

FIRE AND SWORD: A STORY OF THE MASSACRE OF GLENCOE.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE LOVERS REUNITED—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The hut of old Dugald, the shepherd of the Glen-head, was situated near the eastern extremity of Glencoe, beyond the terrific descent of the "Devil's Staircase," where the road opens on the spread of the moor, and the moss-converging on the Rannoch passes.

The Glen-head shepherd, although a Macdonald and a tenant of M'Jan's, had escaped the general slaughter because of his out-lying position, and was only made aware of it on sight of the flying and wounded fugitives, with whose presence the higher reaches of the Glen were filled ere the dawn had yet lit the sky, and whose wail of sorrow filled the hollows of the awful hill engulfed passes like the moan of a swollen stream.

The flying fugitives had warned him of what was transpiring lower down the Glen, urging him to fly with his wife and family; but his wife was lying ill of a low fever, and his two sons being absent from home at the time, in the Appin district somewhere, the tough old hero resolved to stay by his suffering wife, and, claymore in hand, he fortunately shortly afterwards admitted young Ronald—staggering under the weight of his unconscious burden—to the covering shelter of his house.

It needed but a few words to explain matters. The unconscious maiden was put to bed, and as tenderly nursed by the kindly old shepherd as if she had been a daughter of his own, until the crisis of her nervous collapse was past and she had gradually recovered strength and consciousness. As for him who had thus so nobly struggled to save her—when fight would have been easy for himself—he sank on the floor immediately he had rendered up his fair burden, and died of exposure and exhaustion through loss of blood within an hour afterwards.

It was, therefore, all true, and not the fancied mirage of a deceitful dream, that Helen Cameron still lived, as the old Ballachulish boatman had told Malcolm, who had been mourning her as dead.

The unconscious state into which she had sunk when her lover stood over her prostrate body, as related in a former chapter, was more the result of a nervous shock on witnessing the murder of her dear old uncle, the crofter of the Craes, than the effect of the flesh wound she had received in trying to protect him from the bullets of Sergeant Barber's soldier.

From the dread and bloody reality of the cruel scene she had there witnessed, she awoke at length as from a horrid nightmare of sleep.

And if Malcolm mourned for her as one already dead, she in turn wept over the sad thought, that he also was one of the perished victims, and that she was destined to see him no more.

Eight long days and nights had now dragged out their slow length, and the invalid girl was able to sit up and move about the shepherd's lowly hut, rewardingly as well as she could the kindness of a simple-minded old Dugald by nursing in the sickling wife.

"Eh, my bonnie lassie," the old shepherd would exclaim, as he watched the valid maiden resting her sweet, sad eyes on his bedridden wife, as she stood by her in the exercise of some kindly little touch of sympathy or attention, "I'm thinkin' ye're just an angel sent down frae Heaven to woe my guid auld wife awa' back wi' ye, and that ye're no auld Sandy's bonnie niece ava'. But 'that's the lassie, lassie," he would add with a pleasant smile, "ye mauna be in a hurry, awa', for I'm wearin' o' neither o' ye." And the maiden would smile faintly in acknowledgment of the kindly compliment, but the deep sigh which was never free from her breast, would escape her in spite of her efforts to look happy, and she was aware of a great void in her life which only one voice and one form could ever fill.

But the broken rainbow of her young life was about to be restored. Could she have known that on that same morning, while she yet spoke of and wept over her lover as lost to her sight forever, he was speeding towards her with the energy and speed which is born only of excitement or frenzied impulse, how would her sad heart have leapt and fluttered in her breast! Yet, as was much indicated, she was yet speaking of Malcolm's tender love and love, his foot was already on the threshold of the house, his knock at the door, and lo, a moment after, she stood revealed to her eyes—aggrieved and wild-like, but with all his sweetness and manly beauty still fresh upon him.

A cry of agonized joy, ringing sharp and clear, and she was roused to her hearing breath.

For the space of an hour afterwards the world of reality was a blank to her, but in a sweet dream she once more wandered through the moonlit passes of the great Glen, the low murmur of the

Corra mingling with the words of her lover which fell pleasantly on her ear.

And when she once more recovered possession of her mind her soul was just one gush of inexpressible gladness and joy. The lovers had each come through a furnace of the fiercest affliction, and their affection had if possible only been sublimated into a diviner fervor and purer flame.

They had much to tell each other, much to sorrow over, and in the sweet possession of each other's love much to thank a beneficent heaven for.

Malcolm had previously determined on settling on the Lochiel territory, and now that he had Helen Cameron restored to him, and she had expressed a wish to be taken back to her native Fassfern, in the Lochiel district, the following week saw the loving pair on the road thither. They avoided, for obvious reasons, the path through the Glen, taking a more northerly route round by the eastern shoulder of Ben Nevis, and while they are shut winding their way thither we shall turn back a moment to say a leave-taking word about the subject and characters of our story and the after history of the clan.

