

lantern; looked about him; opened the lid of the bin and searched it, even below the moulded grain; emptied the sacks of their mildewed corn till it piled up to his ankles. The dust rose round him in a cloud; he sneezed.

When he had finished here he got up the ladder through the hatch to the second storey, and there came on other boxes, a barrel without a lid half full of pitch, and a mattress filled with feathers. He searched in everything; the boxes were the lumber of a fitting, and held musty papers. He turned them out and found them drafts of tacks, which he put to the closest scrutiny. They were read to the very testing-clause, and then thrown back; there was nothing in them.

Nor yet was he done. He went to the topmost storey where he stood below the sarking, stooped, his head against the beams. Nothing was there at all but the soil of doves; he turned to leave, then noticed something that had hitherto escaped him—every pigeon-hole was boarded up. In this there was some apparent interest, for he put his lantern down, took out his knife, and cut a skelf from the boarding of one hole, and chewed it.

To get out of the place without the tree to help was not so easy as to enter; he got upon the bin and made a great attempt, gave up at last, and felt in the dark about the door. The bolt of the lock was shot in an iron staple which could be levered out; he thought of the mattocks, groped for one, and putting the pick-point in the staple, forced it at a push. When that was done and the door stood open, he hammered the staple loosely back; whoever should find the door unlocked would think it carelessness. But the door itself, shut to, he jammed at the foot with stones. His last precaution was to take the tree and throw it in the river.

The wind was from the north and stirred the thicket, which shed no longer leaves, since all were blown and scattered. They rustled below his feet. He stood a little, and stared at the flaring house. A wild-cat on the Scaurnoch wailed. Dark shapes of cattle moved