The BANNER of BLUE

by S. R. Crockett

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CHAPTER XXII—Continued.

Again after a space I came to myself, as out of the clang and hammer stroke of some great foundry, where for infinite years I had been confined, while the unresting workmen day and night kept up their multitudinous din.

"Open—open!" I could discern a confused clamor of voices outside the door. I felt to make sure that I was completely dressed. I was quickly assured. Discomfort and itching ill-humor were in the very clinging of my clothes. There was also a curious chill in the apartment. I rose and made my way as best I could to the door. I did not, however, succeed in reaching it, for most persistently I kept bumping against the angles of the furniture.

"Open, or we will break down the door!"

The voice was that of Mr. Gregory Glendonwyn.

This was too much for me. So I bade them break down fifty doors, but, instantly recollecting that Kate and the child might be frightened, I asked them to stay a moment. Mr. Glendonwyn had given us a few boxes of lucifer matches, which were then thought a curious and wonderful invention.

By orienting the position of the window I managed to scramble back to the bedside and presently struck a match, which burned with a blue flame with much odor of an evil sort. I looked about. Kate's bed had not been slept in.

Both she and the babe had vanished.

I hardly know how I managed to remove the heavy chest of drawers. My head was still dizzy and drowsy with my sleeping draught and the room reeled about me when I strove to push the obstruction aside. At last I could unbolt the door and turn the key.

Mr. Glendonwyn came in hastily without any greeting. He had a tin lantern in his hand, of the common stable pattern then in use. He turned it about the room.

"Where is your sister?" he demanded, with an oath, unusual upon his lips. "Warner, I believe the jade has given us the slip."

I could only tell him that I had been sound asleep and knew nothing of the matter. I could not help adding that Surgeon Warner could probably explain to him why I had been asleep.

But he never answered me. I think now that he never even took my meaning, for at that moment he espied the little door which led out upon the platform of the tower. It was open, and I understood in a moment why it was that the room had felt so damp and cold when I awoke. Kate had escaped that way, driven on by her fears for the safety of her child.

She had escaped. But how—hampered with a baby as she was and but recently recovered herself from the deadly weakness of childbed.

I went out on the tower top, following Mr. Glendonwyn. As we stood on the little platform the laird swung his lantern this way and that.

A great black cartwheel of shadow rayed about us. The wind blew keen and chill over the water. Beneath the wall was sheer. No foothold or swinging rope told a tale of possible exit. Yet my sister was gone, leaving the bed unpressed, the door bolted and barred. Only her cloak of dark blue and some few of the babe's wrappings had been taken.

I caught up my own cloak and followed the man out. Mr. Glendonwyn took his way straight down to the pier. As we passed the door of the boathouse I saw that it was open. There was a light ahead of us as we stumbled on, my heart beating wildly with the fear of I knew not what. We reached the little sheltered bay where the landing stage was. There was old Hamish McColl, busy with a boat I had never seen before. That in which Mr. Glendonwyn and the surgeon had crossed was gone. The rope by which it had been tied had been cut with a knife and now flapped a little in the wind as it drooped from the post.

So much was certain, Kate and her babe were out on the waste of waters. They had fled as soon as I was asleep, the blank darkness of a November night instantly swallowing them up.

"Get in and help us find her!" So said Mr. Glendonwyn roughly. "It will ruin all if she appears with her child at Castle Gower! Or even" (he muttered the final words in a lower tone, as if to himself) "if she meets Rupert!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

Babe Rupert.

The voice of Kate Glendenning, speaking, soft, monotonous, low-toned, in the hushed silence of a little room—the fire in the grate the only light—the winter gray of the noontide carefully tempered by drawn curtains, I, Fairlie, alone by the bedside. That was the scene. But a little farther off, hidden behind the hanging was another, even our father, David Glendenning. He, too, was listening unseen, his head sunk in his palms.

For, thank God, there was no need to hide anything from him any more. Ah, if only I had taken him into my confidence from the first! And indeed so I would, if the secret had been mine. Nor would I have left him to go away with nine Johns—that is, without telling him first.

But Kate's voice was relating a strange simple tale—infinitely touching, at least to us who had been part of that history, and who now held the wanderer to our hearts against a world of slanders.

