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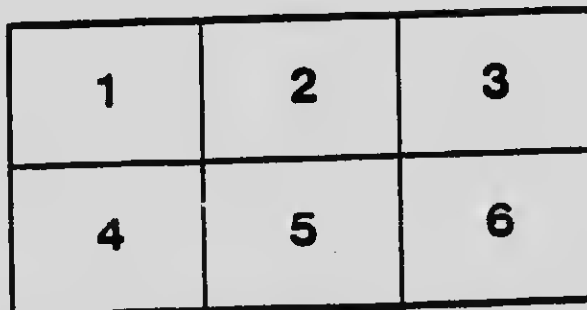
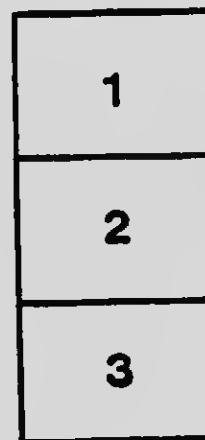
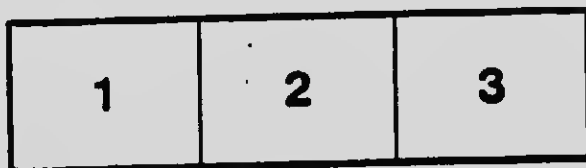
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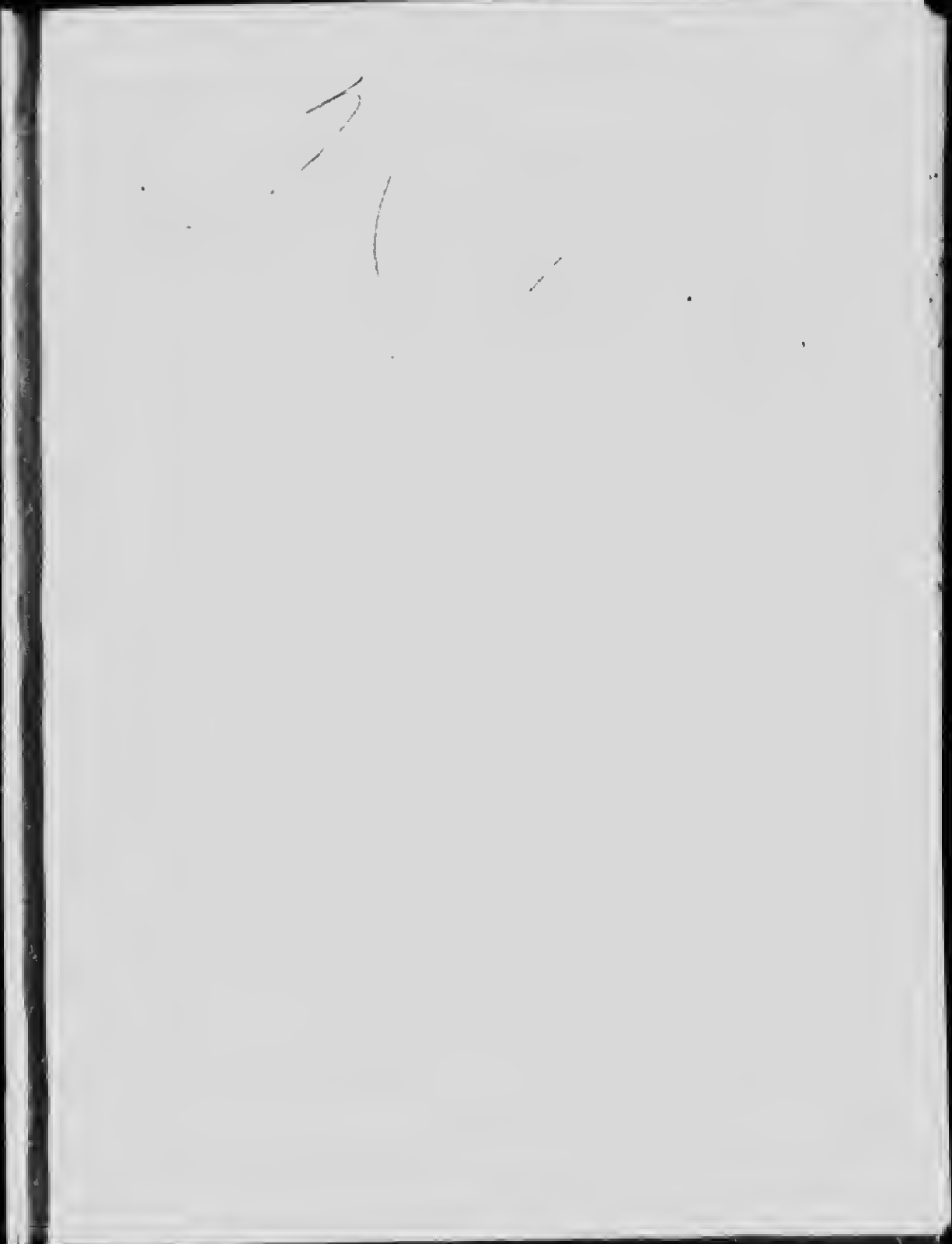


