

The Marquis of Lossie

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CHAPTER I
THE STABLE YARD

IT WAS ONE OF THOSE exquisite days that come in every winter, in which it seems no longer the dead body, but the lovely ghost of summer. Such a day bears to its sister of the happier time some-thing of the relation the marble statue bears to the living form; the sense it awakes of beauty is more abstract, more ethereal; it lifts the soul into a higher region than will summer day of lordliest splendour. It is like the love that loss has purified.

Such, however, were not the thoughts that at the moment occupied the mind of Malcolm Colonsay. Indeed, the loveliness of the morning was but partially visible from the spot where he stood—the stable yard of Lossie House, ancient and roughly paved. It was a hundred years since the stones had been last relaid and levelled: none of the horses of the late Marquis minded it but one—her whom the young man in Highland dress was now grooming—and

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she would have fidgeted had it been an oak floor. The yard was a long and wide space, with two storied buildings on all sides of it. In the centre of one of them rose the clock, and the morning sun shone red on its tarnished gold. It was an ancient clock, but still capable of keeping good time—good enough, at least, for all the requirements of the house, even when the family was at home, seeing it never stopped, and the church clock was always ordered by it.

It not only set the time, but seemed also to set the fashion of the place, for the whole aspect of it was one of wholesome, weather beaten, time worn existence. One of the good things that accompany good blood is that its possessor does not much mind a shabby coat. Tarnish and lichens and water wearing, a wavy house ridge, and a few families of worms in the wainscot do not annoy the marquis as they do the city man who has just bought a little place in the country. When an old family ceases to go lovingly with nature, I see no reason why it should go any longer. An old tree is venerable, and an old picture precious to the soul, but an old house, on which has been laid none but loving and respectful hands, is dear to the very heart. Even an old barn door, with the carved initials of hinds and maidens of vanished centuries, has a place of honour in the cabinet of the poet's brain. It was centuries since Lossie House had begun to grow shabby—and beautiful; and he to whom it now belonged was not one to discard the reverend for the neat, or let the vanity of possession interfere with the grandeur of inheritance.

Beneath the tarnished gold of the clock, flushed with the red winter sun, he was at this moment grooming the coat of a powerful black mare. That he had not been brought up a groom was pretty evident from the fact that he was not hissing; but that he was Marquis of Lossie there was nothing about him to show. The mare looked dangerous. Every now and then she cast back a white glance of the one visible eye. But the youth was on his guard, and as wary as fearless in his handling of her. When at length he had finished the toilet which her restlessness—for her four feet were never all still at once upon the stones—had considerably protracted, he took from his pocket a lump of sugar, and held it for her to bite at with her angry looking teeth.

It was a keen frost, but in the sun the icicles had begun to drop.

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The roofs in the shadow were covered with hoar frost; wherever there was shadow there was whiteness. But for all the cold, there was keen life in the air, and yet keener life in the two animals, biped and quadruped.

As they thus stood, the one trying to sweeten the other's relation to himself, if he could not hope

much for her general temper, aman, who looked half farmer, half lawyer, appeared on the oppositeside of the court in the shadow.

"You are spoiling that mare, MacPhail," he cried.

"I canna weel du that, sir; she canna be muckle waur," said theyouth.

"It's whip and spur she wants, not sugar."

"She has had, and sail have baith, time aboot (in turn); and Ihoup they'll du something for her in time, sir."

"Her time shall be short here, anyhow. She's not worth the sugaryou give her."

"Eh, sir! luik at her," said Malcolm, in a tone of expostulation, as hestepped back a few paces and regarded her with admiring eyes. "Sawye ever sic legs? an' sic a neck? an' sic a heid? an' sic fore an' hin'quarters? She's a' bonny but the temper o' her, an' that she canna helplike the likes o' you an me."

"She'll be the death o' somebody some day. The sooner we get ridof her the better. Just look at that," he added, as the mare laid backher ears and made a vicious snap at nothing in particular.

"She was a favourite o' my—maister, the marquis," returned theyouth, "an' I wad ill like to pairt wi' her."

"I'll take any offer in reason for her," said the factor. "You'll just rideher to Forres market next week, and see what you can get for her. I dothink she's quieter since you took her in hand."

"I'm sure she is—but it winna laist a day. The moment I lea' her,she'll be as ill's ever," said the youth. "She has a kin' a likin' to me, 'cause I gi'e her sugar, an' she canna cast me; but she's no a bit betteri' the hert o' her yet. She's an oonsanctifeed brute. I cudna think o'sellin' her like this."

"Lat them 'at buys tak' tent (beware)," said the factor.

"Ow ay! lat them; I dinna objec'; gien only they ken what she'slike afore they buy her," rejoined Malcolm.

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The factor burst out laughing. To his judgment the youth hadspoken like an idiot.

"We'll not send you to sell," he said. "Stoat shall go with you, andyou shall have nothing to do but hold the mare and your owntongue."

"Sir," said Malcolm, seriously, "ye dinna mean what ye say? Yesaid yersel' she wad be the deith o' somebody, an' to sell her ohntell't what she's like wad be to caw the saxt comman'ment clean toshivers."

"That may be good doctrine i' the kirk, my lad, but it's pure her-esy i' the horse market. No, no! You

buy a horse as you take a wife—for better for worse, as the case may be. A woman's not bound totell her faults when a man wants to marry her. If she keeps off theworst of them afterwards, it's all he has a right to look for."

"Hoot, sir! there's no a pair o' parallel lines in a' the compairison," returned Malcolm. "Mistress Kelpie here 's e'en ower ready to con-fess her fauts, an' that by giein' a taste o' them; she winna bide to bespeired; but for haudin' aff o' them efter the bargain's made—yeken she's no even responsible for the bargain. An' gien ye expec' meto haud my tongue aboot them—faith, Maister Crathie, I wad assune think o' sellin' a rotten boat to Blue Peter. Gien the man 'at hasher to see tilt dinna ken to luik oot for a storm o' iron shune or langteeth ony moment, his wife may be a widow that same market nicht: An' forbye, it's again' the aucht comman'ment as weel's the saxt. There's nae exception there in regaird o' horse flesh. We maun behonest i' that as weel's i' corn or herrin', or onything ither 'at 's coftan' sell't atween man an' his neibor."

"There's one commandment, my lad," said Mr Crathie, with the dignity of intended rebuke, "you seem to find hard to learn, andthat is, to mind your own business."

"Gien ye mean catchin' the herrin', maybe ye're richt," said theyouth. "I ken muir aboot that nor the horse coupin', and it's fullcleaner."

"None of your impudence!" returned the factor. "The marquis isnot here to uphold you in your follies. That they amused him is noreason why I should put up with them. So keep your tongue be-tween your teeth, or you'll find it the worse for you."

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The youth smiled a little oddly, and held his peace.

"You're here to do what I tell you, and make no remarks," addedthe factor.

"I'm awaur o' that, sir—within certain leemits," returned Malcolm.

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean within the leemits o' duin' by yer neibor as ye wad ha'eyer neibor du by you—that's what I mean, sir."

"I've told you already that doesn't apply in horse dealing. Everyman has to take care of himself in the horse market: that's under-stood. If you had been brought up amongst horses instead of her-ring, you would have known that as well as any other man."

"I doobt I'll ha'e to gang back to the herrin' than, sir, for they'relike to pruv' the honest o' the twa; But there's nae hypocrisy in Kelpie, an' she maun ha'e her day's denner, come o' the morn's whatmay."

At the word hypocrisy, Mr Crathie's face grew red as the sun in afog. He was an elder of the kirk, and had family worship everynight as regularly as his toddy. So the word was as offensive andinsolent as it was foolish and inapplicable. He would have turned Malcolm adrift on the spot, but that he remembered—not the favourof the late marquis for the lad—that was nothing to the

factor now: his lord under the mould was to him as if he had never been above it—but the favour of the present marchioness, for all in the house knew that she was interested in him. Choking down therefore his rage and indignation, he said sternly;

“Malcolm, you have two enemies—a long tongue, and a strong conceit. You have little enough to be proud of, my man, and the less said the better. I advise you to mind what you’re about, and show suitable respect to your superiors, or as sure as judgment you’ll go back to fish guts.”

While he spoke, Malcolm had been smoothing Kelpie all over with his palms; the moment the factor ceased talking, he ceased stroking, and with one arm thrown over the mare’s back, looked him full in the face.

“Gien ye imagine, Maister Crathie,” he said, “at I coont it ony rise i’ the warl’ ‘at brings me un’er the orders o’ a man less honest than he might be, ye’re mista’en. I dinna think it’s pride this time; I

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wad ile Blue Peter’s lang butes till him, but I winna lee for ony factor atween this an’ Davy Jones.”

It was too much. Mr Crathie’s feelings overcame him, and he was a wrathful man to see, as he strode up to the youth with clenched fist.

“Haud frae the mere, for God’s sake, Maister Crathie,” cried Malcolm. But even as he spoke, two reversed Moorish arches of gleaming iron opened on the terror quickened imagination of the factor a threatened descent from which his most potent instinct, that of self preservation, shrank in horror. He started back white with dismay, having by a bare inch of space and a bare moment of time, escaped what he called Eternity. Dazed with fear he turned and had staggered halfway across the yard, as if going home, before he recovered himself. Then he turned again, and with what dignity he could scrape together said—“MacPhail, you go about your business.”

In his foolish heart he believed Malcolm had made the brute strike out.

“I canna weel gang till Stoa comes hame,” answered Malcolm.

“If I see you about the place after sunset, I’ll horsewhip you,” said the factor, and walked away, showing the crown of his hat.

Malcolm again smiled oddly, but made no reply. He undid the mare’s halter, and took her into the stable. There he fed her, standing by her all the time she ate, and not once taking his eyes off her. His father, the late marquis, had bought her at the sale of the stud of a neighbouring laird, whose whole being had been devoted to horses, till the pale one came to fetch himself: the men about the stable had drugged her, and, taken with the splendid lines of the animal, nor seeing cause to doubt her temper as she quietly obeyed the halter, he had bid for her, and, as he thought, had her a great bargain. The accident that finally caused his death followed immediately after, and while he was ill no one cared to vex him by saying what she had turned out. But Malcolm had even then taken her in hand in the hope of taming her a little before his master, who often spoke of his

latest purchase, should see her again. In this he had very partially succeeded; but if only for the sake of him whom he now knew for his father, nothing would have made him part with

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the animal. Besides, he had been compelled to use her with so much severity at times that he had grown attached to her from the reaction of pity as well as from admiration of her physical qualities, and the habitude of ministering to her wants and comforts. The factor, who knew Malcolm only as a servant, had afterwards allowed her to remain in his charge, merely in the hope, through his treatment, of by and by selling her, as she had been bought, for a faultless animal, but at a far better price.