"You must forgive me, Fairlie, dear (she was saying). It was wicked and cruel of me. But then I did not know what I was doing. I thought that you were in league with those who wanted to take my baby from me. So I said nothing to you of what I meant to do. I was afraid you would tell them. I wanted to get to Rupert—it seemed as if I must get to Rupert, and I knew you hated him. O, yes, you did! I always knew that—though, indeed, he always spoke nicely about you. I think at heart he was a good man, my Rupert—that is, if his father would only have left him to me. He never meant me any harm. I knew that. God will never be so cruel to me as to let me believe that he did.

"So when you were busy in the house I stole out—it was after these two had come back. I heard them go into the dining room where the guns are, and I slipped past so quietly, and went round to the back of the peatstack. That is where Hamish keeps his tall ladder. At first I thought I could never be able to carry it and set it against the wall. But just when I was going to give up I heard baby cry. And then all at once I could.

"I got it up bit by bit, a little at a time. And once I had a terrible fright and was obliged to sit down for a while behind the peat stack. And, Oh, Fairlie, I felt so happy to see the babe again and to think that there was a way out for him and me. It was hard to wait. I knew that their boat would only be tied with cord. Because the day after Rupert went away I unwound the chain and threw it over the cliff into the sea, before Hamish came back from rowing him. And I always meant to tell you of it, Fairlie. But the devil, or else that little tickling thing in my head, kept saying that I must not. You would not let me go if I did.

"Yes, it was very wicked! But do not be angry. Well, the old hateful thing kept saying all the time, 'Give—Fairlie—some—of—that—sleeping—stuff—you—got—for toothache,' And I dropped thirty drops in your wine glass before dinner—only there were more than that. Oh, I can't think what made me so wicked, Fairlie. But that night everything that I wanted to do, and just how to do it, popped up in my head without needing to think of it at all. It was the funniest thing!"

"No, I am not the least tired, dear—at least not if you will put little Rupert upon the bed and let him hold my forefinger. I would rather tell you all about it now. Is my father there? Why do you love me so much, father, dear? I have been such a bad daughter to you. I wouldn't if I were you!"

"Oh, yes, about the boat—no, I was at your going to sleep. It was funny to watch—I mean it would have been if it had not been so wicked—to see you trying to keep awake.

"Then, when at last you went upstairs, I had to help you to bed and I just opened your dress at the neck and covered you up comfortably. Then I laughed—yes, I did. But I waited a long, long while, till I heard them come up and listen at the door. Then I was dreadfully afraid they meant to come in and that I could not wake you to help me. And, oh, I was so frightened! So it was after that that I dragged the chest of drawers in front of the door—after they had gone, I mean. For when they were there I just walked about the floor, hushing baby and talking to him to show them that I was awake.

"Then I heard Mr. Glendonwyn and Surgeon Warner go down again and shut themselves into the gun room. And I took baby in my arms. Oh, how I prayed that he would not cry! I opened the window and put out my hand, trembling for fear the ladder would not be high enough or lest some one should have taken it away.

"But it was there—only so steep and thin that I knew not how I was going to trust baby upon it. However, I took a long breath and let myself out backward, creeping very quiet and slow, lest anyone should hear me.

"I expected to see them all rushing out and catching hold of me before I had time to get ten yards away. But it was just the same with everything that night. I was going to find my husband and speak to him about our love, and how he must help me to take care of our loveliest. And till I found him—everything went well—until I found him.

"Yes, I will finish the story—though, indeed, I cannot understand why you do not let Rupert come and see me and the boy, if (as you say) he really loves us. But perhaps he is ill again? Perhaps—

"Ah, well, I won't talk about Rupert any more. There, kiss me! I will keep my promise and tell you everything. Well, I found the boat easily enough, simply walking straight to it. It was all done in a moment. Indeed, as near as might be I lost the boat myself. I had to make a jump for it. The tide was coming in and the boat was dancing on the little jabbling waves.

"But I scrambled in somehow—no, I never hurt myself a bit. Everything was as easy as if God had sent his angels to bear me and my baby up in their arms.

"Well, as I got farther out, the sail drew better and the boat went more swiftly. I could see the little, twinkling star which was the light in the kitchen window on Inch Jonet, dancing and dipping. So I kept that straight in my back, and steered to leave it behind.

"And I do not know how long it was—very, very long—and much battering of winds, and the waves leaping up in a kind of foamy way about us, but not angry or clutching—only glad, as I thought, that they were helping us to escape.

"And then I came right into the midst of an awful sound. It had been slowly growing and growing—not a loud sound, but low and booming and awful. It made the lump in my throat go quiver-quiver like a leaf that the wind shakes.

