

## The Ghost of Lochrain Castle

OR THE UNDERGROUND SYNDICATE.

BY MRS. C. N. WILLIAMSON.

Author of "The Lightning Conductor," "Princess Passes," Etc.

## CHAPTER XX.

Where the Light Shined.

There were two ways of reaching the secret room in the tower. Elsie Dean had the best of reasons for being certain of this, but the only one to which she had a clue was the hidden entrance by the fireplace in her own old quarters.

Fortunately, this was the better way to take, as the men who were to be trapped would almost surely have chosen the other. Had they not intended to do so, they would not have left the door of the tower room locked, and this Elsie knew they had done, as she had fastened it when she made her escape.

The three men kept close at her heels, ready to protect her if need be, as she led them up the winding stairs, then the door of the tower room which had been here. It was still unlocked, as she had left it, and they fled in, noiselessly as shadows.

The room was in darkness save for the pale starlight that filtered in at the uncovered windows, but Elsie knew the way to find the place she sought, and no light was needed yet from the police lanterns which the detective carried.

There was a moment of wild suspense when she feared that, after all, she had lost the secret of the spring which opened the sliding panel.

She touched it at last, with a thrill of triumph, and with a faint click as the sole alarm, the way was open.

Now Elsie put the girl away, when she would have passed through. "You have done enough," she said in a whisper, "the rest is for us."

But she rebelled gently. "I can't leave you," she answered. "I don't want to be more afraid here, or going back, than with you near. Oh, I must stay and see it through."

It was true as she said. He could not leave her behind. Who could tell whether Trowbridge and the others were already in the secret room, or whether they might not see the girl outside, and in an instant revenge

themselves for the ruin she had brought upon them?

"Follow us then," Kenrich said. "But—you are to be careful for my sake."

Never had the girl been so happy. If death should come to her in the next moment, she would not have missed that which makes life best worth living.

On the other side of the secret door they paused listening. There was no sound, and the detective opened his lantern.

When Elsie had previously been on the other side of the secret door she had groped in darkness, seeing nothing. Now, by the lantern light, she saw a curious narrow passage between two walls of stone.

The passage followed the form of the tower, and Elsie told herself that it probably ran all the distance round between the embrasures of the windows in the tower room. The floor was covered with a strip of thick carpet, evidently new, and probably meant to deaden the sound of footsteps in case the passage had to be used while the tower room was occupied. Just at the turn, the queer ladder-like staircase was visible—that steep staircase down which she had hurried in fear and nameless horror but a short time ago. It was covered with the same new carpeting as that which protected the floor; a patternless green fabric, stained with dust and dirt, which had passed up or down.

Elsie pointed to the stairs. "It's up above where the dead woman lies," she whispered. "But they left me lying here. See, there are the hands of stuff that bound me, knotted still. They'll look here when they come."

"Hush," murmured the detective, with a finger on his lips, and turned off the light.

They were in black darkness, darkness which in this cold and gloomy place seemed thick, as if it might be felt.

Kenrich laid his hand on the girl's shoulder. She had been trembling a little, but at his touch her nerves grew steady.

There was a light sound in the distance. A sliding door had been softly pushed back, somewhere out of sight. Then came a muffled sound of footsteps on the carpet and voices talking in low tones together. An instant later a yellow light quivered along the dark wall. They were coming round with a lantern, and Elsie heard the same clicking noise which had frightened her on that first night in the tower room.

In a moment more they would know that they had been tricked; but the light had found the intruders yet, and the four who lay hid waited, scarcely breathing.

Now they came round the turn of the passage, two tall, black figures, walking one behind the other; but the old-fashioned lantern which, with its clicking chain, hung from the hand of the foremost man, did not send its rays up to their faces. Their features were hidden still, as if masked by darkness.

"We're late," Trowbridge's voice said, in a hushed tone, yet audible to those intently listening ears. "You oughtn't to have gone so far off when this thing had to be done still, before dawn."

"We've time still," answered the other voice, strange to Elsie, save that she had heard it here before; but she felt the hand on her shoulder start.

"Where was it left her?" asked Trowbridge. "Here I think. Why?"

And the light touched the wooden bands which Elsie had thrown off. But his sentence was never finished. The detective leaped out of his hiding place and flashed the lantern in his eyes.

With a cry of rage and amazement Trowbridge stepped back and stumbled against the man behind him. Then, what followed came so quickly that Elsie had scarcely time to understand the meaning of what she saw.