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CHAPTER II

THE LIBRARY

WHEN SHE HAD FINISHED HER OATS, Malcolm left her busy with her hay, for she was a huge eater, and went into the house, passing through the kitchen and ascending a spiral stone stair to the library—the only room not now dismantled. As he went along the narrow passage on the second floor leading to it from the head of the stair, the house-keeper, Mrs Courthope, peeped after him from one of the many bed-rooms opening upon it, and watched him as he went, nodding her head two or three times with decision: he reminded her so strongly—not of his father, the last marquis, but the brother who had preceded him, that she felt all but certain, whoever might be his mother, he had as much of the Colonsay blood in his veins as any marquis of them all. It was in consideration of this likeness that Mr Crathie had permitted the youth, when his services were not required, to read in the library.

Malcolm went straight to a certain corner, and from amongst a dingy set of old classics took down a small Greek book, in large type. It was the manual of that slave among slaves, that noble among the free, Epictetus. He was no great Greek scholar, but, with the help of the Latin translation, and the gloss of his own rather experience, he could lay hold of the mind of that slave of a slave, whose every slavery was his slave to carry him to the heights of freedom. It was not Greek he cared for, but Epictetus. It was but little he read, however, for the occurrence of the morning demanded, compelled thought. Mr Crathie's behaviour caused him neither anger nor uneasiness, but it rendered necessary some decision with regard to the ordering of his future.

I can hardly say he recalled how, on his deathbed, the late marquis, about three months before, having, with all needful obser-

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vances, acknowledged him his son, had committed to his trust the welfare of his sister; for the memory of this charge was never absent from his feeling even when not immediately present to his thought. But although a charge which he would have taken upon him all the same had his father not committed it to him, it was none the less a source of perplexity upon which as yet all his thinking had let in but little light. For to appear as Marquis of Lossie was not merely to take from his sister the title she supposed her own, but to declare her illegitimate, seeing that, unknown to the marquis, the youth's mother, his first wife, was still alive when Florimel was born. How to act so that as little evil as possible might befall the favourite of his father, and one whom he had himself loved with the devotion almost of a dog, before he knew she was his sister, was the main problem.

For himself, he had had a rough education, and had enjoyed it: his thoughts were not troubled about his own prospects. Mysteriously committed to the care of a poor blind Highland piper, a stranger from inland regions, settled amongst a fishing people, he had, as he grew up, naturally fallen into their ways of life and labour, and but lately abandoned the calling of a fisherman to take charge of the marquis's yacht, whence, by degrees, he had, in his helpfulness, grown indispensable to him and his daughter, and had come to live in the house of Lossie as a privileged servant. His book education, which he owed mainly to the friendship of the parish schoolmaster, although nothing marvellous, or in Scotland very peculiar, had opened for him in all directions doors of thought and inquiry, but the desire of knowledge was in his case, again through the influences of Mr Graham, subservient to an almost restless yearning after the truth of things, a passion so rare that the ordinary mind can hardly master even the fact of its existence.

The Marchioness of Lossie, as she was now called, for the family was one of the two or three in Scotland in which the title descends to an heiress, had left Lossie House almost immediately upon her father's death, under the guardianship of a certain dowager countess. Lady Bellair had taken her first to Edinburgh, and then to London. Tidings of her Malcolm occasionally received through Mr Soutar of Duff Harbour, the lawyer the marquis had employed to

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draw up the papers substantiating the youth's claim. The last amounted to this, that, as rapidly as the proprieties of mourning would permit, she was circling the vortex of the London season; and Malcolm was now almost in despair of ever being of the least service to her as a brother to whom as a servant he had seemed at one time of daily necessity. If he might but once be her skipper, her groom, her attendant, he might then at least learn how to discover to her the bond between them, without breaking it in the very act, and so ruining the hope of service to follow.

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CHAPTER III

MISS HORN

THE DOOR OPENED, and in walked a tall, gaunt, hard featured woman, in a huge bonnet, trimmed with black ribbons, and a long black netveil, worked over with sprigs, coming down almost to her waist. She looked stern, determined, almost fierce, shook hands with a sort of loose dissatisfaction, and dropped into one of the easy chairs in which the library abounded. With the act the question seemed shot from her—"Duv ye ca' yersel' an honest man, noo, Ma'colm?"

"I ca' myself naething," answered the youth; "but I wad fain bewhat ye say, Miss Horn."

"Ow! I dinna doobt ye wadna steal, nor yet tell lees about a horse: I ha'e jist come frae a sair waggin' o' tongues about ye. Mistress Crathie tells me her man's in a sair vex 'at ye winna tell a wordlesslee about the black mere: that's what I ca't—no her. But lee it wadbe, an' dinna ye aither wag or haud a leein' tongue. A gentleman maunna lee, no even by sayin' naething—na, no gien 't war to win intill the kingdom. But, Guid be thankit, that's whaur leears never come. Maybe ye're thinkin' I ha'e sma' occasion to say sic like to yersel'. An' yet what's yer life but a lee, Ma'colm? You 'at's the hon-est Marquis o' Lossie to waur yer time an' the stren'th o' yer boadyan' the micht o' yer sowl tyauvin' (wrestling) wi' a deevil o' a shehorse, whan there's that half sister o' yer' ain gauin' to the verradeevil o' perdition himsel' amang the godless gentry o' Lon'on!"

"What wad ye ha'e me un'erstan' by that, Miss Horn?" returned Malcolm. "I hear no ill o' her. I daursay she's no jist a sa'nt yet, but that's no to be luiked for in ane o' the breed: they maun a' try the warl' first ony gait. There's a heap o' fowk—an' no aye the warst, maybe," continued Malcolm, thinking of his father, "'at wull ha'etheir bite o' the aipple afore they spite it oot. But for my leddy

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sister, she's owre prood ever to disgrace hersel'."

"Weel, maybe, gien she bena misguidit by them she's wi'. But I'm no sae muckle concernt about her. Only it's plain 'at ye ha'e no richt to lead her intill temptation."

"Hoo am I temptin' at her, mem?"

"That's plain to half an e'e. Ir ye no lattin' her live believin' a lee? Ir ye no allooin' her to gang on as gien she was somebody mair nor mortal, when ye ken she's nae mair Marchioness o' Lossie nor ye're the son o' auld Duncan MacPhail? Faith, ye ha'e lost trowth gien ye ha'e gaint the warl' i' the cheenge o' forbairs!"

"Mint at naething again the deid, mem. My father's gane till's accoont; an it's weel for him he has his father an' no his sister to pronoonce upo' him."

"Deed ye're right there, laddie," said Miss Horn, in a subdued

tone.

"He's made it up wi' my mither afore noo, I'm thinkin'; an' ony gait he confesst her his wife an' me her son afore he dee'd, an' what mair had he time to du?"

"It's fac'," returned Miss Horn. "An' noo luik at yersel': what yer father confesst wi' the verra deid thraw o' a labourin' speerit, to the whilk naething cud ha'e brought him but the deid thraws

(death struggles) o' the bodily natur' an' the fear o' hell, that same confession ye row up again i' the cloot o' secrecy, in place o' dightin' wi' 't the blot frae the memory o' ane wha I believe I lo'ed mair as my third cousin nor ye du as yer ain mither!"

"There's no blot upo' her memory, mem," returned the youth, "or I wad be markis the morn. There's never a sowl kens she was mither but kens she was wife—ay, an' whase wife, tu."

Miss Horn had neither wish nor power to reply, and changed her front.

"An' sae, Ma'colm Colonsay," she said, "ye ha'e no less nor made up yer min' to pass yer days in yer ain stable, neither better nor waur than an ostler at the Lossie Airms, an' that efter a' 'at I ha'e borne an' dune to mak a gentleman o' ye, bairdin' yer father here like a verra lion in 's den, an' garrin' him confess the thing again' ilka hair upon the stiff neck o' 'im? Losh, laddie! it was a pictur' to see him stan'in wi' 's back to the door like a camstairy (obstinate) bullock!"

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"Haud yer tongue, mem, gien ye please. I canna bide to hear my father spoken o' like that. For ye see I lo'ed him afore I kent he was ony drap 's blude to me."

"Weel, that's verra weel; but father an' mither's man and wife, an' ye camna o' a father alane."

"That's true, mem, an' it canna be I sud ever forget yon face ye shawed me i' the coffin, the bonniest, sairest sicht I ever saw," returned Malcolm, with a quaver in his voice.

"But what for cairry yer thoughts to the deid face o' her? Ye kent the leevin' ane weel," objected Miss Horn.

"That's true, mem; but the deid face maist blottit the leevin' oot o' my brain."

"I'm sorry for that.—Eh, laddie, but she was bonny to see!"

"I aye thought her the bonniest leddy I ever set e'e upo'. An' dinna think, mem, I'm gaein to forget the deid, 'cause I'm mair concemt about the leevin'. I tell ye I jist dinna ken what to du. What wi' my father's deein' words committin' her to my chairge, an' the more than regaird I ha'e to Leddy Florimel hersel', I'm jist whiles driven to ane mair. Hoo can I tak the verra sunsheen oot o' her life 'at I lo'ed afore I kent she was my ain sister, an' jist thought lang to win near eneuch till to du her ony guid turn worth duin? An' here I am, her ane half brither, wi' naething i' my pooer but to scaud the hert o' her, or else lee! Supposin' she was weel merried first, hoo wad she stan' wi' her man whan he cam to ken 'at she was nae marchioness—hed no lawfu' richt to ony name but her mither's? An' afore that, what richt cud I ha'e to alloo ony man to merry her ohn kent the trowth about her? Faith, it wad be a fine chance though for the fin'in' oot whether or no the man was worthy o' her! But, ye see that micht be to make a playock o' her hert. Puir thing, she luiks doon upo' me frae the tap o' her bonny neck, as frae a h'avenly heicht; but I s' lat her ken yet, gien only I can win at the gait o' 't, that I ha'ena come nigh her for naething."

