

light of moon that at the moment fought its way through wrack.

A man was standing on the steps and fumbling at its door, with curious faint imploring cries as if he might be weeping.

At first it was Ninian's notion that some fool debauched mistook the dwelling for his own, and he went forward to explain that this was a house for the time deserted. How great was his amaze to find it Duncanson!

He had on him a greatcoat and a plaid about his shoulders, but his head was bare, and his haffits blowing in the wind disclosed him even before his voice.

A homeless cat was at his ankles, rubbing against his hose; his breast was against the door, and his hands wrought at the upper panels as if to push them in. And he was craving piteously for entrance. He spoke as in a dream; the name of his wife, dead years ago, was uppermost: "Ealasaid!" cried he, "oh, Ealasaid, let me in!" And then in Gaelic said the night was cold and folk were after him. The street was saddened by his cries.

Even when Ninian came to him and touched him, he still leaned up against the door, and craved, disconsolate, paying no attention.

"*A chiall!*" said Ninian, "what is wrong? There is no one in that house, nor light nor ember, Mr Duncanson."

And thereupon the old man turned. The moon struck on his face that was like dry cheese cracked; his eyes were standing in his head.

"It is my house," he said in a wandered way, and looked up at the arch, where a date was cut on the keystone.

It had indeed been his, in the lighter days, the house where he brought his wife, and his daughter had been born; his care-free days, if ever he had any, had been there.

"No more your house, sir," Ninian said to him. "Ye mind, Drimdorran? Craignure has got this place. There is no one there. It will not be opened up till Christmas."