

## THE FOREWORD.

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A BOOK iron-grey and chill is this that I have written, the tale of times when the passions of men were still working like a yeasty sea after the storms of the Great Killing. If these pages should chance to be read when the leaves are greening, they may chance to taste unseasonably in the mouth. For in these days the things of the spirit had lost their old authority without gaining a new graciousness, and save for one man the ancient war-cry of "God and the Kirk" had become degraded to "The Kirk and God."

This is the story of that one man whose weak and uncertain hand held aloft the Banner of Blue that I have striven to tell—his failures mostly, his loves and hates, his few bright days and his many dark nights. Yet withal I have found green vales of rest between wherein the swallow swept and the cuckoo called to her mate the cry of love and spring.