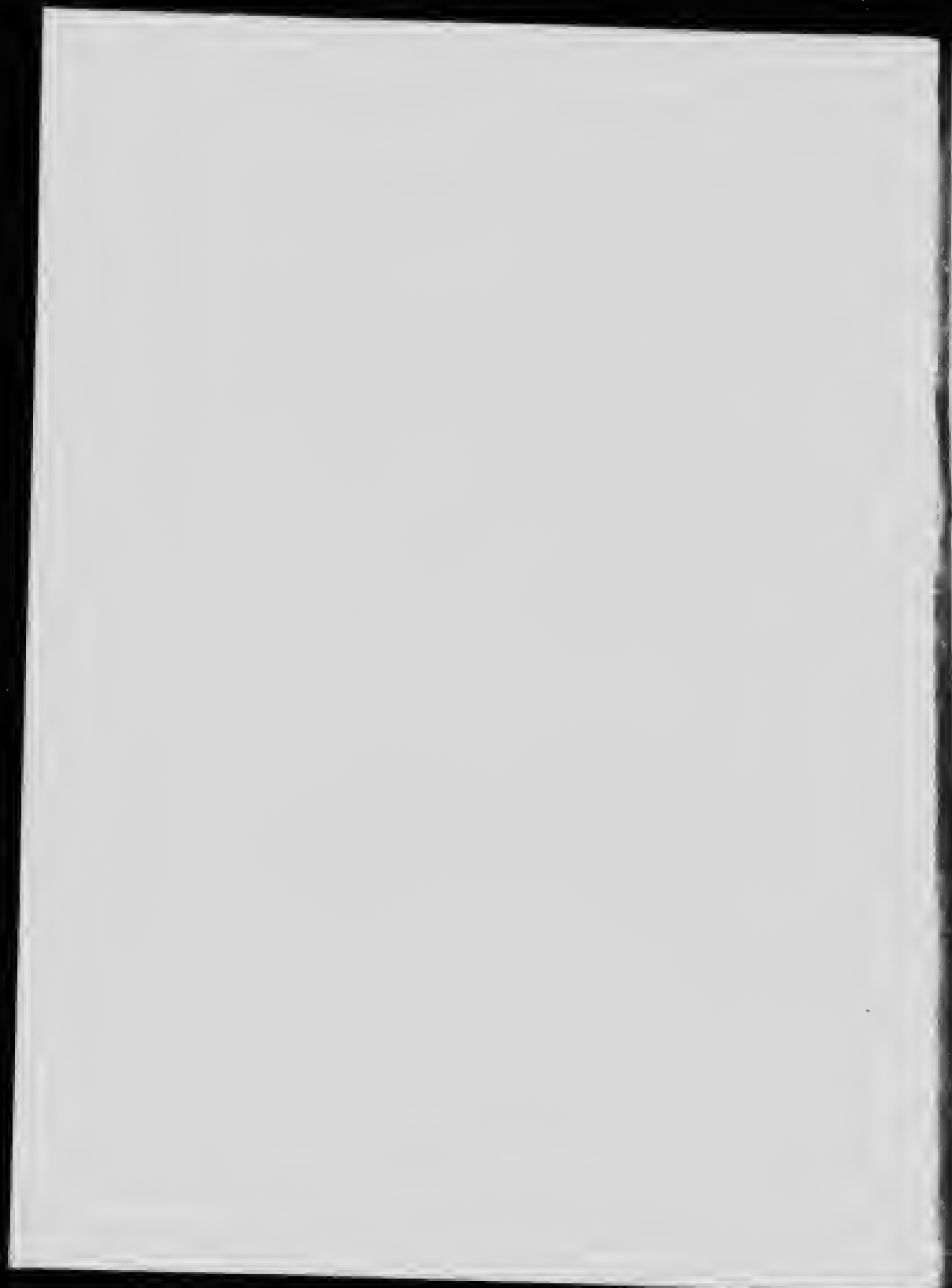
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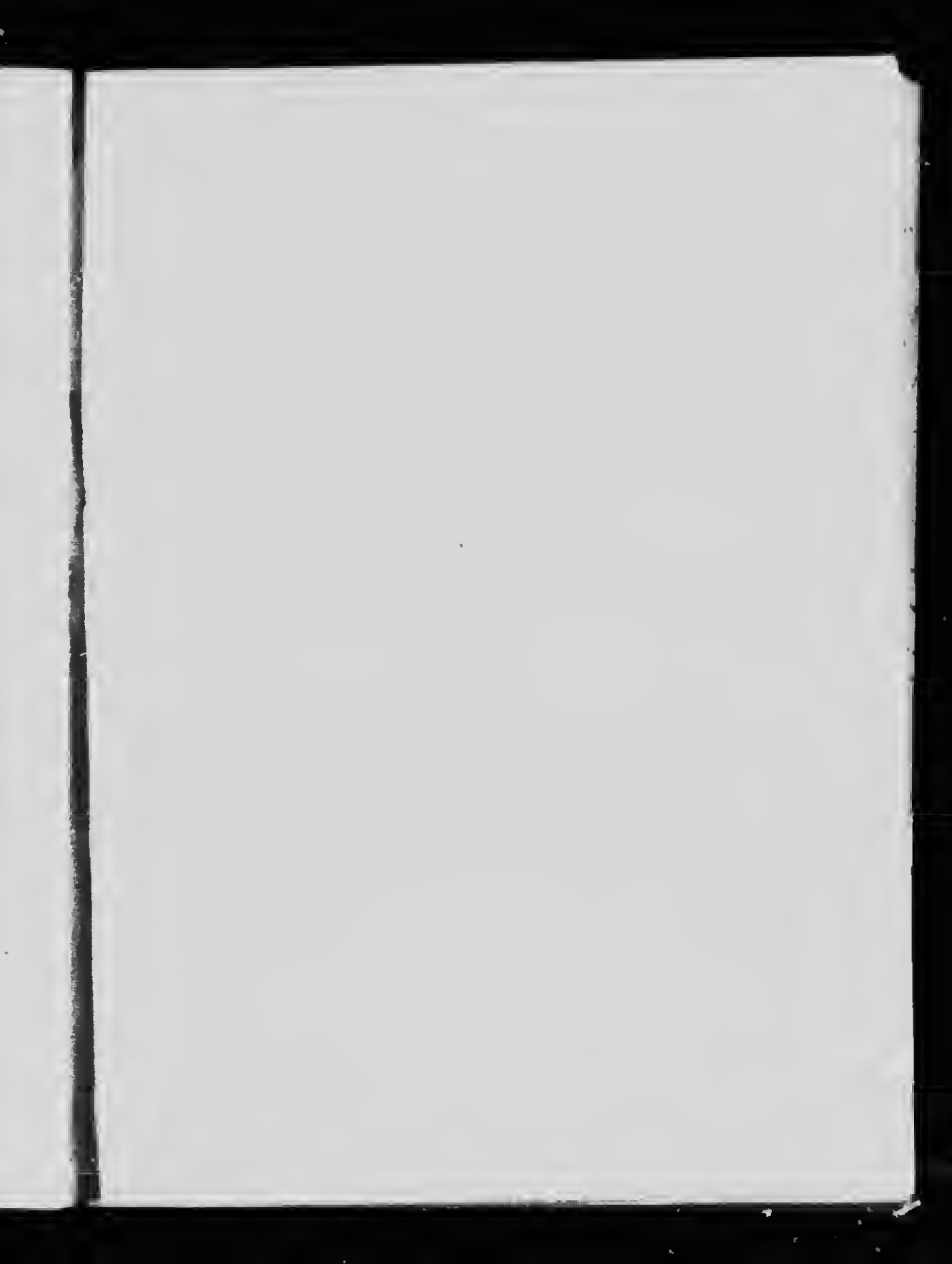
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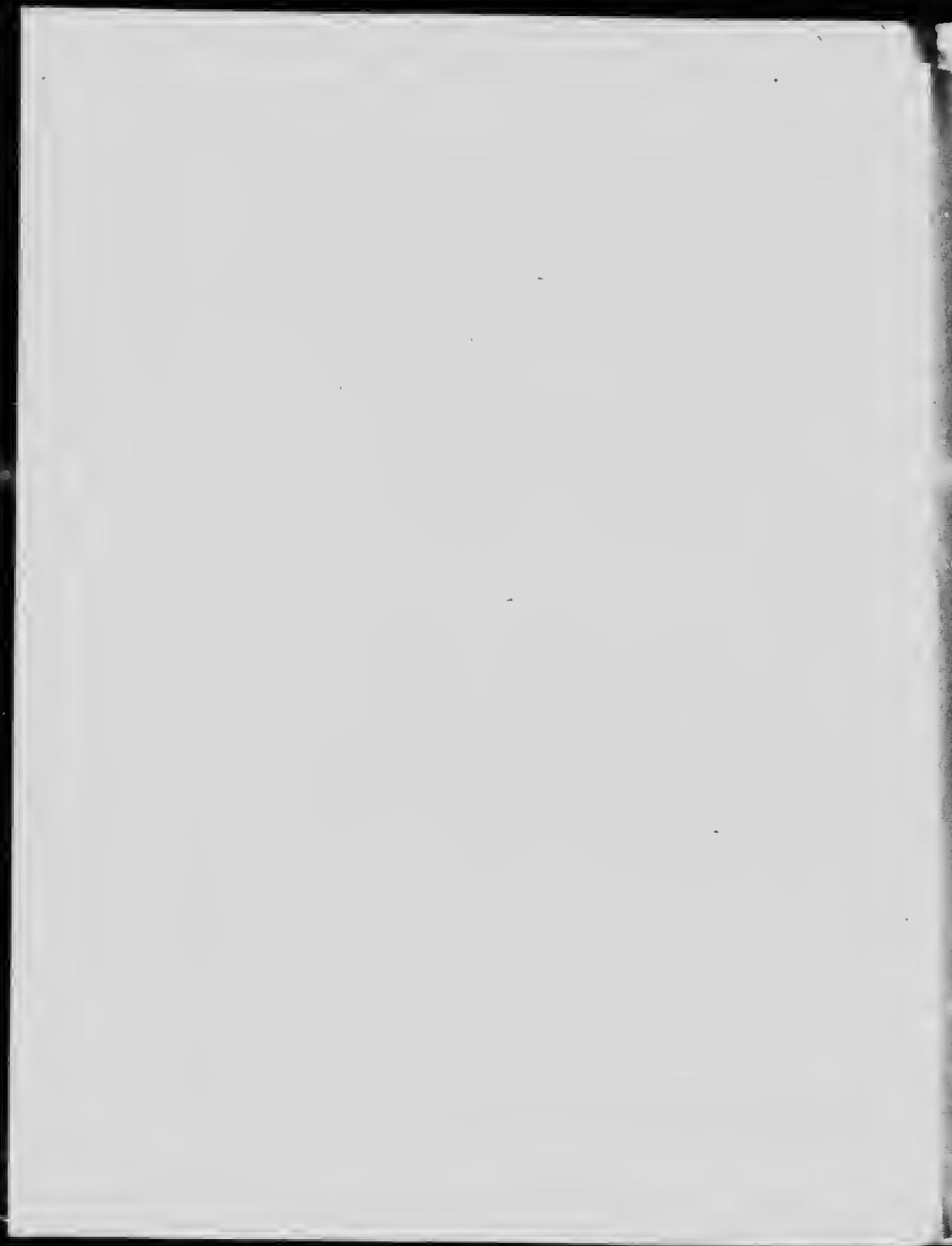






Truly

...





Yours Truly
Mae



The Doctor's Daughter

By D. MacGeorge

Author of "Original Poems," and
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Scotland."

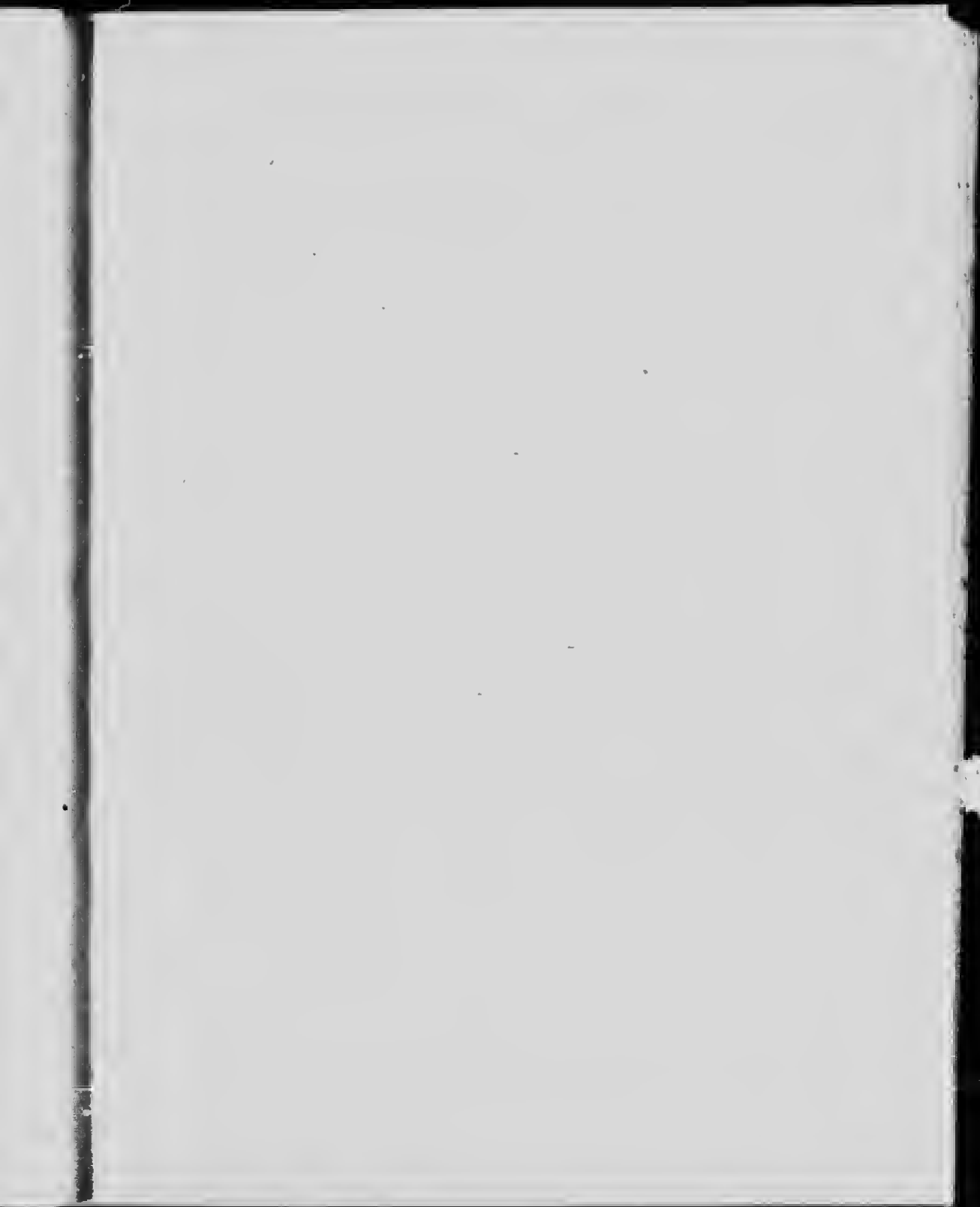
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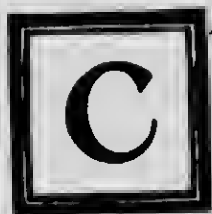
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THE DOCTOR'S DAUGHTER

CHAPTER I.