He gave a sigh with the words, and a pause followed.

"The trowth's the trowth," resumed Miss Horn, "neither mair nor less."

“Ay,” responded Malcolm; “but there’s a richt an’ a wrang time for the telling’ o’ t. It’s no as gien I had had han’ or tongue in ony

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foregane lee. It was naething o’ my duin’, as ye ken, mem. To mysel’, I was never onything but a fisherman born. I confess ‘at whiles, when we wad be lyin’ i’ the lee o’ the nets, tethered to them like, wi’ the win’ blawin’ strong ‘an steady, I ha’e thocht wi’ mysel’ ‘at I kent naething about my father, an’ what gien it sud turn oot ‘at I was the son o’ somebody—what wad I du wi’ my siller?”

“An’ what thocht ye ye wad du, laddie?” asked Miss Horn gently.

“What but bigg a harbour at Scaurnose for the puir fisher fowk ‘at was like my ain flesh and blude!”

“Weel,” rejoined Miss Horn eagerly, “div ye no look upo’ that as a voo to the Almichty—a voo ‘at ye’re bun’ to pay, noo ‘at ye ha’e yer wuss? An’ it’s no merely ‘at ye ha’e the means, but there’s no anither that has the richt; for they’re yer ain fowk, ‘at ye gaither rent frae, an’ ‘at’s been for mony a generation sattlet upo’ yer lan’—though for the maitter o’ the lan’, they ha’e had little mair o’ that than the birds o’ the rock ha’e ohn feued—an’ them honest fowks wi’ wives an’ sowls o’ their ain! Hoo upo’ airth are ye to du yer duty by them, an’ render yer accoot at the last, gien ye dinna tak till ye yer pooer an’ reign? Ilk man ‘at ‘s in ony sense a king o’ men is bun’ to reign ower them in that sense. I ken little about things mysel’, an’ I ha’e no feelin’s to guide me, but I ha’e a when cowmon sense, an’ that maun jist stan’ for the lave.”

A silence followed.

“What for speak na ye, Ma’colm?” said Miss Horn, at length.

“I was jist tryin’,” he answered, “to min’ upon a twa lines ‘at I cam’ upo’ the ither day in a buik ‘at Maister Graham gied me afore he gaed awa—‘cause I reckon he kent them a’ by hert. They say jist sic like’s ye been sayin’, mem—gien I cud but min’ upo’ them. They’re about a man ‘at aye does the richt gait—made by ane they ca’ Wordsworth.”

“I ken naething about him,” said Miss Horn, with emphasized indifference.

“An’ I ken but little: I s’ ken mair or lang though. This is hoo the piece begins:

Who is the happy warrior? Who is he That every Man in arms should wish to be?—It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought Upon the plan that pleased

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his childish thought.

—There! that's what ye wad hae o' me, mem!"

"Hear till him!" cried Miss Horn. "The man's i' the richt, though naebody never h'ard o' 'im. Haud ye by that, Ma'colm, an' dinna ye rist till ye ha'e biggit a harbour to the men an' women o' Scaurnose. Wha kens hoo mony may gang to the boddom afore it be dune, jist for the want o' 't?"

"The fundation maun be laid in richteousness, though, mem, else—what gien 't war to save lives better lost?"

"That belongs to the Michty," said Miss Horn.

"Ay, but the layin' o' the fundation belongs to me. An' I'll no du't till I can du't ohn ruint my sister."

"Weel, there's ae thing clear: ye'll never ken what to do sae lang's ye hing on about a stable, fu' o' fower fittet animals wantin' sense— an' some twa fittet 'at has less."

"I doobt ye're richt there, mem; and gien I cud but tak puir Kelpie awa' wi' me—"

"Hoots! I'm affrontit wi ye. Kelpie—quo he! Preserve's a! The laad 'ill lat his ain sister gang, an' bide at hame wi' a mere!"

Malcolm held his peace.

"Ay, I'm thinkin' I maun gang," he said at length.

"Whaur till, than?" asked Miss Horn.

"Ow! to Lon'on—whaur ither?"

"And what'll yer lordship du there?"

"Dinna say lordship to me, mem, or I'll think ye're jeerin' at me. What wad the caterpillar say," he added, with a laugh, "gien ye ca'd her my leddie Psyche?"

Malcolm of course pronounced the Greek word in Scotch fashion.

"I ken naething about yer Seechies or yer Sukies," rejoined Miss Horn. "I ken 'at ye're bun' to be a lord and no a stableman, an' I s' no lat ye rist till ye up an' say what neist?"

"It's what I ha'e been sayin' for the last three month," said Malcolm.

"Ay, I daursay; but ye ha'e been sayin' 't upo' the braid o' yer back, and I wad ha'e ye up an' sayin' 't."

"Gien I but kent what to du!" said Malcolm, for the thousandth

time.

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"Ye can at least gang whaur ye ha'e a chance o' learnin'," returned his friend.—"Come an' tak yer supper wi' me the nicht—a rizzart haddie an' an egg, an' I'll tell ye mair about yer mither."

But Malcolm avoided a promise, lest it should interfere with what he might find best to do.

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CHAPTER IV

KELPIE'S AIRING

WHEN MISS HORN LEFT HIM—with a farewell kindlier than her greet-ing—rendered yet more restless by her talk, he went back to the stable, saddled Kelpie, and took her out for an airing.

As he passed the factor's house, Mrs Crathie saw him from the window. Her colour rose. She arose herself also, and looked after him from the door—a proud and peevish woman, jealous of her husband's dignity, still more jealous of her own.

"The verra image o' the auld markis!" she said to herself; for in the recesses of her bosom she spoke the Scotch she scorned to utter aloud; "and sits jist like himsel', wi' a wee stoop i' the saiddle, and ilka noo an' than a swing o' his haill boady back, as gien some thoucht had set him straught.—Gien the fractious brute wad but brak abane or twa o' him!" she went on in growing anger. "The impidence o' the fallow! He has his leave: what for disna he tak' it an' gang? Butoot o' this gang he sail. To ca' a man like mine a heep o' creet 'cause he wadna procleem till a haul market ilka secret fau't o' the horse he had to sell! Haith, he cam' upo' the wrang side o' the sheet to play the lord and maister here! and that I can tell him!"

The mare was fresh, and the roads through the policy hard both by nature and by frost, so that he could not let her go, and had enough to do with her. He turned, therefore, towards the sea gate, and soon reached the shore. There, westward of the Seaton, where the fisher folk lived, the sand lay smooth, flat, and wet along the edge of the receding tide: he gave Kelpie the rein, and she sprang into a wild gallop, every now and then flinging her heels as high as her rider's head. But finding, as they approached the stony part from which rose the great rock called the Bored Craig, that he could not pull her up in time, he turned her head towards the long dune

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of sand which, a little beyond the tide, ran parallel with the shore. It was dry and loose, and the ascent steep. Kelpie's hoofs sank at every step, and when she reached the top, with wide spread struggling haunches, and "nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim," he had her in hand. She stood panting, yet pawing and dancing, and making the sand fly in all directions.

Suddenly a woman with a child in her arms rose, as it seemed to Malcolm, under Kelpie's very head. She wheeled and reared, and, in wrath or in terror, strained every nerve to unseat her rider, while, whether from faith or despair, the woman stood still as a statue, staring at the struggle.

"Haud awa' a bit, Lizzy," cried Malcolm. "She's a mad brute, an' I mayna be able to haud her. Ye ha'e the bairnie, ye see!"

She was a young woman, with a sad white face. To what Malcolm said she paid no heed, but stood with her child in her arms and gazed at Kelpie as she went on plunging and kicking about on the top of the dune.

"I reckon ye wadna care though the she deevil knockit oot yer harness; but ye ha'e the bairn, woman! Ha'e mercy on the bairn, an' rin to the boddom."

"I want to speak to ye, Ma'colm MacPhail," she said, in a tone whose very stillness revealed a depth of trouble.

"I doobt I canna hearken to ye richt the noo," said Malcolm. "But bide a wee." He swung himself from Kelpie's back, and, hanging hard on the bit with one hand, searched with the other in the pocket of his coat, saying, as he did so—"Sugar, Kelpie! sugar!"

The animal gave an eager snort, settled on her feet, and began snuffing about him. He made haste, for, if her eagerness should turn to impatience, she would do her endeavour to bite him. After crunching three or four lumps, she stood pretty quiet, and Malcolm must make the best of what time she would give him.

"Noo, Lizzy!" he said hurriedly. "Speyk while ye can."

"Ma'colm," said the girl, and looked him full in the face for a moment, for agony had overcome shame; then her gaze sought the far horizon, which to seafaring people is as the hills whence cometh their aid to the people who dwell among mountains;—"Ma'colm, he's gaein' to merry Leddy Florimel."

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Malcolm started. Could the girl have learned more concerning his sister than had yet reached himself? A fine watching over her was his, truly! But who was this he?

Lizzy had never uttered the name of the father of her child, and all her people knew was that he could not be a fisherman, for then he would have married her before the child was born. But Malcolm had had a suspicion from the first, and now her words all but confirmed it.—And was that fellow going to marry his sister? He turned white with dismay—then red with anger, and stood speechless.

But he was quickly brought to himself by a sharp pinch under the shoulder blade from Kelpie's long teeth: he had forgotten her, and she had taken the advantage.

"Wha tellt ye that, Lizzy?" he said.

"I'm no at leeberty to say, Ma'colm, but I'm sure it's true, an' myhert's like to brak."

"Puir lassie!" said Malcolm, whose own trouble had never at anytime rendered him insensible to that of others. "But is't onybody 'atkens what he says?" he pursued.

"Weel, I dinna jist richtly ken gien she kens, but I think she maunha'e gude rizzon, or she wadna say as she says. Oh me! me! mybairnie 'ill be scornin' me sair whan he comes to ken. Ma'colm, ye're the only ane 'at disna luik doon upo' me, an whan ye cam'ower the tap o' the Boar's Tail, it was like an angel in a fire flaucht, an' something inside me said—Tell 'im; tell 'im; an' sae I bude totell ye."

