

GREEN LEAVES.

Sunny Spring is here at last, Breathing hints of buds and clover...

Jeannie Sinclair, OR, THE LILY OF THE STRATH.

CHAPTER XXX. FALLEN AMONG THIEVES—THE MURDOCHSON AGAIN—WILLIAM AND HIS FRIENDS LEFT IN A SAD FLAUNT.

These words produced murmurs and threats among the band, and demands were made for the destruction of the entire group...

"My word is passed, and you know I keep it," he cried. "This is a matter of spirit, and I admire his boldness. But what have we to fear if we leave them bound? By the time they are released, we shall be able to defy every effort to trace us...

"You mean to bind us, and leave us bound in this lonely place. What is that but to kill us?" "Something very different, I assure you," answered the Captain. "I shall take care to send some one your way—some one not connected with us—who will liberate you when your bondage is no longer necessary to our safety...

"We are in your power, and have no means of resistance," answered William. "Were it otherwise, I should not submit to the indignity without a struggle. But the time may come when I shall..."

"Bring the cords, men," shouted the Captain, in a voice of thunder. Then, under cover of the noise which his men were making, he stepped close up to William and whispered—

"Are you mad? I will save you if I can, but utter more imprudent words like these, and the consequences I may not avert!"

Indignant though William was, his angry feelings were not so strong as to make him blind to the propriety of acceding to the Captain's advice. He had reflection enough to understand that nothing was to be gained by resistance, or by protestation, while matters might be made worse for all of them by uttering words to exasperate the brutal men in whose power they were. He, therefore, gave a brief curt nod of acquiescence, and remained silent. Nay, he controlled his burning feelings so far as to remain passive while two strong ruffians bound him effectually with a hard twisted hempen cord, and laid him helpless on the ground.

Almost at the same instant, Robert Douglas was seized by other two of the band, and subjected to the same process. He had far greater difficulty in restraining his impetuous spirit, and in fact, but for one warning look he received from William, he would, with mad recklessness, have fought furiously. His state of mind was that bordering on the distraction of rage. The robbery involved to him far more than the loss of the property—the result of weeks and months of suffering and toil. It ensured the ruin of his dearest earthly hopes, when these hopes had been again raised and cherished, and gnashing his teeth at the thought, his throbbing impulse was to dash himself against the authors of his ruin and take what vengeance he could on them ere they deprived him of a life which was no longer worth possessing. But, fortunately for himself and the rest, his rage had not mastered his reason, and William's look had sufficient influence to make him crush down the impulse of his soul, and yield with a groan to the humiliation of being bound.

Watty was, of course ready to follow the example set by his masters, and stood grimly silent while the wretches subjected his limbs to the cords, but he thought at the moment with what intense pleasure he could tell them to the ground with his strong broad clenched fist.

The Jew and the American made as little resistance as the others. Shagor also, though his eyes gleamed and flashed, and his file-like teeth showed themselves; made a virtue of necessity, and submitted to be rendered helpless like the rest. As for Josh, the waggon-driver, he was nowhere to be seen. He had evidently contrived to make his escape in the darkness, and his flight seemed unknown to the robbers, who supposed that they effectually secured the persons of all who were accompanying the waggon. No one even among the companions of Josh was aware of his absence except his master Jonathan Barde. When, in obedience to the behest of the Captain of the bandits, they had laid down their arms and retired to fifty yards in the rear, Jonathan saw Josh suddenly dive under a dense bush at the foot of a lesser ravine, and he supposed that in the confusion, when the attention of the robbers was otherwise occupied, the waggoner had glided up this ravine, favoured by the underwood and the increasing darkness, and so had managed to escape.

Being bound now, past all power of resistance or escape, the travellers were laid on a grassy knoll close by the broken path, and it being no longer deemed necessary to keep a watch over them, they were left pretty much to themselves, while the robbers made preparations for departing with their booty. By the orders of Jim Mardschson, Moses Levi was carried apart from the others, and it was only too apparent that a different and a worse fate was reserved for him. Murdochson evidently bore a deadly grudge against the Jew for the part he had played in his conviction and punishment, and having received the Captain's liberty to work his will upon him, there was little doubt that he meant to take a cruel and frightful revenge.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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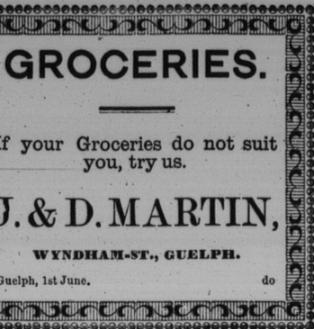
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