

FIRE AND SWORD:

A STORY OF THE MASSACRE OF GLENCOE.

CHAPTER II.

The pursuit was short and uneventful. Malcolm had hardly started his man when he passed from sight within the shadow of a steep mountain side.

Whether he had doubled back of him, and was now half-a-mile south of the track, he could not tell.

As for Red Hughie's turf shield on the hillside, he guessed himself to be within a stone-throw of it, but was unable to "spot" its exact locality, as it was built under, and was, indeed, partly formed by an overhanging shelf of rock.

Emerging in a crouching position from the thick brushwood which had covered his movements, he stole a furtive look behind him, and not observing Malcolm—who stepped within the shadow of a cliff at the moment—he darted forward a few yards and again disappeared, this time within the cover of an overhanging cliff of rock.

With a bounding step Malcolm followed up the track, and was presently within hail of the spot. It was the Red Hughie's turf cabin, and he saw a haggard, feline-looking face half protruded through the partially open door, which was momentarily withdrawn.

With an involuntary cry he rushed up the door, and with one stroke of his feet sent it flying open with a snap that startled the one rusted hinge upon which it awkwardly hung.

The solitary occupant was in bed! "I thought as much," said Malcolm, breathless with excitement. "A quick dismissal to bed—ah!"

"What is the meaning of this, Malcolm?" cried the fugitive, springing up from his low set "truckle bed with a well feigned appearance of surprise.

"You were at the Lever's Well to-day?" said Malcolm, putting the accusation in the form of a question. "and you were watching my movements?"

"I have never been out of my cabin all day, and that's the God's truth, Malcolm," affirmed the accused, with a hard and unblinking front.

Acting on a sudden impulse Malcolm turned about, and, catching up the jacket and bonnet of the accused, he found them to be, as he had rightfully guessed, dropping wet.

"Caitiff!" he cried, dashing the articles of dress in the owner's face, "there is the evidence of your guilt."

"God blind and curse me if I have been at the 'Well' this blessed day," exclaimed the Red Hughie, his right hand uplifted to the roof of rock, and his grey, keen eyes blazing with a mingled fire of fury and fear.

"I chased you from the 'Well,'" continued Malcolm, not noticing the oath of denial, "and have tracked and followed you here. You have just this moment returned to your hut." Malcolm was speaking with hard and determined energy, and was excited to the point of reprisal. He felt as if he had the heart—as he certainly had the strength—to drag the wretch from the bed whereon he crouched, and dash him boldly over some shelving cliff of rock.

"It's a devil's lie," answered the other with defiant snap of the finger and thumb, and he made a spring from the bed in the direction of a dirk which was hanging at hand on the wall.

In a moment Malcolm had him by the throat, and, with a strong thrust, dashed him back with violent energy. The accused fell backwards on the earthen floor, and on making to rise was again clutched at by Malcolm. He lay still for the moment, being evidently afraid of further tempting the young Highlander's just anger and great strength of arm.

lice of the Red Hughie he would not have turned his back to him even for a brief moment, but would have followed him as the lion tamer leaves the wild beast's cage—eye to eye, and with his feet turned towards the dangerous opponent.

With a cat-like spring the fugitive sprang clutched at Malcolm on the wall, and made a deadly lunge at the retreat of Malcolm's sword.

The door partially closed at the moment frustrated the murderous intention. The point of the dirk striking on the edge of the door, the instrument glanced from his grasp, and fell noiselessly on the soft earthen floor.

Quick as thought, Malcolm wheeled about, startled by the movement, but failed to notice the frustrated act.

"Good night, Malcolm! good night!" shouted Red Hughie, instantly disarming him of suspicion, and the next moment the lithe-limbed young Highlander was descending the hillside with a quick and fearless step.

"Yes, yes," soliloquized the Red Hughie as he closed the door of his hut; "it's strong, strong is the young man's love for Helen, and if the Sergeant will not look smart after the lassie he'll lose her altogether. God! if I could have put that in his back to the hill (picking up the dirk from the floor), the Sergeant would have been free to win the lassie's hand," and he chuckled out a fiendish laugh, and replacing the dirk on the wall, proceeded to light a peat fire in the rudely built fire place occupying the centre of the floor.

"There was neither chimney nor window in the hut, and the smoke passed out by the door, through which also the fresh air came in.

