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CHAPTER I.

Grim, gray, dour, fell the early December twilight upon the seaboard parish of Gower, the outward and visible sign, a stranger might well suppose, of a similar grim humor among its inhabitants. But up on the side of Benngaur Anton MacMillian, the herd, drew his checked plaid more closely about him and hummed a cheerful psalm.

Now Israel

May say, and that truly,

If that the Lord

Hath not cause maintained;

If that the Lord

Had not our right sustained—

At this point Anton stopped abruptly and, shading his eyes as if the sun had been shining in them, made an impromptu night-gown of his plains and exclaimed, "David!"

Now when a west-country herd, born in the purple of the Kirk of the Covenants, valiant in defense of Headship and joyously confident of total depravity and the eternity of punishment, stops on his hillside and says "David," it may be taken for granted that he sees more than a few fallen "awa" in a hollow or a slip in the dyke through which his flock hath strayed away to the promised land of another man's pastures.

But again the same "minced oath" broke from Anton's lips, so vigorously that Tyke and Tod, his ministrant colts, slunk aside in fear, casting anxiously back in their canine consciences for what of transgression undiscovered or duty undone might be about to bring their master's hazel "clickie" whirling about their ears.

But it was to a spot far down the slope of Benngaur that the keen gray eyes of their lord were directed. Beyond the village, beyond the kirk and manse, Anton MacMillian saw the dark and solemn towers of Castle Gower, and struck across them, like a fairy necklace, certain bright points which told of lighted chambers and festal scenes.

That might well be, for it was Christmas night, but Anton MacMillian had never heard of the festival save as one of the whims of that Scarlet Woman who, on her Seven Hills, continued to observe times and seasons and so delude the unwary and uncov-

nanted.

"There maun be great doings done by," muttered the herd, as he resumed his long, swinging heather stride, the dogs crowding at his heel in uncertainty as to his mood.

"Forty year ha' I herded Benngaur, clear day and mirt night, but never ha' I seen the great hoose of Castle Gower shinnying as if auld Gregory Glendonwyn had herded the stars o' heaven into his windows, as Tyke and Tod there might ha' wheen silly sheep into bucht!"

And, indeed, it was something far out of the common which had set the great, gaunt house of Castle Gower alight from turret to porter lodge, brought out Gregory Glendonwyn's laced coat, with the gold stiff on the collar and sleeve, the same in which he had bowed the knee to the king in Edinburgh at the never-to-be-forgotten royal visit, and sent every gray domestic and elderly stable boy to door and window in a tremendous agony of anticipation.

The two sons of the house were coming home, the older, Duncan Glendonwyn, from the ends of the earth; the younger, John, only from the college of Edinburgh. But, as was natural, it was for Rupert, the heir, that the preparation was made. Jock, poor lad (so the servants averred), might come and gone a score of times and found no more slaughter of fatted calves in Castle Gower than a slice or two of cold meat from the butler's pantry and no more illumination than was involved in lighting filet own solitary bedroom candle at the table in the back hall. But Rupert—ah, for his first born this old Gregory must order up the best bottle of port, dusted and cobbled, from the cellar. The boy would be cold. He would be tired. It was a pity that he had refused the family carriage and begged that a horse might be sent him at the Cross Keys in Drumfern, sixteen long Scot's miles away.

The laird of Gower sat in his great chair first-born—after years of absence. Grierson, come and go. From his chimney-corner in the closest sparkle of glass and silver on the white stone walls.

"It is well-befitting," he mused, "that I should rejoice to welcome my son—Anton's first-born—after years of absence. Grierson, why on earth do you trot in and out like a new-made sister at his first appearance. Is everything not ready for Mr. Rupert?"

Duncan Glendonwyn, the ancient butler of Castle Gower, lifted his hand to his brow in a semimillitary salute. He and Gregory Glendonwyn had served in the Border Feudics together.

"Na, castle Gower," he said with slow emphasis, "this is no time when we are likely to forget aught that can mark the return o' the young master less memorably. There is never a servant that shelters under the roof o' the Glendonwyns but will do his duty this night. Aye, even thraw auld Sarab Duncan doon at the village—that wadnae the laird's mother, and reared him frae a wark ankle, he brought up a muckle pot o' the crab jets, he was nae fell fond o' when he was a laddie!"

Gregory Glendonwyn nodded, well pleased.