"And all at once I knew it must be the waves breaking on the shore. Now, I knew not one direction from another, but just drove straight away from the island. But the wind had carried me almost as straight to the place we started from with Mr. Glendonwyn as if I had sailed it by compass, and all the navigations and stars in the world could not have done more. There was the lonely house and there before me the little pier. The foam of the breakers ran white for miles on either side of me, but I turned the boat and let the sail down with a run and a clatter. And there! I could hardly believe it, in a moment the boat was gliding smoothly into the tiny harbor.

"The boat had passed the pier and put its nose into a creek at the side. But the tide was on the turn, and, the water beginning to run down, soon brought me back till the side of the boat rubbed lightly against the landing stage. I caught baby and stepped ashore.

"After that there is not much to tell. There were two beasts in the little stable shed where we saw the carriage horses tossing their heads that morning at their feed of corn—the morning when we came first to Inch Jonet, I mean.

"And one of these two was spirited and tossed his head. But the other stood and smelt baby and blew on him through his nostrils, so that it tickled him and made him laugh. And for that I loved him. I even thought I could trust him with baby on his back, so I loosed him and led him to the door, where I got first upon the corn chest and so upon his back. Then I lay down on his neck that I might not hurt my head against the arch as he went out. I told the horse to go very quietly, because he was carrying Rupert the second home to his father. Also because I could not sit very securely, as there was no saddle.

"I had grown deadly tired all of a sudden and indeed had enough to do to hold baby and sit straight on the horse's back. However, I remembered that he would be sure to go right back to Castle Gowar, because his stable was there. And indeed so he did—never stopping and never trotting hard all the night—and I praying to God to give me what was best for my baby—which of course was that I should see Rupert, his father.

"And all at once, as the morning began to come up gray over the black hills, I heard a faraway sound of galloping and I grew deadly afraid. I slipped off, alighting on a green bank at the top of a deep descent under trees, at the foot of which a river ran. But the horse, after standing a moment with his ears turned back, listening, took fright at the sound of hoofs and with a flourish of his heels he scampered off down the road.

"And I ran as fast as I could down, past a little house and a white sign post like a tall ghost—one of those all about 'Trespassers.' And then all in a moment it came to me where I was. The good beast had not carried me wrong. I was at the place called the Green Dook, at the end of the path by which Rupert used to slip through the policies to meet me at the old burying ground.

"And I stopped to laugh—happy that I was so near Rupert. And thinking how happy I ought to be to have such a lover and such a husband. When the noise of the galloping came suddenly louder and nearer, it seemed almost at the top of the Dook. And then a strange and terrible thing happened. I was just going to hide myself in the fir plantation, where it is black as pitch, when I heard—oh, it cannot be that I really did hear it. But I seemed to hear my Rupert's voice crying out terrible words—words that it hurts me even to think about—and cursing his brother, and you, Fairlie, and the day that ever he saw me!

"Then I knew that the little tick-tack demon in my brain was at his tricks again. So I let my cloak drop and ran out of the gate to meet Rupert and cast myself on his bosom.

"It was dark, yet I seemed to see everything. They say mad people see in the night like cats, and I was mad that night, dear Fairlie—mad—mad, or I should never have seen the terrible things I did see.

"First, I seemed to see my Rupert come galloping furiously along on a black horse, looking over his shoulder at a pursuer who rode still faster and ever called on him to stop. Then as he came opposite the turnstile gate I stepped out to him and held up baby in my arms. I was all in white, and baby, too, for I had dropped my cloak to look pretty for my husband. I liked that he should see us first like that. And in the darkness of the night he saw us—or whatever fiend of darkness was riding there in his shape—yes, I saw him and he saw me.

"And then, O, what a cry went up, like that of a poor damned soul out of the Terrible Pit! And in a moment all was whirled out of my sight down to the bottom of the Green Dook, pursuer and pursued, and as it seemed amid the galloping of many furious horses. Then terror took me by the throat. I ran as fast as I could down the path till I was lost and could hear and see no more terrible things. After that I remember no more, except just wrapping the babe tighter and going on and on and always on, with my feet burning like fire and my knees trembling beneath me, and the dust rising up in my eyes, till somehow I came to the place where Rupert and I had been so happy, beyond the cleft tree in the old burying ground. But even there I could not rest very long.