Malcolm was even too simple to feel flattered by the girl's confi-dence, though to be trusted is a greater compliment than to beloved.

"Hearken, Lizzy!" he said. "I canna e'en think, wi' this brute readyilka meenute to ate me up. I maun tak' her hame. Efter that, gien yewad like to tell me onything, I s' be at yer service. Bide about here—or, luik ye: here's the key o' yon door; come throu' that intil the park—throu' aneth the toll ro'd, ye ken. There ye'll get into thelythe (lee) wi' the bairnie; an' I'll be wi' ye in a quarter o' an hoor. It'll tak' me but twa meenutes to gang hame. Stoa't 'ill put up themere, and I'll be back—I can du't in ten meenutes."

"Eh! dinna hurry for me, Ma'colm: I'm no worth it," said Lizzy.

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But Malcolm was already at full speed along the top of the dune.

"Lord preserve 's!" cried Lizzy, when she saw him clear the brassswivel. "Sic a laad as that is! Eh, he maun ha'e a richt lass to lo'e himsome day! It's a' ane to him, boat or beast. He wadna turn frae the deil himsel'. An syne he's jist as saft's a deuk's neck when he speykstill a wuman or a bairn—ay, or an auld man aither!"

And full of trouble as it was about another, Lizzy's heart yet ached at the thought that she should be so unworthy of one like him.

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CHAPTER V

LIZZY FINDLAY

FROM THE SANDS she saw him gain the turnpike road with a bound and a scramble. Crossing it he entered the park by the sea gate; she had to enter it by the tunnel that passed under the same road. She approached the grated door, unlocked it, and looked in with a shudder. It was dark, the other end of it being obscured by trees, and the roots of the hill on whose top stood the temple of the winds. Through the tunnel blew what seemed quite another wind—one of death, from regions

beneath. She drew her shawl, one end of which was rolled about her baby, closer around them both ere she entered. Never before had she set foot within the place, and a strange horror of it filled her: she did not know that by that passage, on a certain lovely summer night, Lord Meikleham had issued to meet her on the sands under the moon. The sea was not terrible to her; she knew all its ways nearly as well as Malcolm knew the moods of Kelpie; but the earth and its ways were less known to her, and to turn her face towards it and enter by a little door into its bosom was like a visit to her grave. But she gathered her strength, entered with a shudder, passed in growing hope and final safety through it, and at the other end came out again into the light, only the cold of its death seemed to cling to her still. But the day had grown colder; the clouds that, seen or unseen, ever haunt the winter sun, had at length caught and shrouded him, and through the gathering vapours he looked ghastly. The wind blew from the sea. The tide was going down. There was snow in the air. The thin leafless trees were all bending away from the shore, and the wind went sighing, hissing, and almost wailing through their bare boughs and budless twigs. There would be a storm, she thought, ere the morning, but none of their people were out.

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Had there been—well, she had almost ceased to care about any thing, and her own life was so little to her now, that she had become less able to value that of other people. To this had the ignis fatuus of a false love brought her! She had dreamed heedlessly, to awake sorrowfully. But not until she heard he was going to be married, had she come right awake, and now she could dream no more. Alas! alas! what claim had she upon him? How could she tell, since such he was, what poor girl like herself she might not have robbed of her part in him?

Yet even in the midst of her misery and despair, it was some consolation to think that Malcolm was her friend.

Not knowing that he had already suffered from the blame of her fault, or the risk at which he met her, she would have gone towards the house to meet him the sooner, had not this been a part of the grounds where she knew Mr Crathie tolerated no one without express leave given. The fisher folk in particular must keep to the road by the other side of the burn, to which the sea gate admitted them. Lizzy therefore lingered near the tunnel, afraid of being seen.

Mr Crathie was a man who did well under authority, but upon the top of it was consequential, overbearing, and far more exacting than the marquis. Full of his employer's importance when he was present, and of his own when he was absent, he was yet in the latter circumstances so doubtful of its adequate recognition by those under him, that he had grown very imperious, and resented with indignation the slightest breach of his orders. Hence he was in no great favour with the fishers.

Now all the day he had been fuming over Malcolm's behaviour to him in the morning, and when he went home and learned that his wife had seen him upon Kelpie, as if nothing had happened, he became furious, and, in this possession of the devil, was at the present moment wandering about the grounds, brooding on the words Malcolm had spoken. He could not get rid of them. They caused an acrid burning in his bosom, for they had in them truth, like which no poison stings.

Malcolm, having crossed by the great bridge at the house, hurried down the western side of the burn to find Lizzy, and soon came upon her, walking up and down.

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"Eh, lassie, ye maun be cauld!" he said.

"No that cauld," she answered, and with the words burst into tears: "But naebody says a kin' word to me noo," she said in excuse, "an' I canna weel bide the soun' o' ane when it comes; I'm no used till 't."

"Naebody?" exclaimed Malcolm.

"Na, naebody," she answered. "My mither winna, my father daurna, an' the bairnie canna, an I gang near naebody forbye."

"Weel, we maunna stan' oot here i' the cauld: come this gait," said Malcolm. "The bairnie 'll get its deid."

"There wadna be mony to greit at that," returned Lizzy, and pressed the child closer to her bosom.

Malcolm led the way to the little chamber contrived under the temple in the heart of the hill, and unlocking the door made her enter. There he seated her in a comfortable chair, and wrapped her in the plaid he had brought for the purpose. It was all he could do to keep from taking her in his arms for very pity, for, both body and soul, she seemed too frozen to shiver. He shut the door, sat down on the table near her, and said:

"There's naebody to disturb 's here, Lizzy: what wad ye say to me noo?"

The sun was nearly down, and its light already almost smothered in clouds, so that the little chamber, whose door and window were in the deep shadow of the hill, was nearly dark.

"I wadna hae ye tell me onything ye promised no to tell," resumed Malcolm, finding she did not reply, "but I wad like to hear as muckle as ye can say."

"I hae naething to tell ye, Ma'colm, but jist 'at my leddy Florimel's gauin' to be merried upo' Lord Meikleham—Lord Liffore, they ca' him noo. Hech me!"

"God forbid she sud be merried upon ony sic a bla'guard!" cried Malcolm.

"Dinna ca' 'im ill names, Ma'colm. I canna bide it, though I hae no richt to tak up the stick for him."

"I wadna say a word 'at nicht fa' sair on a sair hert," he returned; "but gien ye kent a', ye wad ken I hed a gey sized craw to pluck wi' 's lordship mysel'."

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The girl gave a low cry.

"Ye wadna hurt 'im, Ma'colm?" she said, in terror at the thought of the elegant youth in the clutches of an angry fisherman, even if he were the generous Malcolm MacPhail himself.

"I wad raither not," he replied, "but we maun see hoo he cairries himsel'."

"Du naething till 'im for my sake, Ma'colm. Ye can hae naething again' him yersel'."

It was too dark for Malcolm to see the keen look of wistful regret with which Lizzy tried to pierce the gloom and read his face: for a moment the poor girl thought he meant he had loved her himself. But far other thoughts were in Malcolm's mind: one was that her whom, as a scarce approachable goddess, he had loved before he knew her of his own blood, he would rather see married to an honest fisherman in the Seaton of Portlossie, than to such a lord as Meikleham. He had seen enough of him at Lossie House to know what he was, and puritanical fish catching Malcolm had ideas above those of most marquises of his day: the thought of the alliance was horrible to him. It was possibly not inevitable, however; only what could he do, and at the same time avoid grievous hurt?

"I dinna think he'll ever merry my leddy," he said.

"What gars ye say that, Ma'colm?" returned Lizzy, with eagerness.

"I canna tell ye jist i' the noo; but ye ken a body canna weel be aye about a place ohn seein things. I'll tell ye something o' mair consequence hooever," he continued. . "Some fowk say there's a God, an' some say there's nane, an' I ha'e no richt to preach to ye, Lizzy; but I maun jist tell ye this—'at gien God dinna help them 'at cry till 'imi' the warst o' tribles, they micht jist as weel ha'e nae God at a'. For my ain part I ha'e been helpit, an' I think it was him intil 't. Wi' his help, a man may warstle throu' anything. I say I think it was himsel' tuik me throu' 't, an' here I stan' afore ye, ready for the neist tribble, an' the help 'at 'll come wi' 't. What it may be, God only knows!"

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CHAPTER VI

MR CRATHIE

HE WAS INTERRUPTED by the sudden opening of the door, and the voice of the factor in exultant wrath.

"MacPhail!" it cried. "Come out with you. Don't think to sneak there. I know you. What right have you to be on the premises? Didn't I send you about your business this morning?"

"Ay, sir, but ye didna pay me my wages," said Malcolm, who had sprung to the door and now stood holding it half shut, while Mr Crathie pushed it half open.

"No matter. You're nothing better than a housebreaker if you enter any building about the place."

"I brak nae lock," returned Malcolm. "I ha'e the key my lord gaeme to ilka place 'ithin the wa's excep' the strong room."

"Give it me directly. I'm master here now."

"Deed, I s' du nae sic thing, sir. What he gae me I'll keep."

"Give up that key, or I'll go at once and get a warrant against you for theft."

"Weel, we s' refar't to Maister Soutar."

"Damn your impudence—'at I sud say't!—what has he to do with my affairs? Come out of that directly."

"Huly, huly, sir!" returned Malcolm, in terror lest he should discover who was with him.

"You low bred rascal! Who have you there with you?"

As he spoke Mr Crathie would have forced his way into the dusky chamber, where he could just perceive a motionless undefined form. But stiff as a statue Malcolm kept his stand, and the door was im-movable. Mr Crathie gave a second and angrier push, but the youth's corporeal as well as his mental equilibrium was hard to upset, and his enemy drew back in mounting fury.

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"Get out of there," he cried, "or I'll horsewhip you for a damned blackguard."

"Whup awa'," said Malcolm, "but in here ye s' no come the nicht."

The factor rushed at him, his heavy whip upheaved—and the same moment found himself, not in the room, but lying on the flower bed in front of it. Malcolm instantly stepped out, locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and turned to assist him. But he was up already, and busy with words unbecoming the mouth of an elder of the kirk.