CANADA I love and next to it is the land of heather, and as I reflect on bygone days my mind's eye rests upon, and my sweetest memories are of Balmaghie. So, reader, do not wonder that I have chosen that particular place as the scene of this story. 'Twas there I spent my boyhood days, and there, too, lie in the quiet Kirkyard by the black water O'Dee my father and mother, two sisters and a brother. There I felt the first pangs of sorrow, there my frail bark was launched on the sea of life to be tossed about

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without a parent to guide me over the treacherous rocks of youth. My mind loves to rove over Balmaghie's health-clad hills that tower into the clouds, and I cannot forget the sweet-scented, daisy covered fields that lie at their feet.

In one of these fields close by the public road, a neat cottage stood, with a tidy little garden in front protected by a stone fence. In the summer season it was a bower of beauty; there you would smell the wall flower, and the honeysuckle, and the roses, long before you were within their reach. It was here that Doctor McCrae lived, known as the village doctor, though the village of Clauchenpluck was nearly a mile distant.

The doctor was a man among men, in height over 6 feet, well built, and hardy as a mountaineer, and quick as a flash in mind and body. He never used a horse, his only assistance

being a large oak staff, which he held in his right hand by the centre, swinging his arm to and fro in a characteristic style, which gave great impetus to his walk.

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Mrs. McCrae was a great contrast to her husband, being a woman of slender frame and of delicate constitution, and Mary, their only offspring, was in all respects like her mother, only somewhat taller. She was known as the prettiest lass in the parish, admired by all, and particularly by one "as the sweetest flower on Egerton braes," Egerton being the name of the nearest farm, situated on the hillside a little distant from the cottage where Mary lived. As she was the only child, she was brought up with the greatest care, never being allowed any companions and therefore seldom speaking to anyone except those who called to see the doctor.

As Mary emerged into woman-

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hood she frequently watched with longing eye the young folk that passed that way to the cranberry patch to gather the berries. It was behind the little cottage that cranberries grew in the mossy swamp some few hundred yards away, and all that passed were likewise sure to watch for a glimpse of pretty Mary. It was not uncommon for some of the more envious lasses to remark on seeing her, "Deed, an' I dinna see that she's ony bonnier than anybody else."

But the lads had a different opinion, one in particular, who always walked by himself, making himself most conspicuous and no doubt attracting Mary's attention above all the others. He was a noted lad anyway, for he was looked upon as the most worthless young man in the village. Judging by his outward appearance his reputation was sustained, as he was most untidy in

every respect. His hair was seldom cut and as seldom combed. It was said of him that he once remarked on seeing a man comb his hair every day, "I denna ken hoo ye can came yer hair every day, for I only ride mine ance a month an' it's the afulest job I ever tried." But as Wull Kinstrey (which was his name) had had a very careless upbringing he was not entirely to blame for his untidy habits. His mother used to say, "Ony thing will dae for oor Wull, he's naething but a sluch onyway." Rarely had he two boots on his feet that were the same, but should he have they were sure to be on "the wrong feet." Notwithstanding his peculiar dress he was somewhat gifted as a poet, used to amuse the boys of the villages with his verses and was as happy as the day was long.

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Now Mary had no little lamb
But she had a little cow,
And often had to graise it
On the road beyond the Knowe.

She had no where to let it run but the roadside, and it found plenty of fresh grass there. Every doctor had to keep a cow in those days. It not only kept him in milk and butter but also supplied the physician with vaccine to inoculate the bairns, as all children had to be vaccinated within thirty days after their birth or the parents or guardians were fined. Such was the law yet it was not such a hardship because the family doctor did not charge the working class for the operation.

Mary was oftened cautioned not to go far away but she was somewhat like the cow in that she needed to be tethered or she would wander away, and she often did disappear from her mother's view beyond the Knowe.

There the cow seemed to think the grass more to its taste, and there Mary could hold a quiet chat with whom she would and not be seen, but how quickly she would turn homeward when she saw her father's stalwart form in the distance. He was always reminding her to be careful and not linger about the swamp. His fears were well grounded, for at last she caught cold and had to take to her bed, which caused her parents great concern, the doctor having seen many young women die from consumption beginning with a cold. He thereupon resolved to get a lad to do the odd things and herd the cow. So the doctor went off to the village and engaged Wull Kinstrey. He was not much good, as everybody said, but then he got little pay and the doctor had no fear of him and Mary becoming attached to one another.

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But strange—it is the unlikely that

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happens, for it was not long till Wull fell deeply in love with Mary, though he dared not show it, except in the many kind and thoughtful acts he did being ever ready to run at her call. She soon recovered from her illness and Wull had to return home. It was a great disappointment to him, as he was just in his element there, for he'd plenty of time to read and write his poems. He did not care to go to school and as to working steady by the day he had not been used to that. So when he returned home he spent the most of his time reading and writing, but often sanntered down the road towards Egerton just to get a glimpse of the "Flower o' Egerton Braes."

CHAPTER II.

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Now, Mrs. McWhulter, a nearby neighbor of Mrs. Kinstrey, was one of Doctor McCrae's patients, and one of the class that is often ill but seldom sick. She had a great "gift of the gab," as some would remark, a tongue that would clip clouts. On the occasion of the doctor's visit after Wull's return she stated to the doctor that she never cared to interfere in other folks' affairs but she could not help thinking how foolish he was in employing Wull Kinstrey to herd his cow and be around his house, a useless, idle, good-for-naething fellow like him—"an' that isna the worst o't, but the likes o' him making love to bonnie Mary, is a thing was never heard of."

"Wha ever telt ye that, woman," enquired the doctor.

"Naebody telt me but I ken it's

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true, for I hae guid proof o't. As I was just coming up frae the burn wi a pail o' water, what should I find but a piece o' paper, and as Wull was just there afore me I hae nae doots but he had dropt it oot o' a hole o' his pouch." With that she handed it to the Doctor saying, "There it is, ye can see for yer sel', and maybe ye'll believe me noo."

So the Doctor opened it and read thus:

MY MARY.

The spring it is sure, sends the snowdrop
so pure,
And the crocus sae worthy of praise,
But nae flower can compare with the dear
little lass,
That lives among daisies on Egerton
braes.

The roses may bloom and send forth their
perfume,
And the prettiest flower in the garden
may blaze,

But they're attraction is lost at the sight of
my Mary,
That lives among daisies on Egerton
braes.

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Her face it is bonnie, and sweeter than
honey,
An angel might blush if on her he would
gaze,
None purer in heaven than is my ain Mary,
That lives among daisies on Egerton
braes.

Having read the foregoing lines the Doctor looked over at Mrs. McWhulter and said, "I doubt your mistaken. Surely Wull never made up that, for it's not ill written, and I can hardly think Wull could write the verses. If it had been better writing I would have said that Mr. Crocket, of Queratin Espie, was the author. I know the Elder's son is a clever young man and often writes poetry. He might have droped it by the way."

"Na, na, Doctor, ye see Wull was:

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at the burn afore me. I just met him gaun hame as I was gaun doon into the burn, and as I came oot on to the road there it was, and i'm as sure that it's his as I draw ma breath."

The Doctor slipped it in his pocket saying, "Well, well, I'll see about it. Good-bye, Mrs. McWhulter, and I hope the medicine will do ye good, and ye'll soon be yerself again."

The Doctor was not long in reaching his home and not a little excited over the poem, but he did not know very well what to say about it. Mary was as dear to him as any child could be, he just adored her, but he loved her too much to allow her to have any intimacy with such an one as Wull Kinstrey.

It was not long till he enquired of Mary if she had seen Wull lately.

Mary hung her head and said she had not seen him since he went away.

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"Just so," said her father, "you certainly have deceived me, for I never would have thought you could behave like this. Little thought I you would have lowered yourself to take up with that lazy, useless fellow Kinstrey."

Poor Mary tried to say a word in self defence, but ere she had well began the Doctor stamped his foot and forbade her to speak back to him. "You need not deny it; I have proof of it in my pocket right here, and let me tell you that if I ever know you to speak to him again, or have any correspondence with him, or anyone like him, I shall put you out of my house and you shall never darken my door again."

Mary could not stand in his angry presence any longer. Sobbing and crying she made her way to her little bedroom and there cried herself to sleep.

Mrs. McCrae was a very delicate

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woman and her husband's outburst of wrath fairly overcame her. She had never seen him in such anger at any time before and the shock was more than her nerves could stand.

Next day she was unable to rise and it was a sad day for Mary. Between her mother's illness and her father's anger it made her heart nigh likely to break, while the thought of her own innocence in the whole matter aggravated her despondency. She longed to know what was written on the paper in her father's possession, but she dared not mention the matter to either of her parents. The Doctor was a busy man, seldom at home, and he never mentioned the matter again. But still Mary's heart so quaked with fear that she never dared go beyond the Knowe again.

Love's ways are past finding out. Solomon could not understand them, so they are not for us to explain.

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Love is a fire which the more you try to put out the fiercer it burns. This was true in Mary's case, for the wind of fate seemed only to fan the flame. She was determined to find it out, but it puzzled her to know how to do so without arousing her parents' suspicion.

Wull's fingers were often twisting at his hair, but when he heard about Mrs. McWhulter finding his love poem his hair got a more savage twist than ever. He had no difficulty in restoring the poem to paper, and resolved to convey it to her some way or other. He had never heard of the row the Doctor had made about it, so he feared not to go that way, and was fully determined to let Mary know what he thought of her.

It happened to be at the close of the harvest season and the cranberries ripe when he set out light of heart to gather some berries. He did not

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climb the dyke and take straight road as others had done, but went round by the field gate close to the Doctor's garden fence, and as good fortune would have it, who should be in the garden but Mary, pulling a bunch of roses for her sick mother. Wull did not speak but slammed the gate behind him to attract Mary's attention.

As she looked up to see who was passing through the gate he threw his paper over the fence and about as quick as a swallow would catch a fly Mary picked it up and placed it in her bosom, there to hide it till a more convenient season, while Wull passed on to the cranberry patch, feeling as if he had done his first manly act.

It would be difficult to depict Mary's feelings as she read that little love song—her first love letter. She thought nobody took any interest in her but Mother. Her father she loved, but his recent outburst of

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wrath made her feel as if he did not care for her and she never dreamed that this poor lad had any love for her. "He must hae a gie head tae write like that, and a guid heart, tae," she said to herself, "and if he only had someone tae care for him and hae better claes on he would look better. I aye thocht he was a weelfard chiel. And then when I was ill he was aye sae kind and obliging tae me; how he used tae care for my floors. I aye thoch that wha ever liked floors must hae something guid about him." But she could only think such things as she dared not express her thoughts, not even to her mother.