That the Whig Government of King William in permitting the massacre of Glencoe had committed a very grave and impolitic error, not to say a gross and irremediable crime, was very soon apparent, and is now universally admitted.

News did not travel so fast in those old days as now. But an event of such appalling sadness and ferocity could not long remain hushed up. The remnant of the exiled Jacobite party got a hold of it, and, excited by a just horror and anger, spread the news of it all over Europe, in every Royal Court of which the account of it was received with surprise and execration.

While the main facts of the massacre could not be denied by the Government, the opposite party gloried in circulating the grossest exaggeration, both at home and abroad, of its barbarous details. Under these exciting circumstances the odium of the nation rose to such a height that the King's Ministry became justly alarmed for the safety of the Crown, and to pacify the people the perfidious Master of Stair was dismissed from the King's Councils, who afterwards appointed a Royal Commission of inquiry to investigate the affair, pretending that he had signed the order for the massacre among a mass of other papers, not knowing its full contents.

There may have been a grain of truth in the Royal apology for the revolting error which had been committed under the King's signature, but there is counter evidence to show that that supposed grain of truth must have been of quite infinitesimal smallness of size. The true apology is to be found in the fact that Breadalbane, according to Smollett, who was M'Jan's private enemy, devoted that Chief and his people to destruction. He persistently represented him at Court as an incorrigible rebel, a ruffian inclined to bloodshed and rapine, who would never remain obedient to the laws of the country, nor live peaceably under any Sovereign, an accusation which was admitted against Glencoe by Arthur, and pressed home by Secretary Stair, according to which the King signed what he understood to be an order of open war against the rebellious Chief and his clan—never having known the fact of his late admission—and that Glencoe's rivals and enemies, fearing the courage and prowess of his people, peevishly perverted the King's Order of War against the tribe into a secret deed of treachery, bloodshed and private revenge.

Public feeling ran high against the Earl, and while the Royal Commission of inquiry was still proceeding, it was plainly denoted before them that a few days after the slaughter Campbell of Breadalbane, Chamberlain to Breadalbane, discovered himself to John and Allister Macdonald—the late Chief's two sons, who were then in hiding in the wilds of Appin—and made a formal proposal to them, on the authority of the Earl, that if they would declare, under their hands, that his Lordship had no concern in the slaughter they might rest assured that the Earl would move the King's clemency to procure their full remission and restitution.

The offer, tempting as it was, was rejected, and by the fatality that attaches to it to the footsteps of crime, the Commission came to discover that in his negotiations with the Jacobite Highlanders the deceitful Earl had acted in such a way as to lay himself open to a charge of high treason, in consequence of which he was thereafter formally committed prisoner to Edinburgh Castle; but with the craft in which he was an adept he soon succeeded in establishing to the King's satisfaction that he had only professed himself a Jacobite that he might gain the confidence of the recalcitrant Chiefs, and thereby the more readily and successfully execute the Royal scheme of pacification, with which he had been intrusted.

Regarding the Master of Stair, it was not to the year 1773—six years after the occurrence of the massacre—that he ventured to assume the place in Parliament to which his rank entitled him. But he never regained public confidence, and died in 1797, on the very day on which

the "Treaty of Union" between England and Scotland was formally signed, not, it has been said, without suspicion of suicide.

Of the two direct agents in the massacre, Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton absconded, and afterwards joined King William's army in Flanders, where Glenlyon, with the officers and soldiers connected with the affair, were then serving; and although the principals were never recalled home for trial, they have been duly punished by the universal execration of posterity.

As the surviving portion of the Glencoe people had been reduced to great poverty and distress by the destruction of their property, and as they had conducted themselves with great moderation under their misfortune, the Commission solicited His Majesty to order reparation to be made to them for the losses they had sustained in their properties. To what extent the Royal "charity and compassion" were exercised has never been definitely made known; but it is certain, however, that the Glencoe people were invited back to the possession of their just heritage, and that the lineal descendants of the murdered M'Jan successively ruled over them for many subsequent generations.

The superstitious belief, popular at that time, that punishments of the cruelty, oppression or misconduct of an individual descended as a curse on his children to the third and fourth generations, was not confined to the common people. All ranks were influenced by it, believing that if the curse did not fall upon the first or second generation it would inevitably descend upon the succeeding.

