

# The BANNER of BLUE

by S.R. Crockett

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## CHAPTER XII.

### Ordination.

"As may well be supposed, John had much on his mind during these days of suspense. He rode his horse everywhere, questioned, cross-questioned, followed false clues till they talked off into nothing or ended in absolute confusion. But nothing came of it. The girls had, so far as their friends' knowledge was concerned, absolutely disappeared. Yet old David Glendonwyn would have no communication made to the authorities. Neither was their father's heart bitter against them. Not a word of anything. He would stick at nothing. He was their father and he would love them to the end.

"If only I could tell them as I was happy," he said, "but I'm thinking they ken it—especially Fairlie."

He stood on the top of the watch tower with the faded calf bleating in the wood-yard beneath, and he looked across that great and terrible wilderness, on the other side of which are sins of crimson and scarlet and pleasures like to the purple of Tyre, and great families and wine troughs and prodigals returning and unreturning.

All the same, it was a weary time for all concerned. Meantime Rupert's foot grew quickly better, and he plunged more and more deeply into such occupations as the country and the neighboring towns afforded.

Ocasionaly Rupert would be a couple of days from home, and once it was the afternoon of the third day before he returned. On this occasion Gregory Glendonwyn had grown fretfully anxious. He could not stay indoors, but with a gun over his shoulder, though it was the middle of July, hunted the edges on the plantations and gauged points from which he could obtain a view of the various roads leading west and north from Castle Gower.

To John, however, his manner was completely altered. He was unwearily kind to his younger son and his influence, together with Dr. Augustus Caesar's good offices, soon smoothed all difficulties out of the way of John's activities. The day of the ordination was fixed and John engaged with what zeal he could muster in the preparation of his trial discourses.

The night before the ordination Gregory Glendonwyn sent for his younger son to his study and upon his entrance invited him to take a chair.

"I have a hard thing to open to you, John," he said. "It is difficult at any time for a father to humble himself to his son—particularly hard in my case, in that I am conscious that many times and for long periods I have been far from doing you justice."

"If ever that has been so, father," said John. "I have forgotten it."

The proud old man silently bowed his head and then relapsed into so prolonged a silence that John watched him with some anxiety.

"The matter is this," he said at length. "You said when we spoke together that when you entered upon the living which I have taken some pains to secure and keep open for you, you would expect me, through a lawyer, to make good and reckoning with you for your mother's fortune, principal and interest. Now, I do not conceal from you that this, though not, of course, impossible, would at the present moment be exceedingly embarrassing to me. You will remember that the care and bearing of it was left entirely to me. I had full power to employ it as I thought best. Now, a few months ago there came a sudden and overwhelming call upon me—a call which required to be met at once if the honor of our house was to be preserved. At the moment there was only one fund upon which I could draw.

"I admit that I sunk a portion of that fortune which should have been yours to avert the threatened disgrace—your disgrace as well as mine. Now, what I ask of you is that you should allow the money which I have expended to remain as a first charge upon the estate. I am advised that such a course is perfectly legal. You will receive your income as certainly and as high an interest as on any other security, and you will have the satisfaction of having lifted a great load of sorrow from your father's heart."

John Glendonwyn, without a moment's hesitation, took his father's hand.

"Agreed," he said. "I will do all you wish in the matter. I have neither wish nor need to take the capital of my mother's fortune out of your hands."

"And as to the interest—that shall be

as is most convenient for you!"

"The deeds are here," said the father, mindful of the motto who advises striking before the cooling of the iron. "Mr. M. Crosby has drawn them up. The matter has his approval and sanction. I assure you there is nothing unfair or over-herd in the arrangement. Shall I ring the bell for Grierson and Faithful to write the papers for us. There are duplicate agreements which shall remain in your possession and the other in mine."

At the conclusion, as Grierson went out and John Glendonwyn was putting the document in his pocket, Rupert entered, and the slightest gleam of intelligence passed between him and his father—a lift of the eyebrows, an inclination of the head—question asked and answered, with a simple-hearted third party busily signing papers and none the wiser.

The ordination passed over without any hitch. All went smoothly.