"Didna I say 'at ye sudna come in, sir? What for wull fowk no tak' a tellin'?" expostulated Malcolm.

But the factor was far beyond force of logic or illumination of reason. He raved and swore.

"Get oot o' my sicht," he cried, "or I'll shot ye like a tyke."

"Gang an' fess yer gun," said Malcolm, "an' gien ye fin' me waitin' for ye, ye can lat at me."

The factor uttered a horrible imprecation on himself if he did not make him pay dearly for his behaviour.

"Hoots, sir! Be asham't o' yersel'. Gang hame to the mistress, an' I s' be up the morn's mornin' for my wages."

"If ye set foot on the grounds again, I'll set every dog in the place upon you."

Malcolm laughed.

"Gien I was to turn the order the ither gait, wad they min' you or me, div ye think, Maister Crathie?"

"Give me that key, and go about your business."

"Na, na, sir! What my lord gae me I s' keep—for a' the factors atween this an' the Land's En'," returned Malcolm. "An' for lea'in' the place, gien I be na in your service, Maister Crathie, I'm nae un'er your orders. I'll gang whan it shuits me. An' mair yet, ye s' gang oot o' this first, or I s' gar ye, an that ye'll see."

It was a violent proceeding, but for a matter of manners he was not going to risk what of her good name poor Lizzy had left: like the books of the Sibyl, that grew in value. He made, however, but one threatful stride towards the factor, for the great man turned and fled.

The moment he was out of sight, Malcolm unlocked the door,

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led Lizzy out, and brought her through the tunnel to the sands.

There he left her, and set out for Scaurnose.

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CHAPTER VII

BLUE PETER

THE DOOR OF BLUE PETER'S COTTAGE was opened by his sister. Not much at home in the summer, when she carried fish to the country, she was very little absent in the winter, and as there was but one room for all uses, except the closet bedroom and the garret at the top of the ladder, Malcolm, instead of going in, called to his friend, whom he saw by the fire with his little Phemy upon his knee, to come out and speak to him.

Blue Peter at once obeyed the summons.

"There's naething wrang, I houp, Ma'colm?" he said, as he closed the door behind him.

"Maister Graham wad say," returned Malcolm, "naething ever was wrang but what ye did wrang yersel', or wadna pit richt whan ye had a chance. I ha'e him nae mair to gang till, Joseph, an' sae I'm come to you. Come doon by, an' i' the scoug o' a rock, I'll tell ye a' about it."

"Ye wadna ha'e the mistress no ken o' 't?" said his friend. "I dinnajist like haein' secrets frae her."

"Ye sall jeedge for yersel', man, an' tell her or no just as ye like. Only she maun haud her tongue, or the black dog 'll ha'e a' thebutter."

"She can haud her tongue like the tae stane o' a grave," said Peter.

As they spoke they reached the cliff that hung over the shattered shore. It was a clear, cold night. Snow, the remnants of the last storm, which frost had preserved in every shadowy spot, lay all about them. The sky was clear, and full of stars, for the wind that blew cold from the northwest had dispelled the snowy clouds. The waves rushed into countless gulfs and crannies and straits on the ruggedest of shores, and the sounds of waves and wind kept calling like voices

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from the unseen. By a path, seemingly fitter for goats than men, they descended halfway to the beach, and under a great projection of rock stood sheltered from the wind. Then Malcolm turned to Joseph Mair, commonly called Blue Peter, because he had been a man of war's man, and laying his hand on his arm said:

"Blue Peter, did ever I tell ye a lee?"

"No, never," answered Peter. "What gars ye speir sic a thing?"

"Cause I want ye to believe me noo, an' it winna be easy."

"I'll believe onything ye tell me—'at can be believed."

"Weel, I ha'e come to the knowledge 'at my name's no MacPhail: it's Colonsay. Man, I'm the Markis o' Lossie."

Without a moment's hesitation, without a single stare of unbelief or even astonishment, Blue Peter pulled off his bonnet, and stood bareheaded before the companion of his toils.

"Peter!" cried Malcolm, "dinna brak my hert: put on yer bonnet."

"The Lord o' lords be thankit, my lord!" said Blue Peter: "the puir man has a freen' this day."

Then replacing his bonnet he said—"An' what'll be yer lordship's wull?"

"First and foremost, Peter, that my best freen', efter my auld daddy and the schulemaister, 's no to turn again' me 'cause I hed a markis an' neither piper nor fisher to my father."

"It's no like it, my lord," returned Blue Peter, "whan the first thing I say is—what wad ye ha'e o' me? Here I am—no speirin' a queston!"

"Weel, I wad ha'e ye hear the story o' 't a'."

"Say on, my lord," said Peter.

But Malcolm was silent for a few moments.

"I was thinkin', Peter," he said at last, "whether I cud bide to hear you say my lord to me. Dootless, as it 'll ha'e to come to that, it wad be better to grow used till 't while we're thegither, sae 'at whan it maun be, it mayna ha'e the luik o' cheenge until it, for cheenge is jist the thing I canna bide. I' the meantime, hooever, we canna gi'e in till 't, 'cause it wad set fowk jaloosin'. But I wad be obleeged till ye, Peter, gien you wad say my lord whiles, whan we're oor lanes, for I wad fain grow sae used till 't 'at I never kent ye said it, for 'atween you an' me I dinna like it. An' noo I s' tell ye a' 'at I ken."

When he had ended the tale of what had come to his knowledge,

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and how it had come, and paused:

"Gie's a grup o' yer han', my lord," said Blue Peter, "an' may God haud ye lang in life an' honour to reule ower us. Noo, gien ye please, what are ye gauin' to du?"

"Tell ye me, Peter, what ye think I oucht to du."

"That wad tak a heap o' thinkin'," returned the fisherman; "but ae thing seems aboot plain: ye ha'e no richt to lat yer sister gang exposed to temptations ye cud haud frae her. That's no, as ye promised, to be kin' till her. I canna believe that's hoo yer father expeckit o' ye. I ken weel 'at fowk in his poseetion ha'ena the preevileeges o' the like o' hiz—they ha'ena the win, an' the watter, an' whiles a lee shore to gar them know they are but men, an' sen' them rattling at the wicket of h'aven; but still I dinna think, by yer ain accoont, specially noo 'at I houp he's forgi'en an' latten in—God grant it!— I div not think he wad like my leddy Florimel to be oon'er the influences o' sic a ane as that Leddy Bellair. Ye maun gang till her. Ye ha'e nae ch'ice, my lord."

"But what am I to do, whan I div gang?"

"That's what ye hev to gang an' see."

"An' that's what I ha'e been tellin' mysel', an' what Miss Horn's been tellin' me tu. But it's a gran' thing to get yer ain thoughts corroborat. Ye see I'm feart for wrangin' her for pride, and bringin' her doon to set mysel' up."

"My lord," said Blue Peter, solemnly, "ye ken the life o' puir fisher fowk; ye ken hoo it micht be lichtened, sae lang as it laists, an' mony a hole steikit 'at the cauld deith creeps in at the noo: coont ye them naething, my lord? Coont ye the wull o' Providence, 'at sets ye ower them, naething? What for could the Lord ha'e gie ye sic an upbringing' as no markis' son ever hed afore ye, or maybe ever wull ha'e efter ye, gien it bena 'at ye sud tak them in han' to du yer pairt by them? Gien ye forsak them noo, ye'll be forgettin' him 'at made them an' you, an' the sea, an' the herrin' to be taen intil 't. Gien ye forget them, there's nae houp for them, but the same deith 'ill keep on swallowin' at them upo' sea an' shore."

"Ye speyk the trowth as I ha'e spoken't till mysel', Peter. Noo, hearken: will ye sail wi' me the nicht for Lon'on toon?" The fisherman was silent a moment—then answered, "I wull, my lord; but I

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maun tell my wife."

"Rin, an' fess her here than, for I'm fleyed at yer sister, honest wuman, an' little Phemy. It wad blaud a' thing gien I was hurried to du something afore I kenned what."

"I s' ha'e her oot in a meenute," said Joseph, and scrambled up the cliff.

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CHAPTER VIII

VOYAGE TO LONDON

FOR A FEW MINUTES Malcolm stood alone in the dim starlight of winter, looking out on the dusky sea, dark as his own future, into which the wind now blowing behind him would soon begin to carry him. He anticipated its difficulties, but never thought of perils: it was seldom anything oppressed him but the doubt of what he ought to do. This was ever the cold mist that swallowed the air-castles he built and peopled with all the friends and acquaintances of his youth. But the very first step towards action is the death-warrant of doubt, and the tide of Malcolm's being ran higher that night, as he stood thus alone under the stars, than he had ever yet known it run. With all his common sense, and the abundance of his philosophy, which the much leisure belonging to certain phases of his life had combined with the slow strength of his intellect to render somewhat long-winded in utterance, there was yet room in Malcolm's bonnet for a bee above the ordinary size, and if it buzzed a little too romantically for the taste of the nineteenth century, about disguises and surprises and bounty and plots and rescues and suchlike, something must be pardoned to one whose experience had already been so greatly out of the common, and whose nature was far too childlike and poetic, and developed in far too simple a surrounding of labour and success, difficulty and conquest, danger and deliverance, not to have more than the usual amount of what is called the romantic in its composition.

The buzzing of his bee was for the present interrupted by the return of Blue Peter with his wife. She threw her arms round Malcolm's neck, and burst into tears.

"Hoots, my woman!" said her husband, "what are ye greitin' at?"

"Eh, Peter!" she answered, "I canna help it. It's jist like a deith.

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He's gaun' to lea' us a', an' gang hame till 's ain, an' I canna bide 'athe sud grow strange-like to hiz 'at ha'e kenned him sae lang."

"It'll be an ill day," returned Malcolm, "whan I grow strange toony freen'. I'll ha'e to gang far down the laich (low) ro'd afore thatbe poossible. I mayna aye be able to du jist what ye wad like; butlippen ye to me: I s' be fair to ye. An' noo I want Blue Peter to gangwi' me, an' help me to what I ha'e to du—gien ye ha'e nae objectionto lat him."