"There is a Divinity that shapes our
ends,

Rough hew them though we may."

It was a day never to be forgotten by Wull when big Anthony McMillan, the Shepherd, called on Mrs. Kinstrey

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and enquired if she had a boy that could herd sheep.

"I hae a boy, I denna know if he could dae that, but am sure ye might try hin, he's daeing naething here at hame!"

"Has he ever been away working out onywhere?" said Anthony.

"Weel, sir, he was doon at the Doctor's awhile, when Mary was sick, but ye ken that was na' far away. He aye came hame at nicht. He liked it fine."

"Dae ye think he wud come tae Barnywater wi me?"

"I dinna ken," said his mother, "but he's no any guid around here, onyway."

Will was called in, whereupon Anthony asked him if he would like to learn to be a shepherd. "A nice easy job ye ken; naething tae dae but tack yer crook and plaid wi yer colie

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dog at yer feet, and tramp the hills and see that the sheep are a' richt."

Wull looked over at his mother, who was sitting on a chair with her hands folded, and looking up at big Anthony as he spoke.

"Ye can please yersel'. There's nae work here for ye. Ye may make a shepherd but I think ye were never born for hard work."

"I think I'll go, mither," said Wull."

Whereupon Anthony promised to give him £2 10s for the first six months, and his choice of one of the flock in the bargain, which was a general custom in those days. Sometimes the flock of a Shepherd, staying for a few years on one farm, would increase to quite a number.

Wull's new field of labor suited him well. He was away some nine miles on the lofty mountains, where rises the black Water O' Dee, free

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from the taunts and sneers of his old companions. Nothing was there to disturb his reflections but the occasional bleat of a sheep, or the merry twittering of a lark as it soared to the clouds far beyond the scan of the naked eye. Or perhaps a whap (Plover) swinging through mid air, sounding his note that is so much like our Canadian Whip-poor-Will, or perchance a raven's croak as it sat on the head of a sheep, waiting for a chance to pick out its eye. This was nothing short of a Poet's Paradise and he used it well. It's said he wrote his poem entitled "The Lost Lamb," while there, and as it is well worth reprinting it is given here :

THE LOST LAMB

'Twas on Mossdales mossy swamp
That a little cottage stood,
Whose roof was only heather
And its walls were just as rude.

The home of William Morrison,
A ditcher to his trade,
He drained the swampy moorland
And thus his living made.

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He usually took his dinner
When he went far from home,
But one day his little Lizzie said
"Father, I'll with it come."

Lizzie was but a stripling,
A child just eight years old ;
As she hurried o'er the moorland
E're his dinner it grew cold.

She reached her father safely
In a spirit full of glee
At the thought of having found him ;
How proud she seemed to be ;

When her father had got rested
And partaken of his meal,
She took her journey homeward,
Skipping o'er hill and dale.

But in an unwary moment,
Where the path made its divide,
Among the bushy heather
And no one her to guide,

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She wandered on the wrong one
And soon went far astray,
Until the darkness settled down
On that bright summer day.

With spirit sad and weary feet
She crouched down by a rock.
She breathed her little prayer to God,
Her head wrapped in her cloak.

She slept until the daylight
And then awoke in plight,
Bewildered, dazed and hungry,
And no home within sight.

Her memory gone, and wild
Still she plodded on her way,
When night returned she halted
Where she was found next day.

When her father returned that evening
And no daughter did appear,
The mother went quite frantic,
Her grief was hard to bear.

Few were the neighbors thereabouts,
But these few, how soon they knew,
And with light in hand searched far away
Till daylight broke in view.

This happened to be Sabbath,
A day of holy rest,
But every man for miles around
Did search his very best.

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Few were the worshippers that day,
No men but aged and frail,
The minister prayed as ne'er before
In the church within the vale.

The Sabbath day came to a close,
Alas! without success,
So they searched again the next day
Though with numbers somewhat less.

All this time I ne'er had heard
The sad and mournful tale,
Living far off on the moorland
Away o'er hill and dale.

But coming round the Craig o' Dee
In a sheltered little nook
I spied the girl, but what think you?
Her for a fairy took.

I stood bewildered on the spot
And felt so very queer,
While she played away with "chuckie
stones"
A game to girlies dear.

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My collie gave a gentle bark.
She heard, gave me a stare,
Then ran as if to save her life,
As wild as any hare.

I followed hard and soon o'ertook
The poor thing, when she fled,
Her look was wild, her tongue was tied,
As ne'er a word she said.

I took the child into my arms
And wrapt her in my plaid,
But though I gently questioned her
She ne'er an answer made.

Where she lived I did not know,
But for Mossdale I set out,
Yet I had not gone very far
When I heard an anxious shout.

"Have you seen a little lass?"
Was this eager, fearsome cry
"Yes, I have one here in my plaid,"
To him I made reply.

To me they came with eager haste,
Their joy it had no bound,
Their anxious fears were now allayed,
The lamb had now been found.

These men set out with lightsome hearts
The gladsome news to tell.
The others that were searching to
Where blooms the heather bell,

While I kept speeding on my way
Towards wee Lizzie's home
And placed her in her mother's arms
No more away to roam.

He was not as big a man as his master Anthony, but he had nevertheless grown to be quite a big fellow in the first year of his sheep herding career and when he found wee Lizzie Morrison he was quite a man in his own estimation. His actions proved him to be no "slutch" as his mother called him, for he no sooner delivered the child to her mother than he suggested that he go for the Doctor. It was not long before he got the Dornal horse and gig and was off to Egerton for Dr. McCrae, who was somewhat nearer than the town of New Galloway. He soon reached

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Cluchenpluck and just as he was turning the corner at Samuel Bean's to cross the bridge, who should he meet but Dr. McCrae, who was not a little astonished when Wull accosted him with the remark, "Aye, man, I was just gaun for ye. I found wee Lizzie as I was coming roon the Lagon O' Dee but I'm afraid she's guan tae dee. I got this machine tae take ye up fast."

The Doctor was not long in getting seated beside Wull and at once began to enquire of him the particulars concerning the girl's wanderings. Wull was a little nervous for a while as he told his story, being afraid he might mention something about Mary, so that it was a great relief when they arrived at Mossdale again and bade the Doctor good-bye.

Many a time during the girl's subsequent sickness Wull tramped

over the hills to see her, and often met the Doctor so that they gradually became warm friends.

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When the poem (The Lost Lamb) became known the young Shepherd sprang into great fame with the villagers. Even the Doctor was heard to say that it was a pity Wull had had so little schooling.

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CHAPTER III.

Mary's love grew stronger during his long absence, yet she dare not mention his name to her father, or even to her mother, who had never recovered from the nervous shock she sustained when the Doctor accused Mary of making love to Wull. She gradually weakened and died, as all believed, of slow consumption. Mary was thereafter left in sole charge of the Doctor's home. Many sympathizers she had from the village, but she was quite reserved in her ways and refused all proffered company, even at nights. She preferred being alone. She was brought up to it, she would say. But her father was of a different mind, for he persuaded Mrs. McWhulter to stay with Mary. She had been in charge during the sad days of Mrs. McCrae's death and burial, and though Mary was able

enough to do all the work, yet he thought it was not right for her to be alone, and more so as the winter was approaching, the month of September being already half gone.

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Wull stuck well to the herding, but in course of time he decided to leave that wild and rugged mountainous part of the Country, and no wonder, for it was decidedly uninviting. The situation of Barnywater was dreary in extreme. A cart could not get within miles of it, and when the river rose, (and that was often) the men had to take a boat and row for three miles from the very door. It lay in a valley with great mountains towering majestically on either side. In winter great flocks of sheep were taken down to the lowlands and wintered there and Wull had come to like the lowlands best, but that was not the real reason. He was nearer Egerton, where his heart lay.

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Mary and he kept their love affairs very quiet, and as far as village gossip went they were never mentioned, not even suspected. Mary's sorrows were somewhat mitigated when she heard that Wull had been engaged as Shepherd at Egerton. It was part hill and part lowland and the Doctor's cottage was on the farm, but on the opposite side of the farmhouse, which was well up on the rising ground some little distance away. How often Mary would make visits into her garden in front of the house, while Wull would be moving among his sheep on the hillside in full view, though too far away to speak, but to one in love a sight is often sufficient to cheer the sad and lonely heart. Who can tell but that he had a peculiar whistle, as if calling on his dog Scar, or perhaps a wave of his plaid that would answer as a love token. Wireless telegraphy was not invented then

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so they could not send messages to one another by that means, but there were other ways of doing it. To correspond by letters was not unusual, it had been done many years before this. If I remember right it was a case of lovers' corresponding that was the means of the invention of the penny postage. People used to send a letter with a private mark on the outside of the envelope. No stamps were used, the party receiving had to pay according to distance, and one could refuse to accept the letter if one saw the the private mark. That may have been all that was wanted to escape the payment. This became so common that Sir Rowland Hill, then the Postmaster-General, suggested the penny postage.

But Wull and Mary did not trust the Postman. They had a post office of their own. It was not a hole in a tree, as I have read of, but a secret

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place by the spring. The parish of Balmaghie was famed for wells and the best of spring water was to be had almost anywhere, especially on the hillside. Pumps were not required so at Egerton Braes they had a pure spring well, starting right from the rock just across the road from the Doctor's cottage, from which Mary got her water for the house. Beside the well lay a large flat stone, where many a weary traveller had rested on his way to and from Kirkcudbright, and right behind the stone lay a smaller one and underneath it Wull and Mary placed their love epistles. They still feared the wrath of the Doctor, and up till now had been able to keep their love affairs entirely to themselves. Wull could stoop down and take a drink unsuspected, and often he pretended to drink, when all the time he was only placing his letter under the stone and extracting one

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from Mary. And so with Mary The milk coggie that she carried the water in was often emptied when it did not need to be. She just loved to visit the spot, not that she hoped to meet the lad, for as yet they dare not be seen together. She had no liking for the company of Mrs. McWhulter, and consequently often made excuses to go out. Her life, however, was not to be always under a cloud. The sun at last shone out, for Mrs. McWhulter got tired of being away from her own home and returned to the village, where she could hear more about her neighbors. Her departure was a great relief to Mary, so the Doctor got Mrs. McFarlien to come. She was a widow, possessed of means, and quite a friend of the doctor, and Mary soon began to like her. Being of a sompathetic nature Mary could not bear the outspoken, rough and ready tongue of Mrs. McWhulter. But

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Widow McFarlien was a woman of culture and manners, and of a gentle disposition, a stylish lady, as Mrs. McWhulter termed her when she was discussing about the Doctor and his affairs to Sally Blackhall.