"Yea, yea," he said, "all is indeed in readiness, and I'm sure that you will not find Rupert ungrateful. He was ever generous and high-spirited from his youth up, and I cannot believe that these qualities should have forsaken him during the years he has spent abroad."

"Na, na," muttered the old butler, busying himself at the sideboard. "Maister Rupert will be Maister Rupert to the end o' the chapter. And we will a' lie down and mak' oursel's door scrapers and hall mats for him to die his feest on!"

"Very properly so," said Gregory Glendonwyn, who had caught the spirit but not exact letter of the old man's speech. "The grandson of a king o' Ireland, the heir to an ancient name and title the estates, whose son inherits from me will cover, I trust, lack due respect in his native country. Though, indeed, there is a reckless and die-loyal spirit abroad, which seeks to overturn both church and state in common destruction. Have you noticed any symptoms of

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such in the servants' hall, Grierson? Speak openly, sir!"

A curious light shone for a single instant in the old man's eyes, but they were bent upon the floor, and so far as words were concerned he answered meekly enough:

"Well, laird Gregory, I diams ken, I dinna mind o' eicht that could be ca'd a hangin'-matter, as it were. But noo, when I be thinkin' me, it's fac as daith that Tammas Faithfull refus'd flatly to sup hit parritch theither morain', declarin' and threepenn'd my throat that he was initiatit to han' an' eggs. And there's Mary Geddes, the guise-herd, an' it please your honor—faith, that lassie winna look at a red harris' for her supper, but maun ha'e her pease-bro's and bannocks like a leddy. O, as ye say, laird, it's fair awsome that these commonality are comin' to in this generation wi' their whims and whigmalterin'. But I doubt nae these are the times broken in the prophet Daniel, the seventh and anoch chapter, as guid Maister Albinis pointed in his lecture addicion last Sabbath mornin' when your honor was over by at Dr. Caesar's kirk."

"That will do, Grierson," said his master, sharply. "When I wish for any information about goose-girls and silly blytherin' pupiters like Simeon Albinis I will not fail to ask for it. In the meantime go to the hall door and keep a sharp lookout for the arrival of your young master. When you hear his horse turn into the drive, do not fail to advise me."

"And mighty your honor ha'e any commands about Maister John, when he arrives frae the college at Edinburgh?" said the old man, lifting his eyes for one instant to those of his master and dropping them instantly with a look so shrewd and keen that it seemed like the edge of a steel in-

ing themselves to a momentary exchange of flouts and jeers, or when a reference to some college story, well worn and proven, now for the first time failed to wake the usual gay contagion of youthful laughter.

Last to quit these attempts at enlivenment was a tall lad with a face of fair hair crisping under his college cap, a little pale of face and thin of cheek, perhaps, but with a blue eye so sunny-bright that not even the lank wretchedness of that December afternoon could in the least cloud or overcast its azure clarity.

His companions for the most part addressed this youth either brusquely as "Glen," or with reprehensible flippancy as "My Lord Bishop."

It was a rough place at the best of times, but today the Cross Keys held a raft of drovers, swearin' indiscriminately in Irish and Scottish, high-flavored with fist and afflatus, as guid Maister Albinis pointed in his lecture addicion last Sabbath mornin' when your honor was over by at Dr. Caesar's kirk."

So it chanced that John Glendonwyn,

the friendship which long absence on Rupert's part and perhaps some trials of jealousy on that of his junior had clouded for a time. And in the inn parlor of the Cross Keys there was clinking of glasses and the sound of stampings and shoutings, not so much mirthful as loud. For the prodigal returned from a far land evidently considered this a more promising spot wherein to kill the fatid calf than in the gloomy dining room of Castle Gower and face to face with his father.

Now, though Rupert's face was flushed with wine and his voice exceeding jovial and loud, his hand shook pitifully. For there were a sheaf of papers and a series of summations in his pocketbook which he was in hurry to show to his father.

And John Glendonwyn, who though no ascetic, loved not wine by reason of health or weakness, with a slowly saddening face this brother who from his youth up had been held before him as a god. Time after time he took his arm and strove to lead him away.

"Our father is waiting for you," he whispered. "For his sake—for God's sake, let us get out of this. I know he has thought of nothing else for days and weeks."

But Rupert shook him off with loud good humor.

