangled 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 cowbell mingles with the voice of the last prayer; the clods drop here and there starting echoes; the mound is leaped 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 sexton 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 I'll help you 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 a soldier marching to the break of a new day, 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.

HERE 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 friends and comrades in the quiet churchyard. I walked long on the cold, 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 lax and careless 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 blood-thirsty adventure.

His first days were spent in making right, or as nearly right as he could, the break that drove him to the west. His old firm—and I have had more respect for the humanity of lawyers ever since—behaved really well. They provided 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 railway journey of four hours he hardly spoke a word, 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 spirit 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 tamaracs stood straight and the slim out of their beds of moss; the fields, 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 where the roads were bad; the orchards, where the harvest apples were best and most accessible—all had their memories.

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 bands across its whole length. Beyond the picture-

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 bold 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.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

He Only Knew Things.

This o' Silas Hoghoom, Say, I bet there wasn't room In that head 'o' his, by jing! Fur another cussed thing! Knewed it all. No matter what Subject to o' Si was brought He could sift it so that we Understood it puffedly.

Take the Bible, he was there 'Lucidatin' it fur fair— Wa'n't a pint he couldn't shake All the ravels out, an' take History right plum from when Daniel worked the lion's den Down to Andy Jackson, he Knewed it plain as a b.c. Pollyticks was Silas' best Theme o' topics; he would jest Argue the hull day through Puttin' fo' th' p'int o' view Him that faced his swing o' jaw Bit off more than he could chew, Fur there never was no quit To o' Silas, not a bit.

Ust to set around the store On the winter nights an' wore Out more pantaloon than I Ever could afford to buy Settin' on a cracker box Givin' us his knowin' talks, Us agreein' with his views, Knowin' in a spat we'd lose.

Useful citizens? Well, no; Stacks o' weeds grown in his row; Handlin' tools o' industry Didn't with a crooked pin. Wasn't with a crooked pin To the town; lived off his kin— Wasn't with his salt, by jings, Only jest fur knowin' things.—Denver Post.

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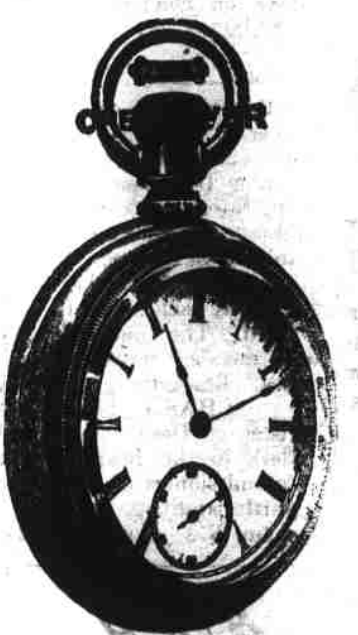


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Were I Devil I'd Bar Negro, Says Tom Dixon.

Baltimore, Md., Nov. 15.—Rev. Thomas Dixon, of New York, who came here tonight to lecture, has a bad opinion of the negro.

"I have known them from the first years of my life," he said to a reporter.

"My deliberate opinion of the modern negro in this country is that he is not worth hell room. If I were the devil, I would not let him in hell. They will be driven from the South just as surely as they swarm that place now."

"I make the statement that no farmer in the South can make his farm pay with negro labor of the modern sort. I have a farm of 500 acres in Virginia, and I employed 100 negroes to work it in grain and other market stuff. I strove and strove with them, but I could do nothing. I discharged them all, and have turned to raising polished Angus beef cattle for the English market. Now I work the farm with two white men."

"There is no hope for the Southern farmer until the negro is expelled and white labor substituted."

Mr. Dixon was asked what he thought of President Roosevelt's action in taking up the part of the negroes in Alabama with the Republican party managers.

"He seems determined to play up the negro at every opportunity," said Mr. Dixon. "Still, from a Republican standpoint, he is consistent and in line with the history and traditions of the Republican party. I do not see that we have any reason for criticizing him."

Durham Herald: There is a disappointed widow of some forty or fifty summers and a lot of talk in the southern part of the city over a wedding that did not materialize. The would-be groom jumped the game at the last moment and sent his fiancée word that the affair was off. Had this wedding proceeded the contracting parties would have been a Mr. Paschall and Mrs. Smith, a widow woman. It is said that the date had been set on several occasions, but day before yesterday it was announced, as a positive fact that the marriage would take place at 4 o'clock. The bride elect decorated the home, invited in her neighbors and then dressed in her wedding garments, waited for the husband who never came. Finally she received a note, so it is said, in which the truant lover stated that she might as well call off the whole affair and go back to her work, that he was not coming. Those who know say that he stated in the note that he was 65 years of age and his friends had advised him not to marry and that he had taken their advice. To others he has stated that the reason he fooled her was that she fooled him some years ago and he wanted to get even with her.

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President Roosevelt didn't get a shot during his bear hunt in Mississippi, but Old Man Cleveland had better luck on his Virginia duck hunt. A Norfolk dispatch says Mr. Cleveland killed 80 ducks in one afternoon.

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Write for Fall Catalogue and prices of any Seeds desired.

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The investigating committee which has just finished the work of examining State institutions, inspected 39 institutions, consuming many days in an exhaustive review of the work. There are three members of the board and the cost to the State of their investigation is \$1,808.47.

W. O. Saunders, a young man who was convicted of smoking cigarettes on the streets of Elizabeth City in violation of a city ordinance and appealed his case to test the law, did not carry up his appeal and in the Superior Court at Elizabeth City last week the young man paid out \$17.80 for his cigarette smoke.

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