The unknown man sprang back as Trowbridge staggered away from the light, but the full blaze of the detective's lantern was upon them both now, sparing only the face of the unknown. The girl distinctly saw him pull a revolver and aim it at some one among the number. She had the impression that the shot was not fired at random, merely to injure a dangerous enemy and terrify the others, but that it was meant to find and kill one among them. So strong was this impression that, with a quick thought for the man she loved, she tried to throw herself in front of Kenrich.

But the light thrown up by Trowbridge's swaying lantern was not upon his face. It was upon Captain Oxford's, and only she realized that the coming shot was meant for him.

With a shriek she would have warned him of his deadly danger, but she was saved in another way.

Trowbridge, struggling to regain his balance, had caught his foot in the folds of a loose-lying carpet, and falling against the man behind him, not only destroying his aim, but received the bullet in his own body.

Then, for the fraction of a second, Elsie caught a glimpse of that other face. Disfigured though they were by fear and some other emotion more terrible still, she recognized the features. They were those of the mysterious man she had seen twice before—once revealed by white floods of moonlight in the tower room; again, in a corridor downstairs as he had passed her. But even as the revelation came, it was gone. The face was withdrawn from the light, and turning the man fled.

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floor. Disregarding the danger of treachery, he bent over Trowbridge, who, shot in the back, had fallen heavily forward on his face.

"Good heavens, I believe he's killed!" cried the young man. "It's Trowbridge!"

"The man who would have killed you," said Kenrich. "Strange that his last act should have been to save your life."

The fallen man stirred and groaned. "I'm done for," he gasped, trying to turn upon his side, and a thin stream of blood oozing from his lips as he spoke. "I don't want to die—without seeing her."

Oxford would have moved him, gently laying him upon his back, but Trowbridge groaned in anger, as well as pain. "No—not you, I hate you," he said. "Let Kenrich."

There was no need for him to finish. The man was dying, and no matter how vilely he had sinned, he must be forgiven now. Kenrich went down on one knee, and brushing up the loose carpet, made a kind of rough pillow for Trowbridge's head.

"It's Countess Radepolskoi you wish to see?" he asked.

"No—she's dead; I killed her," panted the dying man. "Up there above—she's lying. I—old I to save Hilary. It's Hilary I must see. Bring her someone, quickly."

Kenrich looked up at Elsie. "What is to be done?" he asked.

"I will fetch Lady Hilary here; I promise," answered the girl.

"And the doctor," said Kenrich. "Trowbridge heard, and lifted his hand with a commanding gesture. 'No now,' he said. 'Hilary first—the doctor afterward. But what use? I know I'll die. And I don't want to live—I've lost everything I've played for. For Heaven's sake, girl, bring Hilary to me. If you love me—I'll tell her things you would all give much to know.'

"I'll go," repeated Elsie. "There's nothing to be afraid of now."

"The other man—wherever he was," suggested Oxford.

"He will have enough to do to escape from the detective," said Kenrich. "And even if he does escape—"

"What then?"

"It will do him no good. I saw his face," Kenrich finished.

"And so did I," said Elsie.

They were the last words she spoke in the secret passage, for Trowbridge's eyes, brilliant with fever in the dull glow of the lantern which was to have lighted him to another crime, implored her not to delay.

She came, into the tower room and so downstairs, reaching the great hall in time to hear the tall clock strike the half hour after four, and to see the dawn turning to jewels the colored panes in the big stained-glass window.

"The Countess dead," she kept saying over and over to herself, as mechanically she went on toward the stairs which would lead her to Hilary Vane's room. "It was her face I touched that cold, cold face lying there in the secret passage; her hair that was so wavy and soft. And—and if I hadn't begged him to save Lady Hilary from her at any cost, she would be alive now. How terrible—how wicked he is; and yet—how he loves Hilary! It was for her—he said it was for her."

To be Continued.

TEA, TOASTS AND MUSIC

The Talbot Street Baptist Sunday School Orchestra Honored.

On Tuesday evening, the teachers and officers of the Talbot Street Baptist Sunday School entertained the orchestra at a most delicious tea, held in the Sunday school room, which was nicely decorated for the occasion. Several members of the church finance board, who were in the building that evening, also enjoyed this treat. After some well-coming remarks by Mr. A. J. Clark, Sunday school superintendent, and prayer by the pastor, Rev. J. J. Ross, ample justice was done by all to the good things that had been provided. A short programme consisting of "Toasts" and music followed. This was divided into two parts—the first half presided over by Mr. Clark, and the second by Mr. B. Campbell, assistant superintendent. The following toasts were given:

"Our Guests of the Evening, the Orchestra"—Very fittingly responded to by Mr. Hastings, in the absence of Mr. James Miller.