"A stylish lady he has got nae doot, but he'll be thinking she'll keep the hoos brawer than I did. I could keep a hoos afore she was born. It ill take a hantel mair tae keep it noo than whan I was there, I assure ye. His sorrow for his puer wife didna last lang. I used tae think he was a man fu' o' kindness, and especially to the poor, but he'll gang past my door an not even cast his ee' ont the same as I was dirt. Little does he mind o' the trachel I had when his wife deet, puer body, an' a richt fine woman she was. Talk about a lady! Widow McFarlien couldna hand a canil tae her. Aye, and was it not me who opened his een about Mary's ongauns

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wi' that guid-fer-naething callant, Wull Kinstrey, and he can just gang by; a'l be gie ill afore I send for him."

"A weel, woman," said Sally, "ye shouldna speak sae fast. Ye ken nether you nor naebody else can tell how sudden trouble will come, and he's the only doctor near han' and ye might be dead afore ye could yet ane frae the toon."

"Aweel, al' no be cain at the Doctor's ony mair onyway. I was just thinking about gaun doon tae get some cranberries this afternoon, but I'll ne'er take the road the hoos is on. So I'll hae tae be gaun and get my shawl and bonnet on. You need not be saying onything about what I hae been saying tae ye, Sally."

So she set out to the berry patch, and had nearly filled her pail when she got tired stooping low down and stood up to ease her back. She happened to look as she said, "Wha

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should I see but Wull coming along the brae and straight to the well, and there tak' some white thing oot o' his pouch, which he seemed to lay doon. 'Ma fegs,' I said tae maself, 'I'll just gang hame that way and pretend tae take a drink and I'll see what it is.' My milk pail was nearly full o' the berries so I hustled and gathered a few mair, then danered away to the road, but gaed by the Doctor's hoos on the other side tae make sure I wouldna come in contact wi Mary. When I got to the well a couldna see naething at first, until I bent on ma knee tae take a drink, when I spied something like a piece o' paper stickin' oot from under the weestane. I soon got it oot and what dae ye think it was but a letter tae Mary. 'Noo,' says I tae masel' after I had it safe and soon in my frock pouch, 'will I send it tae the Doctor? Na figs, I'll

just gie it tae him sel' the first time I see him.' "

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The foregoing story she related to some half dozen neighbors. Of course they were to keep it a dead secret and as is usually the case they all kept it as great a secret as she did, but it was several days e'er she got a chance to see the doctor. The secret in due time spread, he got the news earlier than she intended, and as soon as he heard it he made a call on her without being sent for. He laid manners and courtesy aside for once. Opening the door without knocking he called,

"Are you in, Mrs. McWhulter?"

"Yes, sir."

She was sitting by the fire taking her smoke. She quickly laid by her pipe in the little square hole in the fire jam beside the matches and at once rose to meet him, not a little confused, but e'er she had time to say "guid day" the Doctor, in a stern

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voice, demanded the letter she found addressed to his daughter.

"I would like to know what right you have to retain in your possession that which you know does not belong to you," said the Doctor. "It is the next thing to stealing and you are liable to be brought before the Fiscal and severely punished."

"I'll soon get ye the letter Maister McCrae. I didna intend to keep it. If ye had been here two days sunner I wad hae gien it. I just thocht I wad be daen baith ye and the lassie a guid turn by gieing it tae yersel."

"Give me the letter at once," said the Doctor.

She went to the kitchen dresser drawer, drew out the letter and gave it to him.

"There it is, Doctor, I'm sorry I touched it, but I never opened it. It's just there as I got it. A thocht I was

daeing ye a kindness, an' a' for the lassie's guid."

"I am perfectly capable of looking after my own daughter and I want none of your interference. You're always making trouble with some of your neighbors. I was slow to believe that you were the mischief making woman that you are."

With that the Doctor took his departure.

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CHAPTER IV.

He was no sooner gone than Mrs. Kinstrey, who lived on the other side of the street, seeing the doctor depart, went over to see what was the matter with Mrs. McWhulter.

"That's a weetin rain, Mrs. McWhulter. A just saw the doctor coming oot, and I didna ken ye were ill, so I just came over tae see ye. What's like the matter wi ye?"

"O, just ma old complaint again, woman. Little does onybody ken what a suffer, and I dinna think that Doctor McCrae is ony use, at least he does not dae me ony guid. I hae just been thinking I'll not hae him ony mair. I'll send for ane o' the experts frae the town—Specials or something they call them."

"Ma certy, but ane o' them 'ill cost a gie penny. The parish won't pay their bill for ye," said Mrs. Kinstrey.

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Looking out of the window at the same time she exclaimed, "there's Mary McHaffie at my door. I maun rin o'er and see what she has brought me frae Castle Douglas."

It was just a bundle of dirty clothes from her son Wull. As she opened them out before Mary she remarked,

"It's changed days wi oor Wull since he went tae service. He's not like the same laddie. He's got sae prood an' maun hae a clean sark every twa weeks or so. But tell me, Mary, is it true that him and the Doctor's douchter are getting thick again? You are sure tae hear all about it as you are travelling thro the parish."

"Deed woman," said Mary, "I never fash ma thum about things like that. I just try tae mind my ain work and it takes me all my time tae dae that, as I hae a lot of parcels tae take oot. So I must be gaun."

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It was late that night when the Doctor arrived home, so it was the next morning before he handed the letter to Mary. It was a great surprise to her, and greater still when she observed the handwriting. Her face grew pale. Not a word she spoke. Her thoughts flashed back to the time when her father broke forth in furious wrath upon her. Some two years had passed since then, but the recollections of that night could never be obliterated from her memory, and though her father had of late shown her the very greatest of affection, still there was the lingering thought that he might still entertain some prejudice to Wull.

But it was otherwise, for he no sooner saw Mary's face turn pale than he laid his hand on her shoulder and in a loving voice said, "Mary I'm not going to scold you this time. I just want to tell you one thing and it is

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this ; tell Wull to leave no more letters at the spring, but just come here and speak to yourself. I have changed my opinion about the lad and I shall never more look down on him. He has proved himself to be a young man well worthy of my esteem and respect." With these remarks he retired to his office or study.

It is difficult to depict a prisoner's feeling who has been found guilty of the first offence and has been let off on suspended sentence, but it is more so to describe the state of Mary's mind as she retired to her little bedroom with the letter in hand that her father had just given to her. Having shut the door she cried, but not with pain. She sobbed but not from sorrow. Her tears did flow, but not from grief. It was an overflow of joy quite beyond her control. Little did Wull expect that his sweet song on Mary O' Egerton Braes would be

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as a cloud on Mary's sky so long, but now the cloud had burst and the sunshine was so brilliant on Mary's little world that it seemed too much for her to bear. It has been well said, "This world is nothing but sunshine and shadow," and truly Mary had found it so. What a change in her life.

No fears haunted her now as in days gone by when she used to graze her cow. She could go with easy mind further than beyond the Knowe. With perfect freedom she could now speak to the one she loved, whose name once was not only a byword in the village but also regarded by those that knew him as a lazy, worthless boy. Circumstances have been the making of many a man or woman. How seldom can man choose his lot in life! Yet we have much in our power if we choose to take advantage of it. It has been truly said, "There is a

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divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them though we may." There is many a turn in the road through life and certainly Mary had come to one in hers. It was not long till she invited Wull to spend the evening with her and Widow McFarlin.

Seeing him at the well one afternoon as he was looking his sheep (as the shepherds called it when they went through them e'er the night came down) she said, "Friday nicht is hallowe'en, and Mrs. McFarlin would like you to come down and spend the nicht with us. Faither would like ye tae come, tae."

"Weel, I'll try, Mary. I dinna think that we'll hae tae thrash that nicht."

It was a common thing at night in the winter season thrashing with the flail, as there was no mill in those days, but most farmers allowed the servants to have their hallowe'en.

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“Hallowe'en, the night at een the fairies shall be riding.” Wull came down and the doctor made his yellow staff swing that day to get through calling on his patients before the night arrived, so that he, too, could spend the evening with them. He was just as full of fun as any, burning nuts, and eating slaes and playing all the tricks of hallowe'en.

This was the first evening Mary and Wull spent together, and, of course, they were a little bashful, but the Doctor soon dispelled it with his jokes and tricks and stories of his boyhood days. Like most doctors he was a great entertainer, and it was not long before Wull had to take his turn and recite some of his poems.

After hesitating a little, and twisting his bushy hair in front with his forefinger, he started off with the following :

THE GIG O' MUTTON.

Come, listen to the story
That I have got to tell,
It's about a gig o' mutton
That had got roasted well.

I happened to be herding
Upon the Farm of Crae,
Where the farmer was quite uppish,
And the young folks rather gay.

So it was not unusual
For them to have a spree ;
To invite the friends around them
To a dance or to a tea.

One night they had a big affair,
A dinner up-to-date,
A great display of everything,
And a jigot on a plate.

The people being somewhat poor,
And flesh was rather dear,
The farmer thought to give a treat
So a rich man he'd appear.

The common fare for dinner time
Was brakey flesh half rotten,
And bludie puddins rather dry,
They ne'er shall be forgotton.

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So when the guests had all arrived
And their haps had been laid by,
They marched into the dining hall,
The jigot for to try.

No sooner had they all been seated
And the farmer said the grace,
Than he looked across at his guid wife
With a rather serious face.

For, to his great surprise, he saw
The jigot it was gone,
The plate was there and gravy
Nought left, not e'en the bone.

The auld wife was in a pickle,
The guests they looked sedate,
The farmer's wrath was kindled
When he saw the empty plate.

"Excuse me, friends, but here's a jock
I canna tak' awa,
We had a roast, and oh, sae fine,
But who has taen't awa?"

The young folks felt as if to burst,
But not with mutton prime:
'Twas laughter that they had within,
Yet did not suit the time.

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The guid auld wife rose up in haste,
Followed by douchters twa.
They hunted up and down the house
But never a jigot saw.

