

FIRE AND SWORD:

A Story of the Massacre of Glencoe.

CHAPTER II. AT KILCHURN CASTLE.

Sir John Campbell, Earl of Breadalbane, was essentially a man of the period—ambitious, and greedy of place and power, and ready at any moment to sacrifice those who might chance to stand in the path of his progress towards ingratiating himself with the reigning Government. Personally, he was tall and austere of manner, his deportment partaking of the formal gravity of a Spaniard; but in policy he was as slippery as an eel, and as we have already indicated, was full of temporising policy and unsettled shift.

Descended in direct line from Sir Colin Campbell—ancestor of the Breadalbane name, and first of the House of Glenorchy—he was the third son of Duncan, first Lord Campbell of Lochoy, progenitor of the Dukes of Argyle, by Marjory Stewart, daughter of Robert Duke of Albany, the Regent of Scotland.

The Glenorchy estate had come into the possession of the Breadalbane-Campbell family as early as the reign of David II.; but had formerly been the property of the brave and warlike, but unfortunate, Clan Macgregor, who had been expelled from possession by the rival and powerful Campbells.

Early in the 16th century the strong pile of masonry still known as Kilchurn Castle—the noble ruins of which are to be seen till this day—was erected by the high-minded wife of Sir Colin, while her heroic liege lord was absent on a seven years' crossing expedition as a Scottish Knight Templar.

For this ambitious purpose the Baronet's energetic and spirited lady is said to have expended the principal portion of the rents of the estates during that length of time.

Kilchurn Castle, which is a most imposing relic of feudal masonry, is commandingly situated on a rocky elevation at the east of Loch Awe, and most under the shadow of the lofty and scarred Ben Cruachan. There, imperious to the waning light of time, a hoary and historic sentinel of the past, stand, 'mid the mountains, lofty, old kil-

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To this feudal hall of his warlike ancestors Breadalbane had invited the Jacobite Chiefs, at least all of such as had chosen to accept of his proffered hospitality. The majority had gone with him, and, but for the influence and example of the reluctant Head of the Macdonalds, the acceptance of his hospitality, he judged, would have been unanimous.

The ill feeling existing between M'lan and Breadalbane was not confined to the respective Chiefs, but extended to their dependants, between whom an old standing historic feud existed, which neither rival Clan seemed inclined to soften or forget.

The Breadalbane-Campbells held land which was said to have belonged originally to the Men of the Glen, and the Macdonalds were accordingly in the habit of making reprisals, with a free conscience, on Breadalbane's numerous herds of cattle, and thereby repaying themselves for the territory they had in former days been thencefully deprived of.

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It was well on in the afternoon when the Earl's guests—each attended by his "piper," and followed by his armed retainers—turned their steps southward down the Glen of Orchy in the direction of Kilchurn.

The evening was warm and fine, and the sky glowing with the red stain

of a magnificent sunset, with brackens and gorse and miles of heather-blossom glowing in the same rich arabesque light.

A right brave and gallant sight it was to see those lions of the mountain passes threading their devious way through the deep solitudes of glen and valley, with all the martial air and high-spirited assertion of manner native to the proud sons of the mountain.

They had a good half score of miles to travel, but the valley was beautiful in itself, and the walking was easy and pleasant.

During their descent to Kilchurn scarce aught animate was seen, save the black-faced sheep on the fells, and the startled wild-birds which crossed and wheeled overhead, uttering sharp cries of alarm, responsive to the echoing tread of the clansmen. Beyond that and the blended echoes of the screaming "pipes" which the neighboring hills gave shrilly back, all else was slumberous and impressively silent.

At the head of the long picturesque lines strode the proud Earl, surrounded by, and in close proximity with, several of the Jacobite chiefs.

He engaged them in conversation most of the way, their talk taking at times the form of argument. The subject was the all important one of the King's terms of amnesty. He urged the policy of subscribing to the new order of things, and was large in his promises of rewards and preferments to all such as elected to accede to the Government terms and openly take the Oath of Allegiance to King William.

