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FOREWORD.

I, Patrick Heron of Isle Rathan in Galloway, begin the writing of my book with thanks to God, the Giver of all good, for the early and bountiful harvest which He has been pleased to give us here in little Scotland, in this year of His Grace, 17—. It is not the least of the Lord's mercies that throughout all this realm, both hill-land and valley-land, the crops of corn, Merse wheat, Lowden oats, and Galloway bear, should be in the stackyards under thack and rape by the second day of September.

So, with a long back-end before me, the mind running easy about the corn, and prices rising, I am not likely to get a better season of quiet to write down the things that befell us in those strange years when the hill outlaws colloqued with the wild freetraders of the Holland traffic, and fell upon us to the destruction of the life of man, the carrying away of much bestial, besides the putting of many of His Majesty's lieges in fear.

Now it will appear that there are many things in this long story which I shall have to tell concerning myself which are far from doing me credit, but let it not be forgotten that it was with me the time of wild oat sowing when the blood ran warm. Also these were the graceless, unhallowed days after the Great Killing, when