There was, however, one farring note in the proceedings of the day. At the close of the solemn ordination service, when the assembled presbytery was shaking hands with the newly ordained minister of the

ty, tender and pensive, was the note of John Glendonwyn's early ministry in Gower and the days when he exercised it are still unforgetting upon Solway side.

"No an easy man in turn," said one of his hearers.

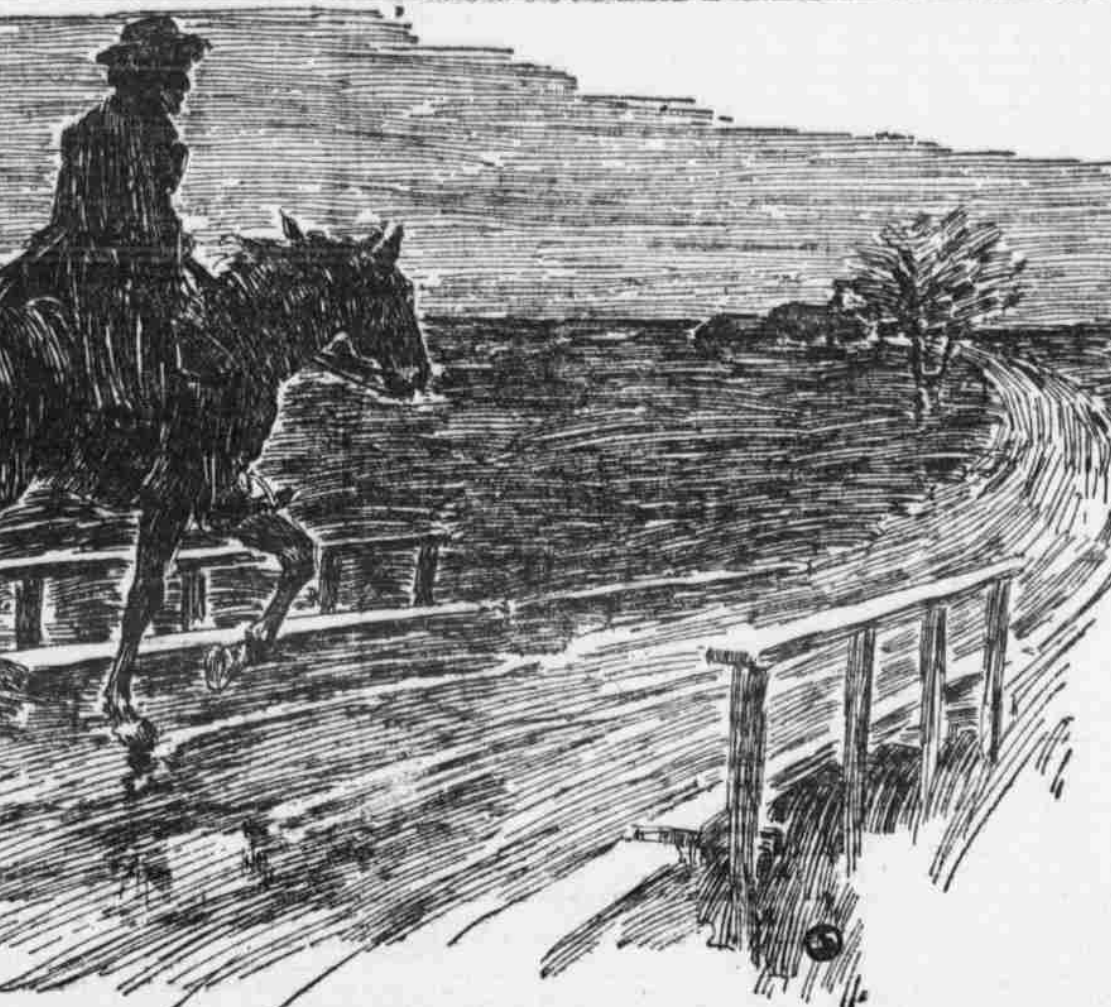
"I will like to see him make bythemsome," said an elder; "to my mind he is over sober for so young a man."

But when these pious comments came to his ears the young minister was abashed and ashamed, knowing that his gravity was but the burden of care which he carried since the disappearance of Kate and Fairlie Glendonning, together with the knowledge that his brother was in some way privy to the matter.