"Na, nane ha'e I. I wad gang mysel' gien I cud be ony use," an-swered Mrs Mair; "but women are i' the gait whiles."

"Weel, I'll no even say thank ye; I'll be awin' ye that as weel's thelave. But gien I dinna du weel, it winna be the fau't o' ane or the ithero' you twa freen's. Noo, Peter, we maun be aff."

"No the nicht, surely?" said Mrs Mair, a little taken by surprise.

"The suner the better, lass," replied her husband. "An' we cudnaha'e a better win'. Jist rin ye hame, an' get some vicktoals thegither,an' come efter hiz to Portlossie."

"But hoo 'ill ye get the boat to the watter ohn mair han's? I'll needto come mysel' an' fess Jean."

"Na, na; let Jean sit. There's plenty i' the Seaton to help. We'regauin' to tak' the markis's cutter. She's a heap easier to lainch, an'she'll sail a heap fester."

"But what'll Maister Crathie say?"

"We maun tak' oor chance o' that," answered her husband, with a smile of confidence; and thereupon he and Malcolm set out for the Seaton, while Mrs Mair went home to get ready some provisionsfor the voyage, consisting chiefly of oatcakes.

The prejudice against Malcolm from his imagined behaviour to Lizzy Findlay, had by this time, partly through the assurances of Peter, partly through the power of the youth's innocent presence,almost died out, and when the two men reached the Seaton, theyfound plenty of hands ready to help them to reach the little sloop. Malcolm said he was going to take her to Peterhead, and they askedno questions but such as he contrived to answer with truth, or toleave unanswered. Once afloat, there was very little to be done toher, for she had been laid up in perfect condition, and as soon as Mrs Mair appeared with her basket, and they had put that, a keg of

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water, some fishing lines, and a pan of mussels for bait, on board, they were ready to sail, and wished their friends a light goodbye, leaving them to imagine they were gone but for a day or two, probably on some business of Mr Crathie's.

With the wind from the northwest, they soon reached Duff Harbour, where Malcolm went on shore and saw Mr Soutar. He, with a landsman's prejudice, made strenuous objections to such a mad prank as sailing to London at that time of the year, but in vain. Malcolm saw nothing mad in it, and

the lawyer had to admit he ought to know best. He brought on board with him a lad of Peter's acquaintance, and now fully manned, they set sail again, and by the time the sun appeared were not far from Peterhead.

Malcolm's spirits kept rising as they bowled along over the bright cold waters. He never felt so capable as when at sea. His energies had been first called out in combat with the elements, and hence he always felt strongest, most at home, and surest of himself on the water. Young as he was, however, such had been his training under Mr Graham, that a large part of this elevation of spirit was owing to an unreasoned sense of being there more immediately in the hands of God. Later in life, he interpreted the mental condition thus— that of course he was always and in every place equally in God's hands, but that at sea he felt the truth more keenly. Where a man has nothing firm under him, where his life depends on winds invisible and waters unstable, where a single movement may be death, he learns to feel what is at the same time just as true every night he spends asleep in the bed in which generations have slept before him, or any sunny hour he spends walking over ancestral acres.

They put in at Peterhead, purchased a few provisions, and again set sail.

And now it seemed to Malcolm that he must soon come to a conclusion as to the steps he must take when he reached London. But think as he would, he could plan nothing beyond finding out where his sister lived, going to look at the house, and getting into it if he might. Nor could his companion help him with any suggestions, and indeed he could not talk much with him because of the presence of Davy, a rough, round eyed, red haired young Scot, of the dull invaluable class that can only do what they are told, but do

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that to the extent of their faculty.

They knew all the coast as far as the Frith of Forth; after that they had to be more careful. They had no charts on board, nor could have made much use of any. But the wind continued favourable, and the weather cold, bright, and full of life. They spoke many coasters on their way, and received many directions.

Off the Nore they had rough weather, and had to stand off and on for a day and a night till it moderated. Then they spoke a fishing boat, took a pilot on board, and were soon in smooth water. More and more they wondered as the channel narrowed, and ended their voyage at length below London Bridge, in a very jungle of masts.

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CHAPTER IX

LONDON STREETS

LEAVING DAVY TO KEEP THE SLOOP, the two fishermen went on shore. Passing from the narrow precincts of the river, they found them-selves at once in the roar of London city. Stunned at first, then excited, then bewildered, then dazed, without plan to guide their steps, they wandered about until, unused to the hard stones, their feet ached. It was a dull day in March. A keen wind blew round the corners of the streets. They wished themselves at sea again.

“Sic a sicht o’ fowk!” said Blue Peter.

“It’s hard to think,” rejoined Malcolm, “what w’y the God ‘at made them can luik efter them a’ in sic a tumult. But they say even the sheep dog kens ilk sheep i’ the flock ‘at ‘s gien him in charge.”

“Ay, but ye see,” said Blue Peter, “they’re mair like a shoal o’ herrin’ nor a flock o’ sheep.”

“It’s no the num’er o’ them ‘at plagues me,” said Malcolm. “The gran’ diffeeculty is hoo He can lat ilk ane tak’ his ain gait an’ yet luik efter them a’. But gien He does’t, it stan’s to rizzon it maun be insome w’y ‘at them ‘at’s sae luikit efter canna by ony possibeelity un’erstan’.”

“That’s trowth, I’m thinkin’. We maun jist gi’e up an’ confess there’s things abune a’ human comprehension.”

“Wha kens but that maybe ‘cause i’ their verra natur’ they’re ower semple for cr’aturs like hiz ‘at’s made sae mixed-like, an’ see sae little intill the hert o’ things?”

“Ye’re ayont me there,” said Blue Peter, and a silence followed.

It was a conversation very unsuitable to London Streets—but then these were raw Scotch fisherman, who had not yet learned how absurd it is to suppose ourselves come from anything greater than ourselves, and had no conception of the liberty it confers on a man

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to know that he is the child of a protoplasm, or something still more beautifully small.

At length a policeman directed them to a Scotch eating house, where they fared after their country’s fashions, and from the landlady gathered directions by which to guide themselves towards Curzon Street, a certain number in which Mr Soutar had given Malcolm as Lady Bellair’s address.

The door was opened to Malcolm’s knock by a slatternly charwoman, who, unable to understand a word he said, would, but for its fine frank expression, have shut the door in his face. From the expression of hers, however, Malcolm suddenly remembered that he must speak English, and having a plentiful store of the book sort, he at once made himself intelligible in spite of tone and accent. It was, however, only a shifting of the difficulty, for he now found it nearly impossible to understand her. But by repeated questioning and hard listening he learnt at last that Lady Bellair had removed her establishment to Lady Lossie’s house in Portland Place.

After many curious perplexities, odd blunders, and vain endeavours to understand shop signs and notices in the windows; after they had again and again imagined themselves back at a place they had left miles away; after many a useless effort to lay hold of directions given so rapidly that the

very sense could not gather the sounds, they at length stood—not in Portland Place, but in front of Westminster Abbey. Inquiring what it was, and finding they could go in, they entered.

For some moments not a word was spoken between them, but when they had walked slowly halfway up the nave Malcolm turned and said, "Eh, Peter! sic a blessin'!" and Peter replied, "There canna be muckle o' this i' the warl'!"

Comparing impressions afterwards, Peter said that the moment he stepped in, he heard the rush of the tide on the rocks of Scaurnose; and Malcolm declared he felt as if he had stepped out of the world into the regions of eternal silence.

"What a mercy it maun be," he went on, "to mony a cratur', in sic a whummle an' a rum'le an' a remish as this Lon'on, to ken 'at there is sic a cave howkit oot o' the din, 'at he can gang intill an' say his prayers intill! Man, Peter! I'm jist some feared whiles 'at the verra

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din i' my lugs mayna 'maist drive the thought o' God oot o' me."

At length they found their way into Regent Street, and leaving its mean assertion behind, reached the stately modesty of Portland Place; and Malcolm was pleased to think the house he sought was one of those he now saw.

It was one of the largest in the Place. He would not, however, yield to the temptation to have a good look at it, for fear of attracting attention from its windows and being recognised. They turned therefore aside into some of the smaller thoroughfares lying between Portland Place and Great Portland Street, where searching about, they came upon a decent looking public house and inquired after lodgings. They were directed to a woman in the neighbourhood, who kept a dingy little curiosity shop. On payment of a week's rent in advance, she allowed them a small bedroom. But Malcolm did not want Peter with him that night; he wished to be perfectly free; and besides it was more than desirable that Peter should go and look after the boat and the boy.

Left alone he fell once more to his hitherto futile scheming: How was he to get near his sister? To the whitest of lies he had insuperable objection, and if he appeared before her with no reason to give, would she not be far too offended with his presumption to retain him in her service? And except he could be near her as her servant, he did not see a chance of doing anything for her without disclosing facts which might make all such service as he would most gladly render her impossible, by causing her to hate the very sight of him. Plan after plan rose and passed from his mind rejected, and the only resolution he could come to was to write to Mr Soutar, to whom he had committed the protection of Kelpie, to send her up by the first smack from Aberdeen. He did so, and wrote also to Miss Horn, telling her where he was, then went out, and made his way back to Portland Place.

Night had closed in, and thick vapours hid the moon, but lamps and lighted windows illuminated the wide street. Presently it began to snow. But through the snow and the night went carriages in all directions, with great lamps that turned the flakes into white stars for a moment as they gleamed past. The hoofs of the horses echoed hard from the firm road.

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Could that house really belong to him? It did, yet he dared not enter it. That which was dear and precious to him was in the house, and just because of that he could not call it his own. There was less light in it than in any other within his range. He walked up and down the opposite side of the street its whole length some fifty times, but saw no sign of vitality about the house. At length a brougham stopped at the door, and a man got out and knocked. Malcolm instantly crossed, but could not see his face. The door opened, and he entered. The brougham waited. After about a quarter of an hour he came out again, accompanied by two ladies, one of whom he judged by her figure to be Florimel. They all got into the carriage, and Malcolm braced himself for a terrible run. But the coachman drove carefully, the snow lay a few inches deep, and he found no difficulty in keeping near them, following with fleet foot and husbanded breath.