An extraordinary story illustrative of this is related by General Stewart of Garth in his "Military Details of the Highland Regiments," wherein we are told that the then late Colonel Campbell of Glenlyon firmly retained this belief through a course of thirty years intercourse with the world as an officer of the 42nd Regiment and of Marines. He was grandson of the Laird of Glenlyon who commanded the military at the massacre of Glencoe. Colonel Campbell held the rank of Captain in the 42nd Regiment in 1748, and afterwards entered the Marines, and in 1762 was made Major, with the brevet rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and commanded 800 of his corps at Havannah. In 1771 he was ordered to superintend the execution of the sentence of a Court-Martial on a soldier of Marines condemned to be shot. A reprieve was sent, but the whole ceremony of the execution was to proceed until the prisoner was upon his knees, with a cap drawn over his eyes, preparatory to receiving the death volley. It was then that he was to be informed of his pardon. No person was to be told previously, and Colonel Campbell was directed not to inform even the firing party, who were warned that the signal to fire would be the waving of a white handkerchief by the commanding officer. When all was prepared and the chaplain had left the prisoner on his knees in momentary expectation of his fate, and the firing party were looking with intense attention for the signal Colonel Campbell put his hand into his pocket for the reprieve, and, in pulling out the papers, the white handkerchief accompanied it, and, catching the eyes of the party, they fired, and the unfortunate prisoner was shot dead. The reprieve papers dropped through Colonel Campbell's fingers, and clapping his hands to his forehead he exclaimed—

"The curse of God and of Glencoe is here! I am an unfortunate, ruined man!" He desired the soldiers to be sent to the barracks, instantly quitted the parade, and soon afterwards finally retired from the service. His retirement was not the result of any reflection or reprieve on account of the unfortunate affair, which was known to be purely accidental. The impression left on his mind, however, was never completely removed, nor is the Glencoe massacre and the judgment which the people believe has fallen on the descendants of the principal actors in the tragedy effaced from the recollection of the common people, who successively note that, while the family succession of the unfortunate Chief who suffered is still preserved, with the estate descending in direct male succession to his procreancy, as much cannot truly be said of the family, posterity and estates of those who were the principals, promoters and actors in the black and unfortunate affair.

From the same source we quote another anecdote relating to the Glencoe episode which fully illustrates the force of principle when founded on the high sense of honor to which those rude Highlanders subscribed. When the army of Prince Charlie, in the ranks of which were Macdonald of Glencoe, the descendant of the murdered M'Jan, and all his followers, lay at Kirtleston, in the year 1745, near the seat of the Earl of Stair, grandson of the Secretary Stair who took such an active part in the concoction of the plot massacre, the Prince, aware of the circumstances, and anxious to save the house and property of Lord Stair, against whom the vengeance of the Macdonalds was likely to be directed, proposed that the Glencoe men should be marched to a safe distance

from his Lordship's house and parks.

The Prince in this instance, however, misinterpreted the true spirit and honor of his Glencoe followers, the principals of whom unanimously declared that if they were considered so dishonourable as to take revenge on an innocent man they were not fit to remain with honourable men, nor to march in support of an honourable cause; and it was not without a promise from the Prince that a protecting guard on Lord Stair's house should be solely chosen from the ranks of the Macdonalds that the high-spirited Chief was prevented from marching home his followers on the following morning. "The Royal Adventurer," says Walter Scott, "granted the spirited request, and the Macdonalds of Glencoe guarded from the slightest injury the house and lands of the cruel and crafty statesman who had devised and directed the massacre of their ancestors—a noble instance of a high and heroic preference of duty to the gratification of private revenge." Such, in brief, is the story of the descendants of M'Jan of Glencoe, the fate of the families connected with the infamous transaction, and the moral-speaking stories attaching themselves thereto.

And now, in conclusion, let us take a parting glimpse of the hero and heroine of our tale.

On the Lochiel district, within the lovely locality of Fassfern, ring up the curtain, prompter, and discover the concluding scene of the stirring drama we have thus detailed; and lo! behold a small turf-thatched cot, fronted with a patch of arable ground, through the centre of which a young man guides the homely plough. A Highlander girl, wife to the ploughman, is spreading out a washing to the sun near a horn, running as clear as amber, and with the warm sunbeams lying in its bed like shivered lances of light.

A fine child, of one year's earthy experience, with blue eyes mirroring the light and innocence of all pure and beautiful things, and flaxen locks flashing back the shining sunlight of heaven, rolls and gambols on the soft, green, wa ground.

Presently the fond young mother picks up the child, and approaching the house door, cries out to the ploughman as if with his team—"Malcolm, dear, dinner waits you." and the man affixes the happy pair go inside their lovely home to share in the contentment, peace, and bliss born of pure lives and true love.

THE END.

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CHAPTER I. Ask any or all of the most eminent physicians: "What is the best and only remedy that can be relied on to cure all diseases of the kidneys and urinary organs; such as Bright's disease, diabetes, retention or inability to retain urine, and all the diseases and ailments peculiar to Women?" And they will tell you explicitly and emphatically "Buchu."

Ask the same physicians "What is the most reliable and surest cure for all liver diseases or dyspepsia; constipation, indigestion, biliousness, malarial fever, ague, &c.," and they will tell you: "Mandrake! or Dandelion!" Hence, when these remedies are combined with others equally valuable And compounded into Hop Bitters, such a

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