So affected to lament M'lan's recalcitrant attitude, and although he did not openly threaten him and his tribe with condign punishment—he was too astute to commit the blunder of showing his mailed hand before them—still he vaguely hinted as an *in terrorem* to his brother chiefs, that the refractory and obstinate old Jacobite was in danger of losing both his lands and his head. Exile and poverty, even possible death, terminated the one course, he explained to them, wealth, distinction and Court preferment the other. In the sense of the commission he held, Breadalbane was the political Christian of the group of malcontents who expatiated eloquently on the glories of Court preferment and privilege, and directing their fascinating vision thereto, and striving to lead them away from their ancient faiths and holdings as so many political Pliables picked up by the way.

A two hours' steady tramp brought the mixed retinue of retainers to the foot of Glenorchy, and almost within the impending shadow of Ben Cruachan, which lay a couple of miles or so west of them, but seemed quite strangely near, in the majesty and solitude of its vastness and towering height.

Beyond it the sun had already sunk behind the western hills, but the sky composed of retainers to the foot of Glenorchy, and almost within the impending shadow of Ben Cruachan, which lay a couple of miles or so west of them, but seemed quite strangely near, in the majesty and solitude of its vastness and towering height.

In the course of the evening the toasts common to such gatherings were duly proposed and honored, political subjects being carefully eschewed for the hour by the crafty Earl, who advised his distinguished guests to drink to each other's health and prosperity, and to make themselves generally happy.

In this agreeable way the swift-winged hours of night gave place to the small hours of the morning, and the Earl and his proud guests still sat and prolonged the feast and social flow of the song, till the lamps looked pale and sickly in the gray light of the breaking dawn. From the open courtyard below, and other portions of the Castle, sounds of song and merriment were also heard, and all seemed to wait merrily, until a slight untoward incident very nearly snapped all the social fastenings, and but for the temporising promptitude of the crafty Earl would have resulted in an open rupture.

The dram-drinking was about formal-ly over. General, and even local, social toasts had been duly pledged, when all at once as if impelled by a sudden inspiration, the chivalrous Lochiel sprang to his feet, and boldly declared his intention of correcting a most unjust omission of the evening, "The toast of M'lan of Glencoe's health."

Unanimously the whole company of Jacobite guests sprang to their feet, with a loud shout of approval, and making their refilled glasses tilt and ring against each other, tossed off a flowing bumper to the recumbent old Lion of the Valley.

The astonished Earl sat still for a moment, his brow visibly darkened with a cloud of ill-hidden anger. He had secretly wished, in his plotting heart of malice to ignore M'lan during the evening's orgies, and had hoped that his name would remain unmentioned in their midst. He was too full of diplomacy, however, to openly oppose the sentiments of his high-minded and vaunting guests. Nevertheless the sting was keen, and ill to suffer; so he slowly filled his glass, and putting it grudgingly to his lips, merely said—

"M'lan's health, gentlemen! and may he strive to cultivate moderation, teach his people habits of thrift and honesty, and learn to know his real friends."

"His real friends!" retorted Lochiel, emphasising the adjective to the point of interrogation.

"Yes, his real friends," rejoined the Earl.

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Advertisement for Johnston's Sarsaparilla, featuring a bottle illustration and text describing its benefits for various ailments like dyspepsia and blood purification.

Advertisement for Mica or Linoleum, showing a circular logo and text describing its use as a floor covering and its durability.

Advertisement for Dr. Wilson's Pulmonary Cherry Balm, listing four ingredients and their benefits for respiratory ailments.

Advertisement for Carter's Little Liver Pills, featuring a bottle illustration and text describing its effectiveness for liver and digestive issues.

Advertisement for Wheeler's Phosphates, describing the benefits of phosphorus for health and vitality.

Vertical text on the far right edge of the page, including the word 'General' and other fragments of text.