"For the galloping of horses was always about me. I heard the ring of their shoe iron. I saw the sparks fly from the stones beneath their feet. And I went ever faster and faster till—Fairlie, that is all! I am very tired. Let me try to sleep. No, do not take baby from me! Let him lie on the pillow beside me. I think I shall know that he is there even in my sleep!"

FIRST HE PLAYED AN AIR, SIMPLE AND QUAINTLY WORKED IN RHYTHM LIKE THE OVER WORD OF A BAIRN'S HYMN

CHAPTER XXIV.

Possessed With a Devil.

(Being the second manuscript written by John Glendonwyn.)

He nodded and smiled as if he had expected nothing else than that I should intrude upon him at that lonely house and in the middle of a winter's night—looking debonair and well pleased to see me. There was something of almost demoniac self-possession during these last days about my brother Rupert.

"Ah, reverend sir," he said, speaking wholly without anger or surprise, indeed lightly and carelessly, "what brings you so far from home on such a night? And on the Sabbath day, too! A poor lost soul like mine may wander, seeking rest, but our family holy man, combed, curled, trimmed and adorned with all the graces of the spirit—to be found blackguarding it at midnight upon the Corse o' Slakes! For shame, sir!"

He unscrewed his flute and wiped it delicately. Then, putting it together again, he motioned me to a chair and pushed the bottle and glass toward me. I refused both with a motion of the hand. I could bear no more.

"Rupert," I said, "there is enough of this—I have found you out. I know who helped you in your knavery, even our father, who till now has been to me as a god sitting on a throne. I cannot tell why he has done this. I cannot tell why the girls have lent themselves to it. But I am here in the name of their father and their family to demand of you where that carriage drove to that night when they left their home with Gregory Glendonwyn for their coachman and Surgeon Warner left to bind up a leg that never was broken."

I had depended upon this to surprise and cover him with confusion, but again I was mistaken. He did not even deny the charge, as a weaker man would have done.

"Some mischance has helped you, dear Don Innocencio," he said, smiling, "you would never have found out so much for yourself—no, not if you had stumbled over the carriage, horses and coachman on your way to the kirk. But, after all, what are you the wiser? You have come a long road and tired your back with, I fear me, but little gain to yourself. What might your detectiveship be going to do with yourself now?"

"I do not stir from your elbow," I cried, "till I have found out what brings you here!"

He raised his eyebrows with an air of well-bred surprise, exceedingly insolent.

"No?" he said, "you are, indeed, generous of your society. Well, since I am to have the pleasure of your company if I do not tell you the truth, I will e'en humor you. What I am going to do now I am here is far beyond your comprehension. But since even asses have an ear for music, so, perhaps, a little tune may do you no ill. Which things are an allegory!"

Where he learned the knack of it I know not, as it were not from his own familiar spirit. For no one of the Glendonwyns ever had an ear for music sufficient to enable them to follow a psalm tune in church without making all their neighbors turn round to look at them. But certainly there was never heard anything in this countryside like the playing of my brother Rupert.

First he played an air, simple and quaintly marked in rhythm, like the overword of a bairn's hymn. Then, striking into a higher, bolder strain with birdlike turns and amorous allurements, he led on to such a tumultuous and soul-shaking back-and-forth of hurrying sound that scraps of melody seemed tumbled together headlong, as if some heavenly songsters had been caught fluttering in a net, whence they sent forth piteous appeals and wing-flappings—all gradually subsiding into the burden of an ancient psalm, slow, sustained and solemn as a burial march.

The musician stopped, unscrewed his instrument again and turned upon me.

"There you have it—that is my parable"—he said; "you are a professional interpreter of such. What do you take out of that?"

"You have come here," I answered him as quietly as I could, "on an errand the purport of which I can only imperfectly guess at. But this I do know, that I shall not let you out of my sight till I discover the mystery of the disappearance of these two poor innocent girls!"

"Innocent?" he cried, laughing, "how do you know they are innocent?"

"I would answer for it with my life!" I cried, starting as if an adder had hissed at me out of a bush. Then sudden as an inspiration there came into my head a way to answer him.

"You or all men," I said, drawing a bow at a venture, "have the best reasons for knowing that they are innocent as children newly born!"

"No," he said, quite calmly, "my father has better!"

"Or had!" he added, looking at his watch while I was struck dumb by his assurance.

"Now, parson," he went on, with the same quiet insolence as before (a year ago I should have smitten him in the teeth for it, but of late the Lord had begun to speak to me), "now, most holy churchman, I will tell you what I am going to do. You have obtruded your company upon me, but after all blood is thicker than water. I will not turn you out. I am going to stay here another two hours—no more and no less. Then, if you will accompany me, why you are at liberty to do so—if you can. Good night, John Knox!"