Some swore a wlth had been aroon,
Some saw a beggar man
Galn frae the door sae short before,
Sae after him they ran.

His whereabouts they couldna find,
No beggar was in sight,
So they all agreed it was a witch
That took the roast that night.

The beggar man they thought they saw,
It turned oot tae be me,
I danered oot tae tak' a walk,
Sae fine it chanced tae be.

My collie dog slipped fare my fit,
But I ne'er minded Scar,
So wrapt was I in musing strain
My thoughts were roaming far.

As I wandered roon the Roan hill
A noise soon made me stand,
The first thing that I saw was Scar
Fast scraping o'er the land.

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Thinks I he's chased a rabbit in,
I'll catch it if I try ;
I used my crook tae prode aroon,
But n'er a hole found I.

But I found the jigot all covered up
With a foot of sand at least ;
So my collie dog had been the witch
That spoiled the farmer's feast.

"Well, well," said the Doctor,
"that's good. But tell me, is that
just made up or did it really happen?"

"Yes," said Wull, "it happened
last winter when I was there herding,
and I could not help writing it out."

"Well," said the Doctor, "it has
a lesson for us all. We should never
pretend to be what we really are not.
How often it happens that some people
make a great show at others'
expense."

The evening was spent very
quickly, and e're Wull went away the
Doctor invited him to drop in again
on any evening, whether he was at

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home or not. So henceforth he felt free to come and go at any time, and many a happy evening he spent thro that long winter.

Mary, who had the appearance of a delicate girl in previous years, had now become more robust and of a brighter countenance. Loving friendship and a contented mind, had, no doubt been the cause of this change. Mrs. McFarlin proved to be a good companion to Mary, in every respect just like a mother, and it was well for her that she had a companion like her. Of course she had the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, Him that never faileth, but like others she was human and where is the one that does not desire earthly friends and especially in the time of trouble and distress? So it happened with Mary, as is the case with the majority of the race. When our sky seems at its brightest dark clouds will

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arise, and blast our hopes and aspirations. But it's well to remember the words of the poet, who wrote :

The brightest sky may soon o'ercast
And rent the air with thunder loud,
But 'mid the spirit of the blast
The sun shines bright behind the cloud.

It was a dark cloud for Mary one day when Wull was so suddenly stricken down with disease. He was still a shepherd at Egerton when a peculiar trouble affected the sheep and a large number of them died, which kept the shepherds skinning the sheep both late and early. He took suddenly ill and Dr. McCrae attended him night and day for a week. He had caused him to be removed from the farm to his home in the village, after which he grew worse and his life was despaired of. As a last resort the doctor sent for the best physician from Castle Douglas, and

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that at his own expense. When he arrived and looked on the face of Wull, he said in sympathetic tones, "Ah, how soon the strong and hearty can be laid low, but I am surprised that there are so few sick among the farm servants, for they are housed worse than the farmer's cattle sometimes. His case is very bad, indeed. It will take some time before I can tell how it will fare with the lad. Doctor McCrae has done all that could be done. Continue to do as he says. I shall endeavor to come again tomorrow."

With these remarks to Mrs. Kinstrey both doctors went out and held a consultation in front of the house, in full view of Mrs. McWhulter who was watching them from her window. No sooner had they moved up the street and disappeared in Miss Doig's Public House, where the Doctor had stabled his horse, than

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she hurried over to Sally's, as Sally was sure to have heard what the two Doctors had been saying. Sally was just as ready to tell what she overheard the Doctors say as Mrs. McWhulter was to listen.

"Weel, Sally, did ye hear what the specialist said about Wull Kinstrey?",

"Deed, Mrs. McWhulter, I havna been in yet but I heard maist every word that they said, for they were richt at ma door, and and as soon as I heard them come oct I just slipit in behint the door, it being half open. The Specialist called it a conformiscated disease. Al' warrant it's naither mair nor less than that awfa gastric fever, and the chances were not guid, he micht and he micht not pull through. Am certain that's what he said."

"O, aye, woman, that is just what I thoct, and what else could they

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expect, them that carries a high head is no lang till they have a fa. The likes o' him cheeking up till a lass like the Doctor's douchter, though she's but a poor thing onyway, fairly spoilt since her poor mother deet. That Widow McFarlien is just filling her full o' pride and conceit, and for the Doctor himsel' he does not seem to care for her or anybody else but that dandy Widow o' his. Never fear ye, noo, it's the siller he's after and nae doubt but he wad be glad tae get rid o' his dochter, and guidness ken he may get rid o' her sune enouch. The lass is just gaen fair giet o'er him. I hae nae doubt but he'll dee an' then she'll dee next; they are far o'er young onyway, I dinna believe in young marriages."

"Weel, Mrs. McWhulter, I dinna agree wi ye there for I think people should all marry young. Of course there's widows and widowers, but of

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other folks they that marry young grow up to ane anithers' ways and they are sure to live happy a' their life. But just take an old maid or an old bachelor who get married and ten chances tae ane they'll be fightin' like cats and dougs in a fortnicht, and how could it be otherwise, for the Lord said that you two shall be ane flesh and it's hard for auld folks tae come into ane anither's ways.'

But here the door opened and Mrs. McWhulter, breathless, rushed in, saying in great excitement, "Poor Wull has taen a bad turn and wad ye rin tae Miss Doig's and see if the Doctors have gaen awa? If they're there tell them tae come quick that Wull's deeing."

Sally went off at once and Mrs. Kinstry ran back to her sick charge. The Doctors being still there they both hurried back to the bedside of Wull, found him lying perfectly still,

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having ceased raving. He felt his pulse and took his temperature and concluding that the new symptoms were all in his favor, he gave strict orders for him to be kept quiet and he would come back in the morning unless he got other news when morning came.

Wull was still alive when he arrived next morning. Dr. McCrae was there awaiting him. He was again examined and though still very low the fever was gradually subsiding and Wull was past the worst. The Doctor said he would not need to come again. He was quite safe in Doctor McCrae's hands. So bidding Mrs. Kinstrey good day the Doctors left, and it was not long till Doctor McCrae was home with the glad news to Mary.

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CHAPTER V.

No sooner had Dr. McCrae got seated in his old arm chair than he at once explained to Mary and Mrs. McFarlien all about Wull's illness and how glad he was that he had got the turn, "but," said the Doctor, "I don't see how he ever will get strong yonder. The house is so small and not much comfort."

Just at this juncture Widow McFarlien spoke up.

"I was just thinking that if he gets better I would willingly pay his board at Lochenbreck Well. The iron water might be good for him. A large number of people are there just now. I heard it said that there were about 350 staying at the place."

"Very good," said the doctor, "very kind indeed, the best place he could go to as soon as he is able to be up and walking, but it is no place for

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one who is as sick as he is now. It is no hospital, you know. The clear mountain air is very invigorating. He would gather strength much sooner in the mountains."

Many weeks passed before Wull was able to be around but he got great care and every attention as the Laird's lady called often to see him and always had with her some fine jellies or other dainties for him, and the Minister's wife was a regular visitor and never failed to bring some nourishing dishes.

Mrs. Kinstrey's house went under a great change since Wull was running about, a little boy, "a guid-for-naething lad," as he used to be called. She had to scrub and clean her kitchen so that the fine ladies (as she called them) could come in. An old saying is "that it's an ill wind that blaws naebody guid." The neighbors used to say that if ever it.

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applied to anyone it suited her for now she had as clean and as tidy a house inside as anyone in the village.

Doctor McCrae made a special visit to Lochenbreck Well to see Mr. McMillan about getting quarters for Wull, but as every bed in the place was engaged, even the men servants being compelled to sleep in the barn to make room for visitors, he was obliged to take boarding with two old maids, who had a little farm not far away, where they kept two cows and two pigs and a few pet sheep. The place had no name, being known only as Maggie Ghie's. Maggie was the elder of the two and did all the out work and Peggie attended to the housework. When the Doctor called on them and enquired if they could accommodate a young man for a few weeks, after telling them who he was—

“A me,” said Maggie, “wethocht

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he was deet an' he's living yet, is he, poor fellow! We will be glad tae tak' him. Many a time he has been here. Come awa ben an' I'll let ye see where I'll put him. He shall hae the best bed in my house, and he shall get all the new milk he can drink."

"I have heard," said the Doctor, "that you keep a goat."

"We dae that," said Peggie.

"Well, I would like if you could spare him a little of the goat's milk every day, as well."

"He'll get all he likes, but it's gie strong, Doctor. He mabie won't like it."

"That may be," said the Doctor, "but you know people who are sick have to take what they don't like sometimes, if they want to get better."

"That's quite true," said Maggie, "but, Mr. McCrae, you're no' gaen

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awa till ye hae something. It's a lang way up here an' ye ken it's a lang way tae Egerton again. We cannot bid you wait till dinner's ready, but ye're welcome tae what we hae."

Peggie was not long till she brought ben the bottle and a glass on a tray and some biscuits. Such was quite common fare to strangers among the hill folks, and especially to a doctor or a minister.

The Doctor after partaking of her hospitality, bade them good day and told them when Wull would likely be along, and that they were on no account to take any money from him, as he would see them paid himself in full.

When the Doctor arrived home that night he was not long in telling all the news to the housekeeper and his daughter and cautioned them not to tell anyone in the meantime.

Mary was quite jubilant over Wull going to Maggie Ghie's.

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Some men's aims and objects in life are sordid and selfish but Doctor McCrae, like many more of his profession, was not only never weary in doing good when an opportunity presented, but he sought them out, and he had no sooner found a place to recruit Wull's health than he wanted to get him a more suitable situation, and when he laid the matter before Mary she was glad beyond measure.

"I have just been thinking," said the Doctor to Mary, "that as I am so well acquainted with the Laird I intend going up to the Laird's some day and ask him to assist me in getting some lighter employment for Wull. I am sure he will be ready to help me."

"Wadna that be fine," said Mary, "it wad be as guid as medicine to him. Why, whenever he hears of it

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it will cheer him, and ye ken as weel as me that when one's spirits are raised half the battle's fought, as mother used to say."

"Ah, yes," said the Doctor, "it is one of the worst of diseases to be melancholy. It is the bright and happy spirit that is easiest cured. I am never afraid of the sick ones if they are of a happy, contented heart, that is to say if such are curable."

The doctor was not long till he found his way to the mansion house of Woodhall and just as he was approaching the house who should come up to him but the Laird himself.

