The BANNER of BLUE

by S. R. Crockett

CHAPTER XXX—(Continued.)

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Anton McMillan did not reply at once. He seemed to be in a brown study. So John had perforce to repeat his question.

"Have you come with a message from your master?"

"Aye, frae my maister!" said Anton with gravity.

"Well?" said John, tugging fiercely at the last knot and rather wishing that the taciturn herd had chosen some other time for his visit.

"Ye will permit me to ask a question?" said Anton.

The young minister nodded without looking up.

"Ask away!" he said cheerfully.

"Ye are to be quit o' the manse by noon tomorrow?"

"That is the notice I have got from the clerk of presbytery," said John, succinctly.

"Aye?" said Anton. "Weel, what may ye be thinkin' o' doin'?"

"Doing?" said John Glendonwyn; "well, for the present I thought of taking lodgings in the town of Kilgour and walking out to visit any who might desire my ministrations."

"That will be verra inconvenient," said the herd, with grave deliberation.

"Doubtless," said John, a little irritably, "but you see, Anton, beggars cannot be choosers. It is that or nothing. There is not a man in Gower that dares take me in—not a house taht will shelter me and mine."

"Aye, there is—" said Anton, suddenly, with a lift of his mountainous brows, and a gleam of the fearless hillman's eye; "there is one man that isna feared o' the wrath o' kings—let alane Gregory Glendonwyn o' Castle Gower. There is hae bit herd's house I' the patirish where ye are welcome—you and your; aye, even your auld leddy there, wha has dootless been used to something far different!"

Letting go the box John Glendonwyn stood up in astonishment.

"But you are not of the Kirk," he cried, "you do not hold with us who have relinquished her communion?"

"And what o' that?" said Anton the herd, 'To the Jews ye maun come!' quoth Peter. 'Deil a bit!' said Paul. 'Circumcise!' said Peter. 'Come on!' said Paul. And withstood him to his face, the furious wee ettercap that he was, him wi' the lame leg. So let it be wi' you and me, minister! 'Coavenants or nocht!' says I. 'Speeritual independence!' says you. 'Render unto Caesar!' says you. 'Plague the dott,' says I. 'Have at ye!' says you, wi' your neives up. And I wad be willin'! But consider gin Paul cam' to Jerussalem and thae deil's birkies o' temple officers were hard at his tail, wadna Peter tak' him to you door he kens pae weel, an' let him into the secret o' the knock that brings out the young lass so blithe and ready? Wad he no slip him in, think ye? And gin Peter cam' to Damascus, wad Paul no gie him a lend o' his basket, for a' the bit difference that had been aewten them—?"

"That wad he no," cried Babby Lockhart suddenly, "and I wull tell ye for why—the basket wad hae been broken doon, hoop, rib and wattle by the wecht of the leebrary Paul wad hae been haulin' up and doon in't. Nae sauchwands that ever were grown by Abana and Pharper, rivers of Damascus, wad hae stood it for an hour!"

"So," said the herd, disregarding her indignant interruption, "this is the message frae my maister that I hae gotten—no frae Maister Habbleshaw o' Bennangower, but frae a Higher Han',—'Gang doon, as the Lord has prospered you,' said the Voice to me late and early, 'an' offer to the minister the shelter o' your bit hoose. It's no muckle, Maister Glendonwyn, but O ye are welcome as the first green grass on the hills o' snaw to the hungry yowes. Come your ways up, man. There's graund caller air on Bennangower, a bit burnie to wash yourse' in wi' pools that wad droon ye were ye as big as Samson and his weaver's beam. And heaps o' mutton hams and oatmeal for Babby to bake into cake. And there's the 'benroom' for you, and your buiks and your studyin'—the heather growin' bonny up to the verra windows, and the larks tellin' ye a' the day lang hoo to praise God wi' the upspringin' heart. Come your ways up wi' me, laddie. Ye ken auld Anton that has washed ye weel a' your days. What he means he says. And what he says he means!'"

John clasped the hand held out and the water stood salt in his eyes.

"But," he said, slowly and thoughtfully, "will not your master turn you away? Bennangower belongs to my father, and you know what he has threatened! Why should you meddle in a quarrel which is not your own?"

The old man threw back his head with the gesture of a covenanter before the Star chamber.