They stopped at the doors of a large dark looking building in a narrow street. He thought it was a church, and wondered that so his sister should be going there on a week night. Nor did the aspect of the entrance hall, into which he followed them, deceive him. It was more showy, certainly, than the vestibule of any church he had ever been in before, but what might not churches be in London? They went up a great flight of stairs—to reach the gallery, as he thought, and still he went after them. When he reached the top, they were just vanishing round a curve, and his advance was checked: a man came up to him, said he could not come there, and gruffly requested him to show his ticket.

“I haven’t got one. What is this place?” said Malcolm, whom the aspect of the man had suddenly rendered doubtful, mouthing his English with Scotch deliberation. The man gave him a look of contemptuous surprise, and turning to another who lounged behind him with his hands in his pockets, said—“Tom, here’s a gentleman as wants to know where he is: can you tell him?” The person addressed laughed, and gave Malcolm a queer look.

“Every cock crows on his own midden,” said Malcolm, “but if I were on mine, I would try to be civil.”

“You go down there, and pay for a pit ticket, and you’ll soon know where you are, mate,” said Tom.

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He obeyed, and after a few inquiries, and the outlay of two shillings, found himself in the pit of one of the largest of the London theatres.

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CHAPTER X

THE TEMPEST

THE PLAY WAS BEGUN, and the stage was the centre of light. Thither Malcolm's eyes were drawn the instant he entered. He was all but unaware of the multitude of faces about him, and his attention was at once fascinated by the lovely show revealed in soft radiance. But surely he had seen the vision before! One long moment its effect upon him was as real as if he had been actually deceived as to its nature: was it not the shore between Scaurnose and Portlossie, between the Boar's Tail and the sea? and was not that the marquis, his father, in his dressing gown, pacing to and fro upon the sands? He yielded himself to illusion—abandoned himself to the wonderful, and looked only for what would come next.

A lovely lady entered: to his excited fancy it was Florimel. A moment more and she spoke.

If by your art, my dearest father, you have put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.

Then first he understood that before him rose in wondrous realization the play of Shakspeare he knew best—the first he had ever read: The Tempest, hitherto a lovely phantom for the mind's eye, now embodied to the enraptured sense. During the whole of the first act he never thought either of Miranda or Florimel apart. At the same time so taken was he with the princely carriage and utterance of Ferdinand that, though with a sigh, he consented he should have his sister.

The drop scene had fallen for a minute or two before he began to look around him. A moment more and he had commenced a thorough search for his sister amongst the ladies in the boxes. But when

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at length he found her, he dared not fix his eyes upon her lest his gaze should make her look at him, and she should recognise him. Alas, her eyes might have rested on him twenty times without his face once rousing in her mind the thought of the fisher lad of Portlossie! All that had passed between them in the days already old was virtually forgotten.

By degrees he gathered courage, and soon began to feel that there was small chance indeed of her eyes alighting upon him for the briefest of moments. Then he looked more closely, and felt through rather than saw with his eyes that some sort of change had already passed upon her. It was Florimel, yet not the very Florimel he had known. Already something had begun to supplant the girl freedom that had formerly in every look and motion asserted itself. She was more beautiful, but not so lovely in his eyes; much of what had charmed him had vanished. She was more stately, but the stateliness had a little hardness mingled with it: and could it be that the first of a cloud had already gathered on her forehead? Surely she was not so happy as she had been at Lossie House. She was dressed in black, with a white flower in her hair.

Beside her sat the bold faced countess, and behind them her nephew, Lord Meikleham that was now Lord Lifford. A fierce indignation seized the heart of Malcolm at the sight. Behind the form of the earl, his mind's eye saw that of Lizzy, out in the wind on the Boar's Tail, her old shawl wrapped about herself and the child of the man who sat there so composed and comfortable. His features were fine and clear cut, his shoulders broad, and his head well set: he had much improved since Malcolm offered to fight him with one hand in the dining room of Lossie House. Every now and then he leaned forward between his aunt and Florimel, and spoke to the latter. To

Malcolm's eyes she seemed to listen with some haughtiness. Now and then she cast him an indifferent glance. Malcolm was pleased: Lord Liftore was anything but the Ferdinand to whom he could consent to yield his Miranda. They would make a fine couple certainly, but for any other fitness, knowing what he did, Malcolm was glad to perceive none. The more annoyed was he when once or twice he fancied he caught a look between them that indicated more than acquaintanceship—some sort of intimacy at least.

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But he reflected that in the relation in which they stood to Lady Bellair it could hardly be otherwise.

The play was tolerably well put upon the stage, and free of the absurdities attendant upon too ambitious an endeavour to represent to the sense things which Shakspeare and the dramatists of his period freely committed to their best and most powerful ally, the willing imagination of the spectators. The opening of the last scene, where Ferdinand and Miranda are discovered at chess, was none the less effective for its simplicity, and Malcolm was turning from a delighted gaze at its loveliness to glance at his sister and her companions, when his eyes fell on a face near him in the pit which had fixed an absorbed regard in the same direction. It was that of a man a few years older than himself, with irregular features, but a fine mouth, large chin; and great forehead. Under the peculiarly prominent eyebrows shone dark eyes of wondrous brilliancy and seeming penetration. Malcolm could not but suspect that his gaze was upon his sister, but as they were a long way from the boxes, he could not be certain. Once he thought he saw her look at him, but of that also he could be in no wise certain.

He knew the play so well that he rose just in time to reach the pit door ere exit should be impeded with the outcomers, and thence with some difficulty he found his way to the foot of the stair up which those he watched had gone. There he had stood but a little while, when he saw in front of him, almost within reach of an out-stretched hand, the same young man waiting also. After what seemed a long time, he saw his sister and her two companions come slowly down the stair in the descending crowd. Her eyes seemed searching amongst the multitude that filled the lobby. Presently an indubitable glance of still recognition passed between them, and by a slight movement the young man placed himself so that she must pass next him in the crowd. Malcolm got one place nearer in the change, and thought they grasped hands. She turned her head slightly back, and seemed to put a question—with her lips only. He replied in the same manner. A light rushed into her face and vanished. But not a feature moved and not a word had been spoken. Neither of her companions had seen the dumb show, and her friend stood where he was till they had left the house. Malcolm stood also, much in-

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clined to follow him when he went, but, his attention having been attracted for a moment in another direction, when he looked again he had disappeared. He sought him where he fancied he saw the movement of his vanishing, but was soon convinced of the uselessness of the attempt, and

walked home.

Before he reached his lodging, he had resolved on making trial of a plan which had more than once occurred to him, but had as often been rejected as too full of the risk of repulse.

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CHAPTER XI

DEMON AND THE PIPES

HIS PLAN was to watch the house until he saw some entertainment going on, then present himself as if he had but just arrived from her ladyship's country seat. At such a time no one would acquaint her with his appearance, and he would, as if it were but a matter of course, at once take his share in waiting on the guests. By this means he might perhaps get her a little accustomed to his presence before she could be at leisure to challenge it.

When he put Kelpie in her stall the last time for a season, and ran into the house to get his plaid for Lizzy, who was waiting him near the tunnel, he bethought himself that he had better take with him also what other of his personal requirements he could carry. He looked about therefore, and finding a large carpet bag in one of the garret rooms, hurried into it some of his clothes—amongst them the Highland dress he had worn as henchman to the marquis, and added the great Lossie pipes his father had given to old Duncan as well, but which the piper had not taken with him when he left Lossie House. The said Highland dress he now resolved to put on, as that in which latterly Florimel had been most used to see him: in it he would watch his opportunity of gaining admission to the house.

The next morning Blue Peter made his appearance early. They went out together, spent the day in sightseeing, and, on Malcolm's part chiefly, in learning the topography of London.

In Hyde Park Malcolm told his friend that he had sent for Kelpie.

"She'll be the deid o' ye i' thae streets, as fu' o' wheels as the sea o' fish: twice I've been 'maist gr'un to poother o' my ro'd here," said Peter.

"Ay, but ye see, oot here amo' the gentry it's no freely sae ill, an' the ro'ds are no a' stane; an' here, ye see, 's the place whaur they

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come, leddies an' a', to ha'e their rides thegither. What I'm fleyt for is 'at she'll be brackin' legs wi' her deevilich kickin'."

"Haud her upo' dry strae an' watter for a whilie, till her banes begin to cry oot for something to hap

them frae the cauld: that'll quaiet her a bit," said Peter.

"It's a' ye ken!" returned Malcolm. "She's aye the wau natur'd, the less she has to ate. Na, na; she maun be weel lined. The deevil in her maun lie warm, or she'll be neither to haud nor bin'. There's nae doobt she's waur to haud in whan she's in guid condeetion; but she's nane sae like to tak' a body by the sma' o' the back, an' shak the inside oot o' 'im, as she maist did ae day to the herd laddie at the ferm, only he had an auld girth about the mids o' 'im for a belt, an' he tuik the less scaith."

"Cudna we gang an' see the maister the day?" said Blue Peter, changing the subject.

He meant Mr Graham, the late schoolmaster of Portlossie, whom the charge of heretical teaching had driven from the place.

"We canna weel du that till we hear whaur he is. The last time Miss Horn h'ard frae him, he was changin' his lodgin's, an' ye see the kin' o' a place this Lon'on is," answered Malcolm.

As soon as Peter was gone, to return to the boat, Malcolm dressed himself in his kilt and its belongings, and when it was fairly dusk, took his pipes under his arm, and set out for Portland Place. He had the better hope of speedy success to his plan, that he fancied he had read on his sister's lips, in the silent communication that passed between her and her friend in the crowd, the words come and tomorrow. It might have been the merest imagination, yet it was something: how often have we not to be grateful for shadows! Up and down the street he walked a long time, without seeing a sign of life about the house. But at length the hall was lighted. Then the door opened, and a servant rolled out a carpet over the wide pavement, which the snow had left wet and miry—a signal for the street children, ever on the outlook for sights, to gather. Before the first carriage arrived, there was already a little crowd of humble watchers and waiters about the gutter and curb stone. But they were not destined to much amusement that evening, the visitors amounting only to a small dinner party. Still they had the pleasure of seeing a

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few grand ladies issue from their carriages, cross the stage of their Epiphany, the pavement, and vanish in the paradise of the shining hall, with its ascent of gorgeous stairs. No broken steps, no missing balusters there! And they have the show all for nothing! It is one of the perquisites of street service. What one would give to see the shapes glide over the field of those camerae obscurae, the hearts of the street Arabs! once to gaze on the jewelled beauties through the eyes of those shocked haired girls! I fancy they do not often begrudge them what they possess, except perhaps when feature or hair or motion chances to remind them of some one of their own people, and they feel wronged and indignant that size should flaunt in such splendour, "when our Sally would set off grand clothes so much better!" It is neither the wealth nor the general consequence it confers that they envy, but, as I imagine, the power of making a show—of living in the eyes and knowledge of neighbours for a few radiant moments: nothing is so pleasant to ordinary human nature as to know itself by its reflection from others. When it turns from these warped and broken mirrors to seek its reflection in the divine thought, then it is redeemed; then it beholds itself in the perfect law of liberty.