John went little to Castle Gower, but his father came over often and sat in the single armchair, staring in the long gaps of silence at the carpetless floor of the study. He did not, however, again repeat his offer of furnishing the manse, nor had he paid any of the interest due to John on his mother's property.

(The narrative as given by the first narrator, which the editor has hitherto forwarded upon, now approaches an event so strange in itself, and so far-reaching in its con-

sequences, that he has evidently taken more than ordinary pains to obtain facts correctly and in an exact form. More than one original narrative is appended to this history connected with the events of this period, and in particular John Glendonwyn himself has been induced to tell the story of the night of the 18th of November, 1843, in his own words.)



THE FERRY HOUSE RESTED CURIOUSLY LONESOME, AVOIDED BY DECENT TRAVELERS, BEETLE-BROWED, AND FORBIDDING IN EXTERNAL ASPECT.

Brother of Scotland, now their friend and kirk, two white-haired old men belonging to the congregation, Adam Gilchrist of Arbigland and Ephraim Gray of Chryston, came forward. The first named held a paper in his hand which he asked permission of the reverend presbytery to read.

"Some high-flying nonsense about non-interference," murmured Gregory Glendonwyn, who knew the man. But Dr. Caesar, on his own ground of the church courts, feared no man alive, and courtiously made way for the delegates to ascend to the little fenced square of the elders' seat, round which the presbytery were grouped.

"We will gladly hear you on any matter touching the justice and legality of the action upon which we are engaged," he said.

Then Adam Gilchrist, in the name of those who had signed the paper and adhered to him, declared that, while protesting against the right of any man to present another to the charge of a congregation of Christian people, they wished to add that they had no objection of any sort to the young man who had this day been settled among them.

Then he put the paper in John's hands.

This was one of the all too numerous signs that it was blowing up for the storm, and although the presbytery of Gower was, by a very large majority, moderate, there were men in certain of its constituent parishes who would not either be intimidated or silenced.

On the Sabbath which followed the day of ordination Dr. Augustus Caesar preached in the parish of Gower and, according to custom, introduced his young friend, John Glendonwyn, to the people. His daughter accompanied him, his wife being, of course, too delicate to bear the fatigue. So it chanced that during the service of introduction John and Veronica sat side by side in the nave.

"I have a remarkable man," said John, "and he would not have in it something notably prophetic."

That night John slept in his own manse. There was little furniture in it, for his father, though most kindly affected to him and full of promises, had as yet paid him no portion of the arrears of his fortune. Moreover, he could hope to receive no stipend for a considerable time. So a kitchen with its necessary utensils, a little bedroom for Baby Lockhart, his old nurse (who had insisted on coming to the manse to attend to her hair, no he had grown into a heavy minister of the gospel), a bedroom for himself furnished with washstand and camp bed, and a study, in which Will Glendonning had put up some bookshelves, and a plain kitchen table of deal to write on, formed all the furnished rooms which Gower manse was destined to contain for many a day. The packing boxes in which John's books arrived from Edinburgh were pressed for additional seats, one of which the young minister helped himself to whenever he had a visitor.

His father had indeed offered him a complete "glenshening" from the wide chambers of Castle Gower, but John was firm in the faith of "dois for himself," and felt himself happier as he lay down that night in his bare apartment with the stars looking in through the blindless windows than had been since the strange disappearance of little Fairlie and her sister Kate.

John Glendonwyn did not begin his ministry with any remarkable manifestation of power, but he gradually gave proof of a conscientious readiness to do the best that in him lay for his people. His pulpit work was excellent and profitable from the first.

Frankly acknowledging his inexperience as a minister, he began to re-study with them the plain gospel teachings in a series of discourses which was long memorable in Gower. These might be called direct searchings for the word of truth, and to a congregation satiated with half-held platitudes and specious commonplaces their new minister's earnest, strenuous reaching out after higher things came almost with the force of a revelation.

