

But the first glance at Ninian's face, when he returned, confounded them. It was grey as ashes. He looked at Annabel strangely, and she left the room.

"Well," said Æneas, sick at the heart, "did you find anything further?"

"*Mo creach!* I did, Drimdorran!" Ninian answered. "Sit you down; my hank's unravelled."

"Was it there?" cried Æneas. The name that Ninian gave him was portentous.

"No other place!" said Ninian, solemn. "The first thing you will do, Drimdorran, is, destroy that tower. Leave not a stone of it upon another!"

He sat with his hands on his lap and stared at the fire; the gale whooped in the chimney.

"One thing I overlooked," he said, "and it was very stupid of me. It never crossed my mind that Duncanson could build, though I kent he had some skill with the saw and hammer. It was his own hand blocked the pigeon-holes. The only wright about the place at the time was old Carmichael, and he never knew the place was boarded up. And Duncanson it was who planted trees about the doocot; would he no' be better just to pull it down? That's a thing I should have asked mysel' to start wi'. Another mistake I made was not to trust my nose that I smelled the soot. When first yon talked about a fire, Alan, I thought ye meant a chaffer in the middle of the floor, for I saw no sign of chimney or fireplace in the walls——"

"But the fire was there! I know!" said the Bailie.

"Of course it was! I found it half an hour ago. He had built the fireplace up! I found the very trowel he had used to spread his mortar! He built it up with rubble, pushed the bin against the place, and locked the door for fourteen years. But, my God! ye canna lock a door on time or terror! No wonder he kept the plaid tacked on his window in the latter days, with yon tomb before his eyes, a monument o' the man he murdered! . . . I took a pick, when I found the place, and broke the wall, and the first thing I came on was a rotten saddle."