"Good day, Doctor, and who is needing your service today? I have not heard of any one being sick in my household."

"I am glad of that, sir. I am not come as a doctor today, however. I am here with your permission to seek an interview with yourself, your

Lordship, and I hope I am not intruding too much on your kindness in doing so."

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"Not at all, not at all," said the Laird. "Come right in and be seated. I am sure you must be tired, for I am told you are walking nearly night and day."

"Well, sir, I have been very busy of late, and as I may say my time is not my own I want to make my visit short. I will proceed to make known my errand. You know that young man, Kinstrey, of the village, who has been so long sick?"

"Oh, yes," said the Laird, "and I am glad to know from my good lady that he is on the straight road to recovery. She has given the butler instructions that he send down to him some little foods to nourish and strengthen him. I hope he will soon get better."

"Very kind, indeed, Sir—just so

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like you and her ladyship—but it's not that I was going to speak to you about. The truth is I have taken quite a liking to the young man ever since he found the young girl that got lost, and I think he is worthy of a better position in life than a shepherd, so it occurred to me that perhaps you could assist me, and I would take it as a very great obligation for anything you would do for me."

"I certainly consider it an honor for you to ask me to do anything," said the Laird, "and I shall at once consult with my good lady and see what can be done for him. I will let you know by the time he has fully recovered, only you might tell the lad not to engage himself until I see him."

So the Doctor at once thanked the Laird for his courtesy and withdrew.

CHAPTER VI.

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It was not many weeks before Wull was able to be driven up the hill to Maggie Ghie's, though the accommodation there was not as elegant as he would have had at Lochenbreck, yet, as he said to himself, it was more to his liking and more like home.

"There are too many gentry up there for me," said Wull, yet the place was so near the famous mineral spring that he could easily walk up there several times a day and drink the iron water that bubbled up from the rock beneath.

Lochenbreck was beautiful beyond description. In the summer season there was the hill of health close by, where so many pleasure parties sought to picnic, and lying at its feet was the lake, completely surrounded by woods and sheltered by mountains on the

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west and north, with yellow trout in its waters in abundance, while on the east was a mossy plain some two miles in extent. Near the house was a high knoll, upon which were benches for resting places for the invalids, and on the road was what was called the "Lang Beaches." For nearly half a mile the road was completely covered over with immense beech trees, a most excellent shade from the sun. On the whole it was a decidedly popular summer resort in the south of Scotland. Wull tells of it in a few lines of verse in a letter to Mary :

I love the hills of Lochenbreck,
The hills of Balmaghie,
Where the heather grows and the burnies
flow
To the black Water O' Dee.

I love to roam among the sheep
That graise among the heather,
They go at will o'er vale and hill,
And rarely but together.

I love to breathe the mountain air,
And snuff the honey'd breeze,
From heather bloom, what rich perfume,
Comes whiffing o'er the leese.

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I love to drink the water clear,
That boils up from the earth,
Such a famous spa I never saw,
And who can tell its worth?

I love to wander down the road
Beneath the beeches green,
Where there a deer doth oft appear
As stately as a queen.

This really is a lovely place,
Still the muse it often says,
'Twould crown it all if fate would call
My Mary of Egerton braes.

The Laird was very fond of riding
and often took a ride on one of his
famous hunters to Lochenbreck to see
that everything was in order. He
was proud to see the many visitors
and never failed to enqui. after those
who were sick. On one of these
occasions he made it a point to have a

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talk with Wull. Calling at Maggie's he asked if William Kinstrey was in. Peggie gave a low courtesy and said that he had just gone up to the well to have his morning drink, but he could not be far on the road yet. His Lordship would easily catch up to him and with that the Laird turned his prancing charger and went off at full gallop. He soon overtook Wull.

"Good morning, William, and how are you?"

Wull raised his hat in the most polite fashion ere he replied to the Laird.

"Thank you, sir, I am improving fast, and I would like you to tell her Ladyship that I am very grateful to her indeed for her exceeding kindness both to me and my mother."

"I shall be pleased to tell her. She has been very much interested in you. I hope you will soon be able to

work again. Do you intend to go back to the herding?"

"I would like to but Dr. McCrae says I should try and get something to do where I would not be so much exposed to the stormy weather—but I liked to be a shepherd."

"Now, William, I have just had a talk with the doctor about you. He seems to take great interest in you."

"He has been very kind to me, indeed," said Wull, "and I really don't know how I will ever get him paid."

"You must not let that bear on your mind. He will never trouble you for payment and you know people with an easy mind soon recover when sick. I have a little matter to occupy your thoughts just now, which I hope won't distract or upset you. It is this: I want a gate-keeper and the duties are not at all arduous. It does not command a large salary, but

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I think you would suit me very well. You have only one fault and I am sure it could easily be remedied, and it is this—you are a single man and I must have a married man. Now you take your time and consider it and I shall see you some time soon again when you can give me your decision. The salary will gradually be increased as you become familiar with your duties, and eventually you can work into a much better position."

"I thank you with all my heart, sir, and I shall speak to mother about it. It is exceedingly kind of you," said Wull, and just before the Laird galloped off he said quietly,

"Now, William, there are plenty of pretty girls about here just now. You just pick out a good one and you will be all right. Good-bye."

Wull stood on the roadside in a state of bewilderment, glaring at the Laird long after he was out of his

sight. His mind sometimes would be on one thing and then on another, not knowing what to think, but Mary seemed to be ever uppermost. How long he stood he did not know and what he thought he could not tell. Circumstances had changed so suddenly that he felt as if he was lost. At last a thought struck him. "I'll watch for the first gig that gangs by and ask a ride tae the village and tell mother all about it. When there I may be able to walk as far as Egerton and consult Mary. But then the doctor, feggs, but that is where comes the job. How am I tae tell him. I'll have tae ask him for Mary and then Mary may not want to marry me. I never said anything to her about marrying. I don't know anither girl that I ever liked but her, and she is the only girl that ever showed that she liked me." Thus Wull talked to himself as he hung

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wearily on Maggie Ghie's yeit (gate) waiting patiently for a ride to the village, as it was too far for him to walk as yet. He had a weary wait, as it was but seldom that any sort of conveyance passed up or down the road, but at last Grabdale cart came along in which he got a ride and was glad to get it. Just as he jumped out at Wattie Campbell's shop who should come out but Dr. McCrae.

"Well, Wull, are ye tired staying at Maggie Ghie's?" said he.

"I am not tired," said Wull, "but I got ma sel' in an awful fix and I don't know what to do."

"Why, whatever is wrong Wull? Surely you have not got in love with little Peggy and want to marry her," said the doctor, laughing.

"It's no' that," said Wull, "but I had a visit from the Laird this morning and he wants me to be his gate-keeper if I'll only get married. Now I am

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at my wits' end; to tell you the truth I am fairly dumfoundid, as mother often will say. So I thought I would just come down and hear what she had to say about it."

"Just so," said the doctor, "it might be all right. Peggy is a trig little body and a good housekeeper but you know she is a little old. She might be your mother. I would like to see you get one about your own age, anyway."

"Oh," said Wull, "I never meant that—I never thought of her at all."

"Now then," interrupted the doctor, "who did you think of?"

"Well, sir, I did not think of any yet. I just thought I might go down and ask Mary's advice about it. She has aye been so kind tae me and I know that she would not advise me wrong."

"A very good idea," replied the doctor, "she is a wise lassie. Do you:



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not think she would want to marry you herself?"

"There is no' another in a' the world that I care for, but I was afraid you would not let her, and another thing I never asked her for I never thought of it till the Laird mentioned it."

"Well, Wull, I think it is too far for you to come down tonight. I am going straight home. I will speak to her about the matter and I will make you sure that if you and she agree I will not stand in the way for a moment."

Wull felt as if he could run right away to Mary with the good news being showered on him, but he at once saw that the doctor did not want him to go down that night. So he promised he would be there in the morning when he would be rested. "That will do very well," said the doctor,

"and you can talk the matter over with your mother tonight."

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The doctor felt quite overjoyed at the news and he hurried home as fast as he could to tell Mary. She met him at the door as had been her custom since Wull took sick, when she knew her father had been at the village, and her first question was, "Did you hear how Wull was?"

"Oh, yes," said he, "I saw him just as he jumped out of a cart at Wattie Campbell's shop. He is getting on fine and as smart as a March hare. He was actually thinking of coming down to see you tonight, but I advised him to wait till tomorrow, when he would be rested. But come let us have our supper and after it is over I will tell you something that will surprise you. Now don't ask any questions till supper is over." But Mary was not feeling in any mood for supper as she did not know what to

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think of her father, so she waited very anxiously till it was over.

When her father told her all the story about his having been to see the Laird about Wull and how the Laird had been up to Lochenbreck to see Wull and his proposition to him, all the time Mary was deep in thought, with her eyes fixed on the big clock hanging on the wall opposite her, its great long pendulum swinging to and fro. She spoke not a word but no doubt she was 'laying at the thinking.'

"A penny for your thoughts," said the doctor.

"Well, father, I don't know what to think. I hae nae doubt but it will be a guid place for him, but he is so young tae get marrit. I would think it awfu' strange for him to be marrit. Did he tell ye wha he was gaun tae take for a wife?" asked Mary.

The doctor gave Mary a somewhat

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funny look and answered, "No, he said he did not know what to do. He was coming down to ask your advice. So you see you will have to pick out a wife for him. I was advising him to take little Peggie Ghie, but he did not like the thought of her. So I suggested to him to ask you to be his wife, and if you had just seen the sudden change on his countenance, the heightening of color as I made the remark. I am sure he won't sleep much tonight."

"But, father—ain't I too young to be married?" said Mary, her eyes looking half wistfully into his.

"Too young!" exclaimed her father, "no, no; the great fault with this age is that too many people are too old when they get married, and that is the reason that married life is often unhappy. Just take for example Nancy Flervie and her husband. He was about fifty and he was older.

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Their honeymoon lasted about two weeks and after that they lived a cat and dog life, knew no domestic happiness, and it was well for her that her days were few on earth. Young people grow into one another's ways, and if they are properly mated their life should be one long honeymoon. It has been knowingly said, 'Marry for love and work for siller,' but nowadays it is becoming more and more a matter of business. The man is afraid of the cash and the woman is afraid of the burden."

"But, father, I do not like to leave you all alone," said Mary after some hesitation.