"Another toast and I am with you, Johnnie, lad," he would say. "If you are to be a parson and preach to us there is no need for you to begin your sermonizing yet awhile. My father has waited patiently these three years and more. He can well afford to wait another hour, and we will ride all the faster when we do start."

So it chanced that Anton MacMillian, shepherd on Benngaur, hearing the noise of shouting far below him, came over the heather and down the boulder-strown galley. Leaping into the turnpike with the agility of one-and-twenty, he found two young men struggling for the reins in a hired dogcart, an indignant and high-spirited saddle-horse rearin' and plungin' between the shafts.

"What's this?" he cried. "Laddies, agree and be ceevil. Market-night or no market-night, there's nae sense in siccan tulises!"

"What's this, what's this, Maister John?"

And John Glendonwyn, recognising the old, quoting Cameronian herd, could

abruptly, as John stood in the doorway uncertain whether to advance or retreat.

"Only to know if I can be of any use!" faltered the lad.

Gregory Glendonwyn waved his hand toward his unconscious heir.

"You have done enough for one night," he said, stonily: "you may rest satisfied. You have made my son a soot. He has made me a bankrupt. But, see—understand it, if you think to benefit yourself by encouraging my poor Rupert to drink himself to death, you are mistaken, sir. You can go. Remember, I have my eye upon you and your schemes. Even since you were a child you have hated him. But it will help you nothing. I, his father, will keep him safe in spite of you—aye, in spite of himself!"

John had knocked one of his comrades into the fireplace of the Cross Keys' parlor only for whispering in his ear, "I say, old fellow, if your brother runs the rig like this, you'll find yourself back in Castle Gower some fine morning before long!"

But since this man who libelled him was his own father, John Glendonwyn only beat his head and went out through the door, with many unspoken words swelling in his heart.

CHAPTER III.
Engaged Persons.

"No, John, it will not do. You and I are engaged to be married. Our fathers and mothers, after the flesh, arranged the matter without consulting us—even as they did that other business of introducing us into the world. Kismet! Necessity has no law. Only, I pray you, do not think it necessary to make love to me. Do not feel obliged to come into the fireplace of the Cross Keys' parlor when you would rather be lying at the waterside scribbling poetry, or, if fates were favorable, looking into the blue eyes of little Prairie Glendonwyn—Oh, I know all about that—I am not in the least jealous. If I could be things might go better."

It was a tall and handsomely molded girl who was speaking in a quiet, unemotional tone and the most matter-of-fact way. Veronica Martha Crossraguel Caesar, eldest but far from the only daughter of Rev. Augustus Caesar, D. D., minister of the parish of Kilgour, commander-in-chief of the town thereto attached, and known

"Dark Days"

Many "dark days" from kidney ills. Backache, headache, nervous, tired, Urinary troubles—makes you gloomy. The aches of kidney ills depress, discourage; No rest at night.

Hard to "keep up and doing."

Doan's Kidney Pills

Brighten every household where they're known, Bring relief to aching backs, Bring cure to sick kidneys, Omaha people testify to this.

Mr. E. G. Glenn, school teacher of No. 634 North 20th street, says: "I procured Doan's Kidney Pills at Kuhn & Co.'s drug store, corner of 15th and Douglas streets, for my wife. She suffered terribly from attacks of kidney complaints for years. At the time her back would ache severely and although she used many preparations said to be good, such as kidney complaint, the benefit received from Doan's Kidney Pills were so pronounced that we have no hesitation in endorsing the representations made for them."

At All Drug Stores, 50 cents, Foster-Milburn Co., Buffalo, N. Y.

breast with a sharp little clack of anger. "Oh! Oh! Oh!" she cried, "that is just the hopelessness of it! You will not be serious even for a moment. I tell you I will not have your cheap-jack compliments and Veronica dear-ling."

You are making a game of this also, as you do of everything," said Veronica Caesar, looking down a little sadly and withdrawing her hand.

"You say do not love me," said the young man, "but do you not think that if you did, you could make me something different from what I am?"

"No," he would say, "I cannot by willing love you or any other. Sometimes I think I am not made to love any man with the love that man would want from women. There are some of us like that. Hospital nurses, matrons of orphan and rescue homes—these should be such women as I—women whom God has made barren of the love of woman and man, but with hearts that overflow with pity. For I have mine near at hand—in a father who, true and great-hearted as he is, must be tended like a baby; a mother—well, I will say nothing of my mother—and a dozen children all younger than myself. No, John, I will remain engaged to you as long as you like, but I will never marry you unless my heart is changed and the very foundations of my life are torn up."