A red heat of fire still smouldered at the bottom of the grate, and, having covered it with fresh peat, he got on to his knees and blew the fire into a low blaze.

"Now I'll get my clothes dried for to-morrow, for that was a wet day's work, and off I'll get another guinea from the Sergeant I'll do more for him than I've done to-day. But he'll be in the Glen himself this week, and I'll see him then; and going to the door he looked down the hill-side whether Malcolm had gone, over which the black night had settled, and shaking his fist in the direction of his late intruder as an expression of his feeling, he withdrew inside and reclosed the door.

Helen Cameron, thanks to her own strength of constitution, joined to Uncle Sandy's prompt nursing, was, little the worse of the misadventure during the thunderstorm; and as for Malcolm, his splendid bodily health was as impervious to the effects of the exposure as were the grand hills of his native Glen.

He had told Helen at their next meeting of his visit to Red Hughie's hut on the hillside, and had expressed his conviction that it was none other than his presence that had disturbed them in the observance of the simple betrothal ceremony at the "Well."

He had also expressed his belief that Red Hughie was acting in the interest and at the instigation of Sergeant Barber who was then quartered, with a few men at North Ballachulish, and who was therefore conveniently near them to be troublesome, if not dangerous.

One evening towards the end of the following week the lovers had met by appointment, and were enjoying a short walk through the Glen, in the fond interchange of those rapturous nothings in which pledged hearts delight to indulge.

"The Sergeant is in the Glen, I have heard," remarked Malcolm, finding at last voice for a thought which had been lying on his mind.

"Yes," assented Helen, reluctantly. Malcolm started observably, and a pause succeeded.

"You have seen him then?" he interrogated, attempting to carry a careless air.

"He called at the 'Crag' yesterday," replied the maiden, "but I was so very glad I did not see him—I was out on the hills."

Malcolm's brow darkened, and another pause succeeded, more painful than the first. He was not jealous of the Sergeant stealing away the affections of the maiden beloved of his heart, but he disliked, in some unaccountable way, the presence of the coarse and blatant Sergeant in the neighborhood, for his rival was reputed to be a jovial, swaggering, careless fellow of the true military type, who loved a glass, told good story, and sang a funny song.

Without sufficient cause he hated him. He felt as much, and almost wished for an opportunity to show it, nor was that opportunity long withheld.

That same evening, at the mouth of the Glen, near the Chief's village of Invercoe, the lovers, on returning homewards, were confronted by the reckless Sergeant, who bowed jauntily to Helen, and slowly, and somewhat reluctantly, passed on.

The face of the maiden took on the changing hues incidental to sudden mental confusion, but the brow of Malcolm darkened into sudden gloom.

If the Sergeant had been less absorbed in such brief contemplation of Helen Cameron's beauty as the passing incident permitted him, he would not have failed to perceive that the dark eyes of her lover were fixed on him with a piercing intensity of gaze.

In that momentary glance Malcolm had measured and estimated him, mentally and otherwise. He had only some met him casually before, and that was when the Sergeant was the bearer of a message from the military governor of the district, to the young man, William, to the hill-side.

On that occasion he had taken no special notice of him, having no interest in him whatever.

On the present occasion, however, he had succeeded by an involuntary mental process in instantaneously fixing the bounding Sergeant's externals on his mind's eye, even to the short cross-handled sword which dangled at his side.

He saw that he was a man of middle age, apparently of a coarse, stern, military aspect, and possessed of very considerable bodily strength.

That he was unscrupulous and a man of obstinacy and of some courage he was also certain.

"So that is he—the Sergeant!" said Malcolm with a slight sneer in the tone of his voice, which the maiden noticed and felt hurt at, knowing how undeserved the sneer was if directed at her. "A handsome rival, forsooth, and as proud of his spangled coat as a peacock of its spreading tail!" he continued, speaking in a sort of monologue tone of voice.

Helen observed discreet silence. "He follows us," exclaimed Malcolm in a stern tone of voice, and suddenly turning round.

"Let us hurry away," pleaded the girl a slight sign of alarm in her manner.

"May I shall speak to him, Helen," and making a swift and resolute step from her side he confronted the swaggering Sergeant with a menacing look and manner.

"You presume to follow us?" he tauntingly remarked.