"Oh, don't let that stand in the way. I will get along all right. I have a good and faithful housekeeper in Mrs. McFarlien, if she will only stay, and I think there is no fear that she won't. And you would be so near by it will be easy for you to

come home, and I will be looking in often to see you when at the village."

But here further conversation was cut short by a rap at the door. Willie Reid, the carrier, wanted the doctor to come right away to see his mother, who was very ill. So Mary returned to the kitchen with a strange new feeling about her heart, and talked over the matter with Widow McFarlien till bed time.

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," does not apply alone to kings and queens, for the Doctor's daughter passed an uneasy night, as she lay tossing about. Sleep had gone from her like the old man's "grace before meat," a printed copy of which he was in the habit of carrying in the crown of his hat, and as he sat down to the table he placed his hat between his knees, inside up, and holding his head down, reverently read it out. The servants having caught on to

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his habit, they one day, going in to dinner, accidentally, as it were, knocked off his hat and took out the paper. Looking into his hat as he saw the others were waiting for the grace and missing the paper, he glanced up and said, "Well, just begin—the blessing has gone from me today." So Mary's sleep went clean from her that night, and day-break was slow in its approach. But it came and with it Wull, just after breakfast was over. The doctor, looking out of the window, saw him open the gate. He turned to Mary and said, teasingly, "Mary, there's little Peggie's intended coming to the door. He'll be wanting to bid ye to the wedding. Go and open the door for him."

Mary was not long in opening the door.

"Oh, Wull, is that you? I'm glad tae see ye. You'll be awful

tired. Sit doon. My, but you look weel. Are you gaun back again?"

"Aye, am I," said Wull, where-upon Mrs. McFarlien came ben and the Doctor came out of his office and what a meeting they had! It seemed just like a repetition of that famous hallowe'en night, only Wull wanted to be serious. The hours passed very quickly, but the marriage was all arranged and Wull returned to Maggie Ghie's. It was not long before the news spread through the village, although very few believed it, thinking it was only another tale that Mrs. McWhulter had originated.

Time wore on altogether too fast for Mary. She was kept so busy preparing for the wedding that she seldom went out, and when Mrs. McFarlien journeyed to the village she gave no news to anyone. But the doctor made known to the Laird the fact that Wull was engaged to his

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daughter Mary, an announcement which was exceedingly gratifying to the Laird, and brought forth an expression of his heartiest approval.

"I do not want to hurry the young folks too much," said the Laird. "It will be some weeks before the cottage is ready for them to occupy, and the young man will need all the time to gather strength."

"We have not fixed the date for the wedding yet," said the doctor.

"I shall let you know when the house is ready," replied the Laird.

It was not long before the Laird made a visit to see Wull. He had left his horse in charge of Riddick, the hostler, and made his way to the Lovers' Knowl, on which were two benches fixed as a resting place, from where one secured a lovely view across the moor for miles. Here he found Wull sitting with his faithful collie dog, Scar, at his feet.

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"How is Mr. Kinstry today," said the Laird.

"I am very well, sir," said Wull, "and gathering strength fast."

"And have you made up your mind about getting married? I have never yet seen you with any of the pretty young ladies that are strolling round here."

"No, sir," said Wull, "I don't know them to speak to as yet, but I have a promise of marriage from one that I have known for a long time."

"And may I ask you who she is?" enquired his Lordship, innocently.

"Oh, yes," said Wull, blushing deeply, but not disconcerted, "it is the Doctor's daughter."

"I am very pleased, indeed," said the Laird kindly, as if he knew nothing about it. Now, William, I want to make an agreement with you. It is this: If you will write me a poem, specially composed for myself,

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I will agree to give you a handsome wedding present. My good Lady is also anxious that you should do so."

Wull was not a little taken by surprise, but promised to do his best. "You know, sir, I have not had much education and though I have written a few songs and homely rhymes I am afraid I could not write anything good enough for you. It will, however, give me pleasure to do my best, as you have been so very kind to me."

"I am sure, William, whatever you do it will be all right, and when you have it finished let me know, as I want you to bring it along and Mary with you. I shall show you the cottage and give you the key in order that you may come and go as you please. It is ready for occupation, and no doubt you will need to see through it so that you will understand what furnishings are required. It will suit me best if you and Miss

McCrae come about three in the afternoon some day, whenever it is convenient to you both."

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Now Wull had intended to stay among the heather another week but this plan of the Laird's made him change his purposes, so he resolved to return to the Clauchen again and go down and tell Mary all about what the Laird had said.

"Now Wull," said Mary "you must put forth your best efforts, an' I would have the verses just about himself. He has been sae awfu' kind to you."

"But you'll hae tae gang up wi 't yer self"

"I dinna like tae gang."

"Oh, but you will hae tae come," said Wull, "for he said I was to be sure to bring you along with me. You know the present is for us both. Whatever it will be I really have no idea."

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Just as Wull had got out the last word in came the doctor, who was not a little surprised to see Wull.

"Well, William, are you back for good this time?" said the doctor, "and how did you leave little Peggy? Did she greet when you came away?"

"Hoots, faither," said Mary, "yer aye hard on Wull. Ye'll no guess what brocht him hame sae sune."

"Oh, perhaps Peggy heard he was going to marry you and likely she got angry and would not keep him any longer."

"Weel, did ye ever hear sich a man? Never heed him Wull," said Mary. "But, faither, it was all the Laird. He wants Wull tae write some poetry and take it up to him and he will gie us a marriage present. So he could not stay any longer. Wull had no paper suitable to write on."

"Now, William, you will have to get your thinking cap on and think

out something interesting," said the doctor, "and I am going down to Castle Douglas tomorrow and will bring you some nice paper to copy it on to give to the Laird."

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E'er Wull returned to his mother the wedding-day was set and everything arranged. William Reid, his old chum, was selected as best man, and he had to go with Wull to Shankfit to give in the cries to the minister, and as the names were only to be proclaimed one Sabbath, then the young couple were to be married the following Wednesday at three in the afternoon, they had just allowed themselves three weeks to get everything ready. So the following day after the doctor had gone to town Mary and Wull set out, dressed in their best, to see the Laird and their abode. At the appointed time the Laird met them with a smile on his face. He shook hands with them

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both. Wull gave him a large envelope
in which was enclosed the following
poem :

**WITH RESPECTS TO THE LAIRD OF
CLAUCHENPLUCK, &c.**

Who owns that mansion big and high,
With turrets pointing to the sky,
Protected from all storms that fly

In wintry weather.

Where howling winds can only sigh,
So sheltered by the trees near by,

That's massed together?

Whose massive walls of granite stone
Have stood through ages past and gone,
And are today to look upon,

A castle fair ;

A monument of art alone,
A pallace fit for any throne,

But who lives there?

Now who enjoys this loved retreat,
Where spacious lawns the eye doth greet,
With here and there flower beds complete,

With gorgeous flowers ;

And bushes rare and walks so neat,
With balmy air that smells so sweet,

Among the bowers?

It is no lord with pompous pride,
Who scorn the poor and them deride,
Who'd give a stone instead of bread,
 In time of want ;
Nor stem misfortune's raging tide,
Or even nakedness to hide,
 When clothing's scant.

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Who lives up there? I'm proud to say
It is a man whom God doth sway,
With heavy purse and heart to pray
 That he may find
Wants to supply along the way,
Where poverty doth often stray,
 Oh, he is kind.

May God ne'er let his funds run dry!
And may he never need to sigh!
May pain and woe aye pass him by,
 Till God alone
Doth call him up with Him on high,
And crown him there, where angels fly
 Around the throne.

The Laird opened it and read the
poem slowly, then folded it and
placing it in his left hand held out the
other to Wull and shook hands with

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him heartily, saying, "I thank you very much, indeed, William, and I must congratulate you on your talent. I trust that the day will come when you will surprise all the world with your verses. You should cultivate the gift you have. I shall give this poem a place among my most precious relics." With that he stepped forward to the cottage door and bade them follow him in, where he showed them the kitchen and parlor both beautifully furnished. "This," said he, "is a gift from the Lady and myself to you and your young bride," saying which he handed them the key of the front door, adding, "Now, go and come as you please."

Poor Wull stood overwhelmed, hat in hand, with Mary holding on to his left arm, both looking as though they had been stricken dumb. Without ever looking up at the Laird Wull managed to reply in a very faint

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voice :—"Sir, I have not words to express the feeling of my heart for your kindness to Mary and me."

"Say no more, William, the sentiments of the poem are quite sufficient. Good-bye," and with that the Laird withdrew, leaving the two standing in the kitchen almost bewildered and for a short time speechless. At last Mary turned up her sweet face to Wull and said, "Is not this maist awfu' kind? Where is there an aither laird that wad hae dune the like o' this?"

"Let us go home and tell mother," said Wull.

"No, no," said Mary, "I would raither not gang in to the village wi ye. We'll just gang roon by the Post Office and straight tae Egerton," which they did.

Wull was a proud man that day as he and Mary, arm in arm, went chatting along the road from the

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village. As soon as they were clear out of sight of the houses, Wull said to Mary: "Did you ever expect such a gift from the Laird?"

"Deed, no," said Mary, "but ye ken he's no like many folks that gie gifts. They want everybody tae ken o't so that they will be praised for it and nae guidness in their hearts."

"But it's no' that way wi the Laird, for he canna help it—it's in his heart just like daft Jock Gordon. Ane day he was washing his napkin in a hole o' water on the road as he went to the kirk, and the minister came up to him and says, 'Jock, Jock, what's that ye're daeing? Do ye no' ken this is the Sabbath?' Jock looked up at the minister and said, 'I ken that fine but it's not much odds what the hands are daeing when the heart's richt.' Was not that a wise saying 'from a fool?' " said Wull.

* * * * *

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There was a great stir in the kirk at Shankfit that Sabbath when the presenter stood up and read aloud to the congregation the following: "There is a purpose of marriage between William Kinstrey and Mary McCrae both of this parish. Anyone objecting to same had better speak now or forever hold their peace as this is the first, second and last time."

What a hurrying home that day to discuss the wedding of the Doctor's daughter, the prettiest and sweetest girl in all the parish! It came off on Wednesday afternoon at 2.30 p. m., and if there is any truth in the maxim "happy is the bride the sun shines on," she must have been happy, for the sun shone forth that day in all its glory, when these two young hearts began life's journey together, with the best wishes of the country.

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side for the poor lad whose nobleness of character was transfigured by the love he had for a sweet and gentle girl.



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