"Vera," said John Glendonwyn, somewhat less philosophically than before, "I cannot do clear starching, and I have no Aunt Fisher. Dig, I cannot, and to beg, I am ashamed."

"Furthermore, there are two things for you to consider. First, would your father really think the less of you for asserting yourself like a man? I am sure in his heart he would not. And again, are you fit to be a minister of the church and explain the way of life to other men, when you have shown so little skill in ordering your own?"

"Your father thinks that I am fit enough," retorted the student of divinity. "Only yesterday he complimented me on my college exercises."

"College exercises, indeed!" cried Veronica Caesar, looking down a little sadly and withdrawing her hand.

"But," objected John Glendonwyn, somewhat less philosophically than before, "I cannot by willing love what I am fit enough for you to consider. First, would your father really think the less of you for asserting yourself like a man? I am sure in his heart he would not. And again, are you fit to be a minister of the church and explain the way of life to other men, when you have shown so little skill in ordering your own?"

"Your cleverness—say the word, Vera," cried John, with a somewhat constrained laugh, "you know you mean it."

"Well, my faculty for carrying things through, if you will. You are a fear, good fellow, John; but to tell you the truth, you have never waked up to seriousness yet. You are no more fit to be the minister of a parish than to be admiral of the fleet!"

Then for the first time John Glendonwyn lost his temper.

"I am not fit to be a minister of my father's parish, am I not?" he cried, flushing with swift anger. "I am not fit to kiss your hand, madam. Well, at any rate, there remains a year or so in which I need not trouble my head about either you or the Kirk of Scotland. My brother and I are pretty good friends at present, and—well—with his help I can try to climb the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil from the other side. I am too young and I presume too innocent for you, my lady Veronica! Eh bien, a year or two with Rupert will mend both particulars. Perhaps I deeply experienced a lady as Miss Veronica Crossraguel Caesar will like her friend the better for that!"

"I will always like him better for appearing to be what he is," said the girl. "If you think that your brother will help you to a career for which you are better fitted I shall rejoice. For I am your true friend, though you do not think so today. John. More than that, I do believe that some day you will awake and cast away your idleness and selfishness as Samson tore off the Philistine's withes."

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"You have it well by rote, Vera," said John Glendonwyn. "I would that you had it also by heart."

"Of course I know it by rote," cried the girl. "Do I not have it served to me for breakfast, dinner and supper?" My mother distracts me with eternal yester about my prospects. Ah, John, she does not know how small chance there is of her expectations being realized. Only last night she was even saying, "Oh, if only that eldest son of yours would be a minister of that church, also. They considered your fitness for the office as they did whether you and I were suited to each other. Why, indeed, should they?" Your father would present you to the living, at present held by a warming pan of the name of Albinis. He could easily enough be provided for through your father's money and my father's influence. All would be for the best. Your father would give you some additional allowance and mine would advance your interests in quarters high and ecclesiastic. So the good children would marry and live happily ever after."

"You have it well by rote, Vera," said John Glendonwyn. "If you think that your brother will help you to a career for which you are better fitted I shall rejoice. For I am your true friend, though you do not think so today. John. More than that, I do believe that some day you will awake and cast away your idleness and selfishness as Samson tore off the Philistine's withes."

"God forbid!" cried John devoutly.

"Ah, there again," cried the girl, "you do not pity yourself, you see. You do not pity me the humiliation of having such things cast up to me."

"And what would you have me do, Veronica?" said John Glendonwyn. "It is easy to say that this and that should be righted. But if I tell my father that our engagement is at an end, for no reason save that we do not suit each other, he will certainly refuse to present me to the parish, even if he does not turn me forever from his door. He likes me little enough but they tell me he is even less than you."

"Nay, John, that was unkindly said," cried the girl; "and quite unworthy of you! If you think that your brother would be the best for you. You were little likely to take my advice as things were. Now you have told me that you despise both it and me. More than that, you spoke a bitter word about Fairlie Glendonwyn. In return for I am to turn-the-other-cheek damsel, I will speak one to you. I said that, like Samson, you were asleep, and I bade you beware. I need not