"True it is," he said, "that Abram Habbleshaw o' Bennangower mich cast off the servant that has served him and his father and saxty year o' yowes and lambs at the biddin' o' Gregory Glendonwyn. But I judge no. And for this reason. Abram Habbleshaw, great billyin' cuff as he is, is nae hoed servant to ony man. His father afore him was a rich man—and what he had, Abram, bein' blessed wi' the gettin' hand, has mair nor doobled. He has led farms by the score, an' as far as it may be said o' ony mortal withoot offence, the cattle on a thoosand hills are his. Gin Gregory Glendonwyn, your faither, were to threaten to pit him oot o' Benangower, it is odds that he wad answer him as he did Neilson o' Clatterinshaws. 'Sir,' he wad say, 'I will mak' you an offer to tak' your hale estates at valuation!' Bigger odds still that he wad juist haud at him, wi' a golly o' muckle braid oaths as coorse as Kilmarnock. Therefore, dinna think o' that! Gin ae door shuts, anither will open for Anton. I am a lanely man, and hae gotten a guid wage for near on saxty year. Auld Anton will no want. But there stands his bit hoosie—and prood will his faither's son be to welcome ye there, till siccan time as the fowk draw aboot ye, and ye hae a bonnier manse biggit than the yin ye are leavin' for conscience sake."

"I thank you, Anton," said John Glendonwyn, touched to the heart, "you are to me as Aaron and Hur for the upholding of my hands."

The old Cameronian herd looked up quickly.

"Ye will na mistakt', will ye, sir, will ye?" he said a little anxiously. "I and all I have are yours, as gin ye were son to me that son hae nane. But when it comes to the Sabbath morn I wull gang doon the rae and hie me ower the lang muir and up by the Cross Roads to the Kirk o' the Coavenants at Causeyend.

"According to the flesh, I dinna like Maister Osborne as weel as you. But, ye see, him and me 'grees aboot the Coavenants and the Paying o' the Cess an' the Ceevil Magistrate and things like that—things that ye care nae mair aboot than ye do whetcher my collie Tyke has a rough coat or a smooth. But whilk are as the breath o' life to auld Anton that was bred to that way even frae his youth up."

"With that, or with anything that concerns the conscience, I think you will not find me meddle," said John Glendonwyn. "But the fear in my heart is that there will be but few in the parish who see as I do, or who will desire that I should continue among them."

The old man took a quick look over his shoulder to see if Babby were still in the room. But she had disappeared to finish her own preparations, having now the prospect of a better "doonsittin'" (as she called it), than in "toon lodgings," where all she would have to do would just be to see that the ladladdy did not cheat her laddie or eat his butter behind his back.

Happy landlady, sound ought to be your sleep in the town of Kilgour this night, considering what you have escaped!

"Maybe there's mair wi' ye than ye wad think, sir," he said, "like a' things it juist needs a beginnin'. And noo that ye are to hae an abidin' place in the parish itsel' (sic as it is), there's mony the yin will stand by ye in the quarry-hole on Sabbath morning. Fear ye never that. The Lord shall rise up a folk for Himsel', and the auld seed o' the Covenant and the mosshog shall be sown amang ither kirks also!"

It was in this way and with these advertisements of welcome that John Glendonwyn went to bide in the herd's house of Anton McMillan, the Cameronian shepherd of Bennangower. And on the following Sabbath day, judge ye with what feelings John Glendonwyn arose and went out to meditate upon the side of the mountain. It was early. Farm and cothouse and farm steading lay there in the unbroken Sabbath quiet. The peculiar brooding silence, the hush and awe of that day affected John Glendonwyn keenly. His was the only foot, save those of the black-faced sheep, which that day had trod the great solitudes his eyes wandered over, or scattered the morning dew upon these purpling ridges.

So thought John Glendonwyn, but he was wrong. There were two and perhaps three already astir and ready in the ancient Scots phrase, "compassing the throne of grace" for him. He had not gone far from the house when the sound of a voice speaking in the profound silence stayed and held him. It came out of a great bush of heather and broom, as from an oratory. The minister of Gower, today the minister of Gower no more, stole up and listened. It was the Cameronian elder who was speaking.