So saying my brother deftly pushed a chair under the calves of his legs so that the little silver spurs on his heels might not embarrass him, drew a lace-edged pocket handkerchief over his face and appeared to go to sleep.

From the kitchen of the inn I heard the measured rack rack of the old woman's nursing chair and her low moaning croon. After about an hour she came in and looked keenly about. Then, having lit another farthing dip, she went as noiselessly out again.

I must have lozed from that point onward, for the next I knew was Rupert standing over me, tapping my shoulder with the key of the stable door.

"You are but a poor spy," he said; "no detective force would employ you for a week. For all you knew I might have been six long miles away by this time, with a Sabine maiden over each shoulder and a scalping knife between my teeth. But I was kind to you, my good, stupid police officer. Take a glass before we go and I will try the mettle of your cart horse along the road. There are eight miles between us and the ancestral towers of Gower. Come, I will give you a mile start and beat you at the gates for 100 guineas!"

How long he had been awake and watching me asleep I could not tell. But it did not take much penetration to see how he had been employing his time. There was already one empty bottle upon the table and as he spoke he poured out another full tumbler for himself, together with a glass for me, which of course I did not touch. Yet all that he had drank seemed to have no effect upon him that night save for the extraordinary lightness and vivacity it imparted to his motions and the brilliancy of his eyes, which at times burned with a lambent glow, as if the fires of hell were already alight behind them.

"It is no use waiting longer," he said, with mock gravity. "The friends whom I have been expecting have evidently played me false. Yet I have spent the evening agreeably enough with the 'Newgate Calendar' and in the society of my dear and only brother. Tonight I have read of twenty men—robbers and bloody murderers—and yet I take my oath every red-handed one of them died penitent—certain of their election and edifying the spectators. I should think Peter would get tired of so much belated repentance, and I ask for a little consistency as a change. 'You need not rattle your keys for me, old fisherman,' I will say, 'keep them at your belt. As I lived I died, and now ask no better than to be treated according to the record.' And I wager that the pilot of the Galilean lake will be so surprised that 10 to 1 he will let me in."

Then was my soul stirred within me.

"Brother," I said, "why should you blaspheme and make a dare of your Maker? You are a young man, even as I am. God is merciful. If you have done wrong, do justly now. Why have you come among us to work this change? My father was a man honorable above most before you came back to alter him out of all knowledge. There was not a happier house in the country than that of David Glendenning. Think well what you have made of them!"

"If no more dishonor is ever brought on either than I am responsible for," he answered, defiantly, "both my father and David Glendenning will pass off the stage with less discredit than most."

"I would that I could believe you!" I cried. "I would give all I possessed to believe you."

He shrugged his shoulders and helped himself again to the glass upon the table.

"I can only speak the truth," he said, "I cannot make you believe it."

He picked up a pair of gloves which lay on the table and drew them on his fingers with the diligent particularity of a woman.

"Now," he continued, mockingly, "we will open the stable and put our beasts to the proof. Bravo should be in fine fettle for the road after his rest. 'Deuch-an-dorris' to you and likewise 'Shlainte!'"

And once more he drained his glass.

In ten minutes we were on the road, Rupert growing wild with excitement as the night air in strife with the alcohol he had drunk took effect upon his brain.

"Once let me upon Bravo's back," he cried, "and I will show you how a gentleman should go home to bed. John, you prig—you always were a prig and hated a bottle even when your nurse filled one with milk—ride for your life—yours against mine! Ride, then, and keep within 500 yards of me if you can! I will beat you at the gates—which gates, do you ask, you cur? Some gates—any gates—the castle gates—hell gates, if you like."

And then began a scene which even now I shudder to recall—a wild chase through the parish of which I had been ordained minister but a few months before. For I was determined that on no account or consideration would I let Rupert out of my sight that night.

I think that somehow in the stable my decent staid old Peden the Prophet must have imbibed a part of the wilder spirit of Bravo, for never had I known that such speed and staying power were lodged in his venerable shanks.

Rupert went off with a shout of defiance and a fleering toss of the hand.

"Now for the blue eyes of Fairlie Glendenning!" he cried. And though I said not a word in reply, I took the words as a cartel of defiance and accepted the gage.

I would stick to him, I muttered grimly, or Peden and I should break our necks—that was all.