"Follow you?" defiantly interrogated the unabashed Sergeant. "Certainly not you!" he sneered. "This pretty girl I will follow delightedly, but by heavens not you."

"Helen," and he reached his hands towards the maiden, who had suddenly thrust herself between the disputants.

In a moment the young Highlander's passion had overmastered his judgment, and grasping at the Sergeant's throat—"Pollute her not," he said, "but stand well off, as I now thrust you," and with a strong and sudden back-punch he sent the hateful Sergeant several paces from him without apparent effort, and calmly awaited the result.

Fuming with hot passion, the discomfited Sergeant, who felt himself to be both outraged and insulted, made a rush at Malcolm, half drawing his short sword which hung from his waist-belt.

UNITY CLUB LECTURE.

Miss Emily Faithfull on 'The Best Society—Our Book Shelf.'

The sixth lecture of the Unity Club course was given at the Grand Opera-house, Cincinnati, yesterday, as usual, a large audience. The lecturer was Miss Emily Faithfull, of London, England, that well known advocate of the emancipation of women. Her subject was 'The Best Society—Our Book Shelf.'

This subject she treated in the light that the companionship of men and women as society in the present day. She said the gratification of vanity was the root of all human effort. For instance, the sea-man did not want to be captain simply because he thought he could manage the ship better than the man who was captain, but because he wanted to be captain.

It was the wish of most persons to get into the best society. High birth and money would serve to admit many into the best society of people, but the society, which was the subject of the lecture, can be gained by all with little work. The members of this circle would talk to us in the very best of words.

There were many differences between the society of men and the society of good books, thought the former be of the very best. In the one there were shame, in the other none. Books never intrude upon us nor outstay their welcome. They help us to forget the cares and crosses of life, and fire us with noble thoughts. They stand by us in sickness and in sorrow. In the society of men two bonds of friendship are to often assumed by caprice, but in the best society there is never such a result. Said the lecturer: "I never enter my library without feeling that I am breathing the air of a better world."

There were also some points of likeness between the two circles of society named. Their are gradations in both. Some books, as an author has said, could be swallowed and other digested.

The lecturer spoke of the great amount of trashy literature published now, and advised all to shun the sensational literature, the sentimental novels, which are the fashionable novels. These books need no digestion, yet ruin the mental digestion. These works were on the increase, and as they spread over the land fell into the hands of the young. In all vital things it was necessary to distinguish between the artificial and the genuine. Young men and women who are the greatest consumers of the pernicious literature, are in many cases not to blame for that taste, as their home training is not such as to guide their minds into other channels. The lecturer spoke of the great demand for this trashy literature, and illustrated it by saying that in England in one place ten copies of 'Froude's History' were sufficient to supply the demand at a public library, while 500 copies of the latest sensational novel would not supply the demand.

Hugh Miller spoke of the stone-mason under whom he worked, as a man who put his conscience into every stone he shaped. The writer wished that could be said of all writers. She did not, however, wish to be understood as speaking against all novels. Good novels instruct as well as amuse.

She then spoke of George Eliot's works, saying that they touched upon the deepest thoughts and all the profound questions of human destiny. There were three things which one ought to know: First, where he is; that is to say what kind of a world is he living in. Second, where he is going; that is, what his chances are for future happiness. Third, what had he best do under the circumstances that is, what he must do to make the world congenial to himself, and what he must do to gain future happiness. These things she thought of when she heard the cries for education. The trouble with modern education was that it despised these things. The tendency of modern education was to despise religion. One great fallacy of modern education was that light was always good and darkness always bad, while the fact is that one is a necessity to the other as we shall all learn in the next world.

It was the custom in London society to accept several invitations for one evening, and thus spend more time in driving from one house to another than in communication with friends. This was the trouble with many persons who spent much time in the society of books. They spent too much of that time in going from one house to another. They never spend enough time with one book to become familiar with it. They were only just familiar enough to talk about having read them, but could not tell what they contained.

The lecturer then spoke of the tendency of modern thought to look upon poetry as a superficial kind of literature—a mere toy. She said that it was poetry, however, which touched the feelings more than anything else. She quoted a number of passages to illustrate her assertion. In conclusion, she said that to become familiar with the 'best society' one must be studious, and this familiarity when acquired, would create sympathy with the authors.

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