Before he became himself an object of curious interest to the crowd he was watching, Malcolm had come to the same conclusion with many a philosopher and observer of humanity before

him—that on the whole the rags are inhabited by the easier hearts; and he would have arrived at the conclusion with more certainty but for the high training that cuts off intercourse between heart and face.

When some time had elapsed, and no more carriages appeared, Malcolm, judging the dinner must now be in full vortex, rang the bell of the front door. It was opened by a huge footman, whose head was so small in proportion that his body seemed to have absorbed it. Malcolm would have stepped in at once, and told what of his tale he chose at his leisure; but the servant, who had never seen the dress Malcolm wore, except on street beggars, with the instinct his class shares with watchdogs, quickly closed the door. Ere it reached the post, however, it found Malcolm's foot between.

"Go along, Scotchy. You're not wanted here," said the man, pushing the door hard. "Police is round the corner."

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Now one of the weaknesses Malcolm owed to his Celtic blood was an utter impatience of rudeness. In his own nature entirely courteous, he was wrathful even to absurdity at the slightest suspicion of insult. But that, in part through the influence of Mr Graham, the schoolmaster, he had learned to keep a firm hold on themselves of action, this foolish feeling would not unfrequently have hurried him into conduct undignified. On the present occasion, if fear the main part of his answer, but for the shield of the door, would have been a blow to fell a bigger man than the one that now glared at him through the shoe broad opening. As it was, his words were fierce with suppressed wrath.

"Open the door, an' lat me in," was, however, all he said.

"What's your business?" asked the man, on whom his tone had its effect.

"My business is with my Lady Lossie," said Malcolm, recovering his English, which was one step towards mastering, if not recovering, his temper.

"You can't see her. She's at dinner."

"Let me in, and I'll wait. I come from Lossie House."

"Take away your foot and I'll go and see," said the man.

"No. You open the door," returned Malcolm.

The man's answer was an attempt to kick his foot out of the door-way. If he were to let in a tramp, what would the butler say?

But thereupon Malcolm set his port vent to his mouth, rapidly filled his bag, while the man stared as if it were a petard with which he was about to blow the door to shivers, and then sent from the instrument such a shriek, as it galloped off into the Lossie Gathering, that involuntarily his adversary pressed both hands to his ears. With a sudden application of his knee Malcolm sent the door wide, and entered the hall, with his pipes in full cry. The house resounded with their yell—but only for one moment. For down the stair, like bolt from catapult, came Demon, Florimel's huge

Irish staghound, and springing on Malcolm, put an instant end to his music. The footman laughed with exultation, expecting to see him torn to pieces. But when instead he saw the fierce animal, a foot on each of his shoulders, licking Malcolm's face with long fiery tongue, he began to doubt.

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"The dog knows you," he said sulkily.

"So shall you, before long," returned Malcolm. "Was it my fault that I made the mistake of looking for civility from you? One word to the dog, and he has you by the throat."

"I'll go and fetch Wallis," said the man, and closing the door, left the hall.

Now this Wallis had been a fellow servant of Malcolm's at Lossie House, but he did not know that he had gone with Lady Bellair when she took Florimel away: almost everyone had left at the same time. He was now glad indeed to learn that there was one amongst the servants who knew him.

Wallis presently made his appearance, with a dish in his hands, on his way to the dining room, from which came the confused noises of the feast.

"You'll be come up to wait on Lady Lossie," he said. "I haven't a moment to speak to you now, for we're at dinner, and there's a party."

"Never mind me. Give me that dish; I'll take it in: you can go for another," said Malcolm, laying his pipes in a safe spot.

"You can't go into the dining room that figure," said Wallis, who was in the Bellair livery.

"This is how I waited on my lord," returned Malcolm, "and this is how I'll wait on my lady."

Wallis hesitated. But there was that about the fisher fellow was too much for him. As he spoke, Malcolm took the dish from his hands, and with it walked into the dining room.

There one reconnoitring glance was sufficient. The butler was at the sideboard opening a champagne bottle. He had cut wire and strings, and had his hand on the cork as Malcolm walked up to him. It was a critical moment, yet he stopped in the very article, and stared at the apparition.

"I'm Lady Lossie's man from Lossie House. I'll help you to wait," said Malcolm.

To the eyes of the butler he looked a savage. But there he was in the room with the dish in his hands, and speaking at least intelligibly; the cork of the champagne bottle was pushing hard against his palm, and he had no time to question. He peeped into Malcolm's dish.

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"Take it round, then," he said. So Malcolm settled into the business of the hour.

It was some time, after he knew where she was, before he ventured to look at his sister: he would have her already familiarised with his presence before their eyes met. That crisis did not arrive during dinner.

Lord Liftore was one of the company, and so, to Malcolm's pleasure, for he felt in him an ally against the earl, was Florimel's mysterious friend.

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CHAPTER XII

A NEW LIVERY

SCARCELY HAD THE LADIES gone to the drawing room, when Florimel's maid, who knew Malcolm, came in quest of him. Lady Lossie desired to see him.

"What is the meaning of this, MacPhail?" she said, when he entered the room where she sat alone. "I did not send for you. Indeed, I thought you had been dismissed with the rest of the servants."

How differently she spoke! And she used to call him Malcolm! The girl Florimel was gone, and there sat—the marchioness, was it? —or some phase of riper womanhood only? It mattered little to Malcolm. He was no curious student of man or woman. He loved his kind too well to study it. But one thing seemed plain: she had forgotten the half friendship and whole service that had had place betwixt them, and it made him feel as if the soul of man no less than his life were but as a vapour that appeareth for a little and then vanisheth away.

But Florimel had not so entirely forgotten the past as Malcolm thought—not so entirely at least but that his appearance, and certain difficulties in which she had begun to find herself, brought something of it again to her mind.

"I thought," said Malcolm, assuming his best English, "your ladyship might not choose to part with an old servant at the will of a factor, and so took upon me to appeal to your ladyship to decide the question."

"But how is that? Did you not return to your fishing when the household was broken up?"

"No, my lady. Mr Crathie kept me to help Stoa, and do odd jobs about the place."

"And now he wants to discharge you?"

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Then Malcolm told her the whole story, in which he gave such a description of Kelpie, that her owner, as she imagined herself, expressed a strong wish to see her; for Florimel was almost passionately fond of horses.

"You may soon do that, my lady," said Malcolm. "Mr Soutar, not being of the same mind as Mr Crathie, is going to send her up. It will be but the cost of the passage from Aberdeen, and she will fetch a better price here if your ladyship should resolve to part with her. She won't fetch the third of her value anywhere, though, on account of her bad temper and ugly tricks."

"But as to yourself, MacPhail—where are you going to go?" said Florimel. "I don't like to send you away, but, if I keep you, I don't know what to do with you. No doubt you could serve in the house, but that would not be suitable at all to your education and previous life."

"A body wad tak' you for a granny grown!" said Malcolm to him-self. But to Florimel he replied—"If your ladyship should wish to keep Kelpie, you will have to keep me too, for not a creature else will she let near her." *

George MacDonald (10 December 1824 – 18 September 1905) was a Scottish author, This book is the story of a noble heart. A young fisherman-turned-groom seeks to do right by his half sister after learning that he is the true Marquis of Lossie.

The Marquis of Lossie - The Marquis of Lossie. Author: Macdonald, George. Publisher: London: Everett 1912?. (Everett's Library). Description: 320p undated small red cloth, gilt titles to The Marquis of Lossie by George MacDonald - Booktopia - Read "The Marquis Of Lossie" by George MacDonald available from Rakuten Kobo. Sign up today and get \$5 off your first purchase. The Marquis of Lossie (Paperback): George MacDonald - Loot - Amazon.ae: the marquis of lossie a novel vol ii by george macdonald paperback. the marquis of lossie a novel vol ii by george - Amazon.ae - He then took to literature, and published his first book, Within and Without Robert Falconer [1868], The Marquis of Lossie [1877], and Sir Gibbie [1879], are The Marquis' secret (Book, 1982) [WorldCat.org] - This 1877 sequel to Malcolm begins where the first volume of the doublet left off, at Lossie House in Cullen's fictionalized Portlossie. Soon thereafter Malcolm The Marquis of Lossie. [A Novel.], George - bol.com - The Marquis of Lossie. Couverture. George MacDonald. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 11 nov. 2014 - 420 pages. 0 Avis. "[...] "Huly, huly, sir! Marquis of Lossie Macdonald George Sunrise Centenary - Overlooking the Moray Firth, this family-run hotel is situated in Lossiemouth. The hotel is directly opposite the historic Moray Golf Club, and is centrally located for The Marquis of Lossie. [A Novel.], George - bol.com - ISBN: 087123324X 9780871233240. OCLC Number:

8669224. Notes: Revised edition of: The Marquis of Lossie. 1877. Sequel to: The fisherman's lady. The Marquis of Lossie - George MacDonald - Google Books - George MacDonald Book The Marquis of Lossie " Wise Path Books - George MacDonald's books by title and content for sale by Johannesen. Marquis of Lossie- Reprinted from the 1887 Edition. A Victorian Scottish Novel. George MacDonald - Wikipedia - George MacDonald (10 December 1824 " 18 September 1905) was a Scottish author, poet G. K. Chesterton cited The Princess and the Goblin as a book that had "made a difference to my whole existence"... The Marquis of Lossie (1877; republished in edited form as The Marquis' Secret), the second book of Malcolm

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