CHAPTER XXV.

The Green Dook.

So there ensued a great and notable race along that noble highway which to this day stretches from the Ferry of the Slakes to the gates of Castle Gower. At first the road was happily mostly level and we flew like the wind—Rupert's fiery black stretching himself out like a greyhound coursing. He was a noble beast and though spirited, exceedingly docile. But that night the demon was abroad, and Bravo, instead of settling down to his work, threw his head high and capered like a still unbitted yearling on the spring pastures.

Nor did the behavior of my brother mend matters. He stood up in his stirrups shouting taunts at me over his shoulders. The coarser mood of the first night at Drumfern seemed to have returned upon him. The quiet irony of the change-house had passed and he grew loud and boisterous.

My brother spoke truth. I rode not ill. It is no source of pride to me this day, whose thoughts are bent on things so very much other—but the accomplishment (such as it was) certainly stood me in good stead. I shall never forget the rushing past of the landscape on either side—the hedges and dykes going behind as if in a dream of flying. I had the feeling, too, that I was riding against a vehement tree-bowing tempest, though I have since been told that the wind was still and that sounds—such as that of our tumultuous passage could be heard at a great distance.

Rupert set the spurs freely to the sides of Bravo, so that the blood ran along the rowel to the very boot. Peden, on the other hand, was never touched. I carried neither whip nor spur, but only urged him with my unarmed heel and with the loose rein laid on his neck. And the poor brute seemed to understand what he was to do, and, though he could never get within 100 yards of Bravo and his wild rider, he still stuck grimly to his work and not once did I lose sight of my brother.

Almost as soon as we had left the change house there leaped up in my mind one spot on the shoreward road that haunted me like the actual specter of fear. The military road had been carried over partly the line taken by another and an older road made in the days when sharp turns and steep descents were less carefully avoided than they are by modern road engineers.

It was a spot called the Green Dook—that is to say, "dive"—a place on the outskirts of my father's property where the road, instead of being conveyed upon a bridge straight across the deep and narrow valley, bends abruptly downward into what is an apparent pool of rustling verdure in the summer, then, turning rapidly, almost at right angles to itself, crosses a bridge and ascends the opposite bank with a more gradual slope.

The Green Dook might never have existed but for a piece of obstinacy on my father's part, who, having a little seldom-used lodge gate 100 yards or so on the south, had refused either to permit his avenue to be shortened or to pull down the lodge that the road might pass straight across. Moreover, being of great authority on the board of the commissioners of supply for the county he had carried his point in the face of engineers and surveyors and the all-powerful roads and bridges committee itself.

But a few steps from the bridge at the bottom of the Dook he had made a wicket-gate, and from thence a path led through the plantations and shrubberies to the Great House—a road which in past days was often chosen by Rupert and myself because in this way we could leave the grounds of Castle Gower practically without ever showing ourselves in the open.

The place, dangerous at the best of times, was simply a death trap in the darkness of a winter's night and as we flew down the slope half a mile from it I called as loud as I could to Rupert, "For God's sake to take care of the Green Dook!"

But he stood up, still going at full speed, and cursed me by name for an interfering craven dog, telling me to pull up myself if my gallows'-cart garron could go no farther."

Faster and faster we went, and when we topped the rise in front of the Green Dook I was within twenty yards of Rupert and gaining at every stride.

Now I do not know whether the heavier hoofs of Pedan the Prophet thundering in his wake aroused Bravo to frenzy or whether it was altogether that which happened immediately after that caused the catastrophe I am about to relate. But certain it is that the mischief was done not at the bottom, but in the middle of the Dook, just where the private path makes off through the woods toward the mansion house of Gower.

I was well nigh at Bravo's heels and beginning to congratulate myself that my brother would pass the peril in safety, when suddenly I saw before me, illuminated faintly but distinctly visible through, some skylight in the trees above the figure of a woman clothed all in white and holding a bundle standing in the opening where was the little turning stile gate into the woodland park.

Rupert saw or seemed to see the figure also, for with a wild scream that was almost a shriek he pulled his horse's head sharp round as it were, right into the wall of the bridge, and the next moment Bravo crashed breast-high into the stone and lime with a sickening sound and his rider was thrown over the parapet.

(To Be Continued.)

THE FIGURE OF A WOMAN CLOTHED ALL IN WHITE AND HOLDING A BUNDLE WHERE THE LITTLE TURNSTILE GATE LED INTO THE WOODLAND PARK.