In this fashion John Glendonwyn won a folk for himself in the parish of Gower. Nor was it only on Sabbaths that he did his work. Soon there was not one heart from north to south where he was not welcome. His simple kindness and sympathy took them by the heart in one young. "Grave beyond his years," they called him. But those sparkings of humor, too were not wanting, without which no map ought to be a minister. A sweet grav-

ity errand at his leisure. But Duncan only shook his head slowly and appeared to know something that he could scarcely bring himself to utter. At last he took his courage in his hand and began.

"Malster John," he said, "things are sore wrong at Castle Gower."

"How, then, Duncan?" I said. "Is my father worse in health or is there a quarrel betwixt him and Rupert?"

"For, indeed, at that time I was never doing thinking of my brother. He had been growing wilder and ever wilder. Many a night had I heard the galloping of his horse Bravo as he passed the manse, riding home from Drumferri or other of his haunts. He would send a view halloo up to my window if he saw a light, calling on me for a hypocritical dog to come down and give him a stirrup up. Once or twice I did go down to speak with him, but to see little purpose that on one occasion he lashed me across the face with his riding whip, so that I carried the mark with me to the pulpit for three several Sabbath days."

"Malster Rupert," cried Duncan Grierson, growing instantly violently agitated, "na, there is na quarrel betwixt Malster Rupert and the laird. I would to God there were, even if it were to the shedding of blood."

"Sit down, Grierson, and tell me what you mean," I bade him.

"I cannot sit, sir," said the old man, standing before me, all trembling, "and that's God's truth, as muckle as what ye preached to us this day far the pulpit. But I couldna hude to see things gaun on as they are doin'—but speakin'. And the Lord, who sees the heart, pardon me, I have done wrong."

"To be plain, then, I think there is a conspiracy betwixt my malster, Gregory Glendonwyn, and his son! And, auld as I am, and great sinner as I have been, I canna stand still and see the innocent suffer for the guilty."

"What the devil's you sayin'?" I cried. "A conspiracy to do them wrong? What do you mean, Grierson? Surely you do not speak of your malster?"

"Deed and I that, sir—seven of Gregory Glendonwyn, whom I have served for fifty-five year and never kenned to do the thing that was dishonorable. Hard he has ye been, hard with men, hard with the mither that brought ye into the world, and specially hard with ye, his son, that might have been to him for a pride and a glorying."

"Ah, Grierson," said I, clapping him on the shoulder, "you were ever partial to me. Do not be afraid. In the long run my father will not do me an injustice."

But the old man held up his hands to stop me.

"No, no," he cried, "that I know, also, or at least something of it. But if all the money in the world were to stake it would not make this sham the less of it in the matter of the disappearance of the ladies, Kate and Fairlie Glendonning, that I have come to you."

"I do not disguise that I had to lay my hand on the window sill to steady myself before I could take the less of it in my hand."

"Well—what of them?" I said, at last.

"Speak out, man, make haste!"

"Malster John," said Duncan Grierson, bending down his white head like a man ashamed and overcome, "I can bear it no longer. That's the fact. The night that they were lost it was my hand that yoked the horses. It was me that gied the letter into the lassie's hand at the schule. It was me, Duncan Grierson, that tried to yoke Kate Glendonning shint her father's wood-yard."

"And where are the girls?" I cried eagerly.

"Nay, that I ken no more than you—though I have a guess," he answered, infinitely to my disappointment. "My work was done when I gied the reins up into the hands of Ben-nan-gie."

"And who drove? Was it my brother?" I asked. "I never believed greatly in his lameness."

The old butler shook his head.

"Into whose hands?" I asked.

"Into the hands of Gregory Glendonwyn, your father!" groaned the old butler, and dropped into the chair which I had set for him at his first entering.

It was thus I became aware of the strange domestic event which shapes all my history, which has caused me to write this for the information of the excellent man who, at my request and that of others of my family, has spent so much time in putting together the materials which myself and others have trusted to him.

But to return to Duncan Grierson.

The old man sat and sobbed because of the breaking of his faith in the man who all his life long had been as an idol to him.

"God forgive me!" he moaned. "I kenned as more the dead than the dead to go down to silence what I was doing. Saunders Greg, the coachman, had been sent to Drumferri on some message for young Malster Rupert, and when the carriage was wanted in a hurry I betocht me that it was some matter of doctors or medicines that was to be returned to Duncan Grierson."