"Our Church"—Reply, Rev. J. J. Ross.

"Church Finance Board"—Reply, Mr. R. G. Wilson.

"Sunday School Music Committee"—Reply, Mr. W. H. Elliott.

"Cradle Roll"—Reply, Miss G. Claypole.

"Home Department"—Reply, Mrs. J. J. Ross, in the absence of Mrs. G. W. Matthews.

"The Ladies"—Reply, Mr. George W. Matthews.

"Our Young People"—Reply, Miss Nell Evans.

A violin solo by Miss Apted, a member of the orchestra, accompanied by Mrs. Hold, was much enjoyed, as were also the solos by Mr. A. W. Greenleaf, and Mrs. Brown. The audience were very enthusiastic over "The Veteran Song" as given by Mr. Greenleaf. Flowers were presented to Mr. Greenleaf, Mrs. Brown, Miss Apted, and to Miss B. Campbell, who acted as accompanist. The evening closed by singing the Doxology, and all seemed to feel that a most enjoyable time had been spent, and that they were delighted to show to the orchestra in some slight measure at least their appreciation of their services, always so cheerfully and willingly given.

FISHER NOT RESIGNING

No Trouble Between British First Sea Lord and Admiralty.

London, Feb. 21. — The report that Admiral Sir John Fisher had resigned his post at first sea lord of the admiralty, is declared to be unfounded. The story was to the effect that Admiral Fisher and the admiralty officials had a serious falling out in regard to the naval policy, and that this led to the first officer's resignation. It was even asserted that Vice-Admiral Sir Lewis Beaumont, commander-in-chief at Devonport, had been selected to succeed Admiral Fisher.

Three brothers named King, living in Bromham, Wilts, England, have won prizes in the army shooting to the value of more than £1,000. They alone have won £400, while John and James have each represented England in international matches.

DR. A. W. CHASE'S CATARRH CURE... 25c.

Is sent direct to the diseased parts by the improved flower, heals the ulcers, clears the sin passages, stops droppings in the blood and permanently cures Catarrh and Hay Fever, Blower from all doctors, or Dr. A. W. Chase Medicine Co., Toronto and Buffalo.

## MUCH SICKNESS THROUGHOUT CITY

Nothing of a Contagious Nature, But Plenty of Grippe and Pneumonia.

Though London appears to be practically free from contagious diseases at present, there is nevertheless a large amount of sickness of one sort or another in the city.

Medical Health Officer Hutchinson stated today that the smallpox patient, who has been confined in the isolation hospital down the river for many weeks, has been discharged, and that to his knowledge there is not a case of diphtheria or scarlet fever in the city.

Superintendent Heard of Victoria Hospital informed The Advertiser that there are very many scarlet fever and measles beds empty at the hospital now, but the accommodation for cases of general sickness, or of accidents, is at a premium.

The other night, when a trolley struck a fire wagon, a room was wanted for one of the injured, there was no accommodation at Victoria, and luckily it was found possible to place the sufferer in St. Joseph's.

Mr. Heard says that the past fall and this winter there have been many such cases in London, because pneumonia frequently follows grippe.

It is said to be next to impossible to secure the services of a graduate nurse in London now. Druggists and physicians who have the names of the majority of the nurses say that, for several weeks now their services have been greatly in demand, and that within the past few weeks many doctors have failed to secure nurses for their patients.

London supplies almost the entire western district with graduate nurses, and it is understood that many of the London ladies are engaged on cases outside the city.

Nevertheless there are many of them employed in London, on pneumonia, grippe and other cases.

"If we could use the beds in the contagious ward for patients suffering from non-contagious diseases, we would have accommodation at the hospital at present," Superintendent Heard said. "But it is not possible to do this, and as a result, while one section of the hospital is filled to overflowing, the other is lying idle."

But it may be a few hours every bed in the institution will be filled. We never have the rooms or wards idle for any great length of time."

THE DETROIT BORE

Expected That the Tunnel Will Be Completed by June, 1909.

Windsor, Ont., Feb. 21. — June 1, 1909, is the date set for the completion of the tunnel beneath the Detroit River. Butler Bros. the contractors, are to receive \$1,000 per day for every day the tunnel is in operation before the time limit expires. On the other hand, the tunnel company is to receive \$1,000 per day from Butler Bros. for every day that the tunnel is not completed after June 1, 1909. It is expected the first portion of the tube will be laid by May 1. Most of the work will be done with divers, as the contractors do not wish to take chances of blocking navigation in the Canadian channel during the summer months.

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150 Dundas and Carling

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