"Thou with Whom is all wisdom and direction," he was saying, "grant to the young man this day that he may speak Thy word, without fear, in all simplicity, in the love of it. Be a mouth unto him and wisdom, and raise up about him an hearing people in this parish of Gower that needs siclike sairly—"

John stepped back. The Cameronian was pleading for him, but he had no right to listen to the words. They were not addressed to his ear. Yet as he wended his way up the little brown trickles of sheep walks and brushed the dew from the bracken-bourochs, he felt infinitely refreshed and strengthened.

"The prayer of a righteous man availeth much," so ran his meditation. And how much more would he have been aided had he known that down on the edges of the woods opposite Kilgour, near that shining white speck to which his eyes turned so often, still apparently smokeless and lifeless in the morning sun, there was a girl who had slipped out of a shut and darkened house to breathe the morning air, to watch and to pray.

"God bless John today. I wish I were with him. Please make him feel that I am thinking of him."

And Fairlie Glendenning, who had prayed these words almost unconsciously, looked lingeringly up at the side of Bannangower. For she had news of John's removal thither, and with her face still in that direction she pulled a white rose from the little tree by her bower, and, first kissing it, she threw is as far as she could over the tall beech hedge in the direction of the white speck among the heather of the hillside.

Also at the window of a certain room in a square, white-walled manse on the opposite side of the river there was standing a tall, white-robed figure.

The window was open and sweet airs were stealing in across the water off the great wastes of heather. There was a whaup flying over the town, uttering his wild cry. But so early is it that there is no noise in the Sabbath-quiet streets to scare him back to his airy domicile. Veronica Caesar looked around. Two of her sisters and a little brother were asleep in the same room. She looked out again, sighed, shook her head, and, murmuring, "No—no—I know it can never be!" she turned and went quietly about the house, laying aside the worn week-day clothes and looking out those which are donned fresh and fresh every Sabbath morning—uniform, in fact, of the Caesarian legionaries.

Then she smiled, though somehow her eyes were wet.

"This is what I was meant for, evidently," she said, and brushed harder at the bottoms of Henry's trousers, which bore the stains of muddy ways and careless feet.

Which, in its way, was a prayer every bit as good as the other two. For if self-sacrifice be not the matter and essence of prayer, it is one of the strong pinions that lift it heavenward.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Nec Tamen Consumebatur.

That was a strange Sabbath day in Scotland when in 470 pulpits there was either silence and emptiness or the voice of a stranger—nothing like it since the "Drucken" parliament of the restored Charles stilled the kirk services over all the south and west, and set the heather on fire with those field preachings which in time were to bring down the mighty from their seats.

The disruption was accomplished. The ministers had done their part—would the people follow them, or, like the kirk jackdaws, "bide by the waa's?" It was a day of testing.

Breakfast at the herd's house of Bennangower was a silent meal that morning. John Glendonwyn was thinking of his first service as a minister outside the Kirk of Scotland. The Cameronian elder, having done the thing which alone was in his power to do, was silent out of sympathy—a very fine gentleman was this herd of Bennangower.

At last the hour hand of the great eight-day clock approached 11, and it would take the better part of an hour to reach the Quarry Hole in front of the village of Gower where the service was to be held. The Cameronian and the self-outed minister walked still and silent together until they reached the little stile where the road down to the Quarry separated from the track which wimpled onward through the heather toward the town of Kilgour.

There John and the elder shook hands and looked a moment in each other's eyes—the look, which meant, "Good speed. Go thy way—a good way, though not mine!"

And so do men differ with good and commendable differences about religion throughout Scotland. Men do not differ about that to which they are indifferent. Let the Blue Banner wave, and the Bush Burn yet unconsumed, and St. Andrew with his crozier be set on high, and half a dozen steeples be seen in every village athwart the land! Let men argue and brother turn his back upon brother on the Sabbath morn, each traveling to his own particular Zion to hear the gospel preached according to his desire and conscience. If the hives are healthy let there be more and more. Good and not evil has come to the Kirk of Scotland through its divisions. Adversity and not prosperity hath made it great. High kirk, Low kirk, Giddiing kirk, Broad kirk, Psalm kirk, Hymn kirk and even Laodican Paraphrase kirk, let them emulate each other to good works and stimulate one another to the best and least somnolent purpose. What a dull fusionless place Scotland would be without its religious rivalries and emulations!