The old man sat and sobbed because of the breaking of his faith in the man who all his life long had been as an idol to him.

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the fields whispered together in the zenith. I had many mingled thoughts of bitter and sweet, of my father and brother, who had set a snare for myself and done injustice to Fairlie Glendonning. Yet when I thought of her there came such a gust of sweet into the bitter that it seemed that I was none other than a knight going forth with sword and lance to bring back his well-beloved out of captivity.

It was, I think, somewhere about an hour after midnight that I discerned across the waste over which I had been riding steadily a glimmering, uncertain light, which I took to be none other than that from the lonesome little stile house on the Corse of Slakes, whither I was bound.

The Ferry house rested curiously lonesome, avoided by decent travelers, beetle-browed and forbidding in external aspect and infelix in repute—like some evil woman, old, misshapen and no longer able to spread her wings in the sight of any bird, but ever brooding on the days when nests were full and green-geese catching was an easy trade.

So the place appeared to me, as I urged Peden forward toward the light. A fine new highway indeed passed in front of the house, carrying straight forward between the trees and the sea, but it was approaching the Ferry house from the moor behind, and in that direction the windows are but little raised above the moss.

There was no soul moving anywhere, yet when I found the stable, lo! there was a beast already there, champing at his manger. Then, by dint of groping, I found a feed of oats in the corn chest, which I gave to Peden. For I knew not what was before me, nor what strange ways I might need to traverse ere the morning.

This business finished, to be yet more forward, I turned the key of the stable and cut it in my pocket.

My cat being so uncommon and my desire to find the lost maidens so overwhelming, I did not consider it beneath me to lie down on my belly and take a look through the windows of the hut to see what I could spy within.

But the interior of the kitchen being lit only by the red fire, which glowed, rather than burned, on the hearth, I could only dimly perceive a dark figure shrouded in a great cloak, which now and then cast a faggot of peat upon the "tresloch" of red embers.

Beside the kitchen there was another chamber or "ten-the-house" at the other end of the Ferry house, but a newspaper had darkened its little foot-square of window, and even the chimney which I squatted down was too narrow to reveal more of the occupant than one booted foot, which

swung back and forth, as if the owner had crossed his legs and was sitting very much at his ease.

But the more I looked, acting the spy for Fairlie's sake, as I would not have done for any other cause, the more did I become convinced that my brother Rupert, was within. The swinging boot was a small and varnished one, and I could think of no other save Rupert who would be likely to carry such a cavalier accompaniment to the Corse of Slakes.

At that moment a horse neighing from the stable, caused the varnished boot to disappear as if in the direction of the door. I recognized the sound also, being quick to distinguish the characteristic noises of animals. The neigh was obviously my brother's black Bravo, making acquaintance with the dappled patriarch of Glensluc, my good Peden, the Prophet.

After that there was no longer any doubt about the matter. Grierson had not been mistaken.

Opening the outer door of the hut and bending my head I passed into the smoky interior. An old woman sprang to her feet with more agility than a misshape back and features wrinkled and smoke-dried might have betokened.

"Eh, Malster Grierson," she cried, "what's brocht ye back already from Hamiel's and preserve us at—what's come o' the—"

But before she had time to finish her sentence—upon which so much depended—she had recognized from my height and appearance that I could not be Gregory Glendonwyn.

"A minister!" she cried, "and what reverend sir, might ye be seekin' at the change house o' the Corse o' Slakes this Sabbath night?"

I had, however, no wish to waste time upon her, so I did not answer, but pushed on in the direction of the varnished riding boots.

The old woman, for all her infirmities, was at the door before me.

"Na," she cried, "in there ye shanna gang till ye have telled me your errand."

But I put her aside with as little force as was possible, considering that she clung to me rather like a cat with nine lives than a woman well past the three-score and ten, as her appearance advertised her to be.

"I am seeking my brother—stand aside!" I said, briefly.

So I opened the door, and there before me, playing a tune to himself upon a small and dainty fute, was my brother, Rupert Glendonwyn.

(To Be Continued.)

## BECOMING A MOTHER

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