

*the saints of God had disappeared from the hills of Galloway and Carrick, and when the fastnesses of the utmost hills were held by a set of wild cairds—cattle reivers and murderers, worse than the painted savages of whom navigators to the far seas bring us word.*

*It was with May Mischief that all the terrible blast of storm began (as indeed most storms among men ever do begin with a bonny lass, like that concerning Helen of Troy, which lasted ten year and of which men speak to this day). The tale began with May Mischief, as you shall hear. I keep the old name still, though the years have gone by, and though now in any talks of the old days and of all our ancient ploys, there are the bairns to be considered. But it is necessary that ere the memory quite die out, some one of us who saw these things should write them down. Some, it is true, were deeper in than I, but none saw more or clearer, being so to speak at both the inception and the conclusion of the matter.*