It was a striking sight which greeted John that glorious June day, high-arched and resplendent of sun. From every side the people poured in—all making for the village, only a slender sprinkling of the utter bondsmen to Gregory Glendonwyn and a few stanch pillars of kirk and state to be seen making a contrary trickle in the direction of the steepled knowe beside the empty manse.

"They are come out to see what shall be done," said John; "so much is well. But it will not last—it cannot last!"

Nevertheless for that day his heart was sufficiently elate within him. For he thought, "At least I am not wholly alone in this the hour of my trial."

The brief entry underneath is taken from the diary of one who was present upon the occasion and shows the effect produced by the young minister's first appearance as a field preacher:

"I went to the Old Quarry Hole and found a strange thing. Many of the country lads and cotters from the farms had been cutting out and arranging seats, some on the bare rock, some on quarry stones excavated but abandoned, and still more on an amphitheater of turf, in front of which the preaching box had been set up.

"There were, so far as I could see, near onto 600 persons present, some doubtless drawn from curiosity from Kilgour and other neighboring parishes, but most of them tenants and cotters on the Gower estates, for whom it said no little that they should be present on an occasion which they knew might affect their livelihood.

"At last the young minister, Mr. John Glendonwyn, was seen approaching over the hill. He looked tall and slim, blue of eye and pale of face—more like a student than one who, after being a placed minister of the Kirk of Scotland in one of its best parishes, had made himself separate from his own kith and kin and damaged his prospects, so far, at least, as these were in the power of his father to hurt or to help.

"The first psalm had just been given out, and while the people were singing I saw a great many people turn round and some few put up their plaids and shawls about their heads as if they did not wish to be recognized. But the elders and those who had taken a prominent part with the young minister stood boldly bareheaded beside him, singing to the tune 'French' the psalm which begins, 'I to the hills will lift my aid, from whence doth come mine aid.' Presently I heard a carriage drive up and stop. Then as soon as the singing of the psalm was over I saw Mr. Glendonwyn pushing a way through the throng, which made way for him readily. There was a little broad-bodied, lawyer-looking man with him, but it was Mr. Glendonwyn, who appeared most keen upon the business.

"'By what right do you hold this meeting in this place?' he called out in a loud voice as he came near the preaching box.

"Then the young minister looked calmly down, and answered with a great quiet that won the respect of all: Sir, we are advised that the place is public. It has not been fenced for forty years, nor have the quarry stones been worked within the memory of man. We believe that we have a right to worship here according to our consciences.'

"'Then you believe a lie, which will be nothing new to you!' cried Mr. Glendonwyn, lifting his hand threateningly, as if he would have smitten his son to the ground, 'but we will soon show you. My friend here has an interdict which will settle that matter.'

"'Sir,' said the minister gravely, 'this is the Lord's day morning, and no time for the service of any legal document. Tomorrow I and my office bearers will be at the gentleman's service.'

"Then he lifted up his hands and said, very reverently, 'Let us pray.'

"At which Mr. Glendonwyn turned and stamped his way back through the concourse in a great and high anger, declaring in the hearing of all that he would cast his son off forever, and that he would live to repent that day's work—with other speeches which I need not set down here.

Mr. John's sermon that day was on the text, "The Lord Hath Done Great Things for Us, of Which We Are Glad." And he spoke with much fervor of the reformation of John Knox, of the intrusion of bishops, of the high days of Presbytery, of the twenty-five years' of persecution and of the long deadness of prosperity which followed. I cannot mind all he said, but at the last, when near his concluding, he had this enlargement of the spirit. Speaking of the sacrifices which might yet be required, he said: "There are many things against us—many strong things and many powerful men. But there is one thing which may encourage us—when we that are on the earth shall depart and the gate of the eternal looms before us—though the portals be high as the heavens, we shall find the gate itself small and mean and low, while over its lintels shall be written in letters of gold the words, 'As a Little Child.'"

"A word which many took as an answer to the reflections which had been so freely made upon Mr. John that he should have set himself up to be wiser than Dr. Caesar and Mr. Aiblins and his own father, being, as it were, a young man and but a child in the service of the kirk."

Meantime in his tower of gray stone high over the sea-edge Gregory Glendonwyn sat, eating his heart out with anger for the disappointment of his hopes, but with the open defiance of his surviving son for the last bitter drop in his cup. He had no longer any fear of him. The papers which John had signed so hastily had been sufficient to enable Gregory Glendonwyn to procure the sum requisite for his immediate needs and to cover Rupert's defalcations. It did not matter to him that John was left absolutely penniless. Indeed that rather added the bitter stimulant of merited punishment to his paternal meditations.

His feeling increased in force and acrimony when he heard that his son had obtained a site for his church in the village of Gower itself—no other indeed than that house and garden which he, Gregory Glendonwyn, had bestowed upon the faithful Babby Lockhart and her heirs for her care and diligence in rearing this ungrateful son.

It was Factor Halliday who brought the news to his master and he had entered expecting to provoke a great outbreak of furious anger. None, however, came, which disappointed him. Gregory Glendonwyn sat with a gray set face thinking, and the factor had perforce to slip out with no news to carry either to the servants' hall or to the higher vehmegerecht of the head gardener, the head gamekeeper and the chief forester of the estates, the vassals and vavasours of the feudality of Gower.

Now to such a pass had this hatred come that the matter of Gregory Glendonwyn's thinking was frightful even to himself.

"No—" he was repeating over and over to himself, "not if I disown him—not if I am compelled to use against him the last weapon in my power, shall a penny of my money, a penny of my wife's money be spent on defying me, brow-beating me in the face of my own people. I will show him what it is to thwart his father, to join himself with beggarly showmen and political mountebanks. He has given up the stipend of his parish. He can have little from the company of scarecrows and beggars who will dare to favor him in Gower. For the rest—I will keep him from ever getting a penny out of the Gower estates. He has signed away his own property and inheritance like a fool. But I will hound him from Gower. I will cast him off as a son. And, by heaven and Him who dwells there, I will take the inheritance he is sure of out of his hand. I can and I will!"

And Gregory Glendonwyn, being a man of action, rose up at once and proceeded to carry out his threat.

For a great idea had occurred to him, a thought at once so striking and far-reaching, yet so mortifying to his own pride, that only the desperate hatred which he had been cultivating against his son in his heart could have brought him even to consider it.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Snarl of the Gray Wolf.

These amiable thoughts with regard to his son caused Gregory Glendonwyn to make up his mind to pay a visit of some importance to the story—one to which he himself looked forward with no great anticipations of pleasure. Indeed so little did he desire to make it for its own sake that he opened his mind that night to a certain Mr. Christopher Ingalls (of Sharp, Smart & Ingalls, W. S., of Edinburgh), who was staying with him at the castle. Mr. Ingalls had recently made himself exceedingly useful to Mr. Glendonwyn—in fact ever since Mr. McCrosty had declined to have anything to do with Gregory's irregular and unlawful intromissions with his younger son's maternal inheritance.

He it was who obtained and served the interdict shutting the quarry to the newly-formed Free Presbyterian congregation and driven them triumphantly forth to worship on the roadside, where next Sabbath he intended to have half a dozen county officers on hand with instructions to keep them moving. Mr. Ingalls had also gained much favor with his principal by discovering a flaw in the deed by which Mr. Glendonwyn had handed over the cottage and garden to Babby Lockhart. At least the litigation (and Mr. Glendonwyn meant to carry it to the bitter end, to the House of Lords if necessary) would take several years, and he anticipated more money than a struggling country congregation could afford to spend on the matter.

It was an interview he had with Duncan Grierson, however, which finally decided him to proceed to extremities with his son and to take the desperate resolution which he was now, in company with Mr. Ingalls, about to put into execution.

Duncan had come up on the Sabbath morning after breakfast and requested on his own behalf and on the part of a certain number of the upper servants of the House of Gower an interview with their master.

"What is it Grierson?" Mr. Glendonwyn cried, looking up testily. "This is Sunday and I have much on my mind today."

It was the morning of the service in the Old Quarry Hole.

"So have we, sir, so have we!" said Grierson, and without further preliminary he opened the door and ushered in Bannerman, the head gardener; Cuthbertson, the forester; Mrs. Mair, the housekeeper, and two of the upper house servants to the presence of the master of Castle Gower.

"This is most unseemly and untimeous," said Gregory Glendonwyn. "But speak out. Let me hear what you have to say! Have you any complaints to make?"

"Sir," said Duncan Grierson, "being the oldest servant in the castle as well as on the estates, I am asked to speak for those others who are here. Sir, we have had our disputings in public, our searchings of heart in private, with regard to matters of religion, and we have come to ask your permission to attend the services of the Free Presbyterian Kirk of Scotland in this parish upon such days as we have had heretofore our ordinary liberty of attendance upon ordinances. We do not think it is a matter which ought to come between master and servant, but we have been long with you—serving you, as far as in us lies, faithfully, and we would not do anything secret or (as it were) underhand with you!"

Dumb-stricken sat Gregory Glendonwyn. The rebellion had come very near his throne. For a moment he could not answer because of the furious anger which swelled in his breast.

Then the tempest broke forth in its full frenzy.

That day and hour they should leave his dwelling. They had been suborned by his son, one who rejoiced in stirring up strife, who set the most sacred obligations at defiance, caring for nothing except his own vain glory. He, Gregory Glendonwyn, would pay them their wages and they should go.

Then it was that Duncan Grierson bowed himself before his master with the ceremony of an Oriental and after that promptly erected himself and looked the laird of Gower in the face with the spirit of a Scottish free man.

"No, Mr. Glendonwyn," he said, "not like stranger dogs will we be driven from the doors we have entered so long. We are all good servants with our characters to look to and these men have wives and families, which I thank God I have not. We will serve you faithfully to the limits of our notices—I myself for a month and the others for six months, according to their agreements. During that time we will abstain from any declaration of our sentiments and from attendance on ordinances according to the way that our consciences approve—"

"Your conscience, Grierson," sneered his master, "of a truth it must have been growing in tenderness during these last days!"

The old man bowed his head.

"I thank God I have tried to make amends for some of the ill I have done," he said. "You have a right to cast that up to me, sir. But at least my future shall not copy my past. I have learned so much from Mr. John—"

"Silence!" shouted Mr. Glendonwyn, "if you name that name in this house I will knock you down—aye, if you could claim 100 years' service instead of fifty. And as for the rest of you—I will deal with you tomorrow morning—that is, I and Mr. Ingalls. You shall have liberty—all the liberty you like to exercise your religious duties according to your consciences, but if I get my way you shall have some way to travel in order to do it. You can go."

All which things and many others, slight but infinitely galling to a pround and arbitrary man, worked like fire in the veins of Gregory Glendonwyn. He would once for all make an end of his son. As a means to an end he set out with his new friend and man of business, Mr. Christopher Ingalls, to call upon David Glendenning and his daughters.

Little was said by the way. Mr. Glendonwyn was full of his intention, and as for Mr. Ingalls, he was engaged in estimating what this new connection would be worth to his firm—enough, he thought, being a pushing man, to buy out Sharp and Smart, who were both oldish men and would be content to retire to one of these estates of a few thousand country acres each, of which there were so many just now in the market—and especially in the hands of such clever practitioners as Messrs. Sharp, Smart and Ingalls, Writers to the Signet.

So in the clear, sifted a light of a June forenoon when the clouds were like a semi-globe of ground glass, these two gentlemen walked into the blue double leaf of David Glendenning's door and the taller of them knocked firmly and determinedly thereon with the knob of his cane. It had a gold knob and was fully as well known in the parish as the owner himself.

The Flower Cot was gay and brilliant as ever with geraniums and slipperwort of strange, uncanny shapes, speckled and ring-streaked like tropic fruits. The air was delicate with lilac, white and purple, and Fairlie's white roses clambered over all.

"A sweet place," said the lawyer, looking about him. "Yours of course, Mr. Glendonwyn?"

But the master of Gower Castle did not reply to the ill-omened query. He was looking rather anxiously about. He knocked the second time without receiving an answer. Did the Glendennings mean to deny themselves to him? Or, worst of all for his present purpose, had they carried his own former directions and gone away?

But no—at the third application of the gold knob to the blistered panel there came forth from a low door, variously streaked in blue and orange and scarlet, a tall man with gray locks of hair about his face, which escaped, oddly enough, from underneath the flat paper cap he wore, and the strangest eyes, looking out from under shaggy brows, which were in their turn subject to the strangest twitchings. This gaunt figure, hollow of cheek and fiery of eye, moved quickly along till the bony arms and multi-scarred hands, the shoulder slightly stooped and the threatening militant countenance were interposed between Gregory Glendonwyn and the creeper-hung door of the Flower Cot at which he had been knocking.

"You are Mr. David Glendenning?" said Gregory Glendonwyn, lifting his hat politely.

"I am!" replied the threatening figure with grim brevity, without returning the salutation.

"Then, Mr. Glendenning," said his visitor, nowise abashed, "I am come to have an important interview with you—"

"I desire none!" quoth David, with a snap of determined jaw, like the Gray Wolf, after which he was named, when he grips a thigh bone.

"I trust I shall be able to satisfy you that what I ask is for your good," said Mr. Glendonwyn, "and—I may add, for the benefit of those belonging to you."

"I ken of no possible benefit that I or mine could be glad to receive from you or yours, Gregory Glendonwyn," answered the joiner of Boatcroft, "save that ye should gang cot through that yett and never set foot on my doorstep again."

"But," persisted Mr. Glendonwyn, suavely, "it is a matter which concerns not only you, but your children and children's children—indeed all who come after you!"

A sudden access of fury seized the old man. He lifted a small vicious-headed American ax which was standing by the side of the wall.

"Gin ye do not tell me by what right ye speak of my children's children," he shouted, "by the Lord that is on high, I will cleave you to the breats-bane!"

Singularly devoid of courtesy was this grim Old Grey Wolf.

"Concerning that I can satisfy you to the full," said Gregory Glendonwyn, who, on his part, certainly did not lack his share of the family courage, for he never blanched at the near gleam of that threatening edge or at the swelling muscles of that mighty arm. "Permit me to speak with you apart for half an hour only. This is my legal adviser, Mr. Christopher Ingalls of Edinburgh. He will tell you that the matter is both urgent and private."

"I have nothing that needs to be held private with you or with any of your race," said David, "nor shall ye enter my hoose while there is breath o' life in my body. But yonder is the woodshed—if ye choose to pass in, I will not prevent ye."

"I thank you," said Gregory, gravely, going on before. Mr. Christopher Ingalls, whose apprenticeship to the law had not included precedents for dealing with interdicts in the shape of American axes, followed him, not a little bewildered.

"Now, speak your mind, and be brief," quoth David. And standing thus, the ax handle still in his hand the head gleaming up from a great block of chipped and dinted hardwood, the Old Gray Wolf looked the very type of an executioner waiting to do his office.

"Sir," said the Laird of Gower, whom no display of force could either daunt or deflect from his purpose, "I have come to invite my late son's wife and his infant son to take their due positions in my house, and to be acknowledged before all men as their position befits, and as I am willing and anxious to receive them."

For a moment David Glendenning stood, as it had been, stricken dumb with the surprise of the words. He had been ready to resent insult, and now, so far as his house's enemy knew how to do it, honor was done to him and his.

It was some time before the old Grey Wolf spoke. He stood like a statue carved in yellow ivory, all, that is, save the great bushy gray eyebrows, which kept working strangely, like mercury "pumping" before a storm.

And still Gregory Glendonwyn was not warned, though (as it were) all the four storm-cones were being hoisted at once. Then suddenly it came. The old carpenter of Boatcroft extended his arm like some gaunt semaphore.

"Go," he cried, "there lies your way! Marriage, I ken naught of any marriage. I ken o' no daughter of mine that is a wife to a son of yours. If I did I would brain them and their offspring with this ax. I will have no dealings with you or yours. Go—while by God's grace I can restrain myself—go!"

"Sir," said Gregory Glendonwyn, "this is not a matter for anger or dispute. It is a matter of right and justice. Your daughter Catherine is my late son's wife. That they were married admits of no doubt, though once, I own, I doubted it. I have the names of the witnesses. It is equally certain that the child born upon the island was—nay, is, the heir to the estates of Gower."

With a voice more doggedly grave than ever, David Glendenning replied:

"I ken nothing of heirs and marriages. I acknowledge none. I scorn you and your name, your lands and your heirships. I would rather that my daughter should live and die shamed than that she should bear, even by common repute, the name of a dastard and a coward, a ravisher of daughters from their father's hearth, a traitor to the woman that trusted him and to the love he professed—!"

(To be Continued.)

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