



The Marquis of Lossie

George MacDonald

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It was one of those exquisite days that come in every winter, in which it seems no longer the dead body, but the lovely ghost of summer. Such a day bears to its sister of the happier time something of the relation the marble statue bears to the living form; the sense it awakes of beauty is more abstract, more ethereal; it lifts the soul into a higher region than will summer day of lordliest splendour. It is like the love that loss has purified. Such, however, were not the thoughts that at the moment occupied the mind of Malcolm Colonsay. Indeed, the loveliness of the morning was but partially visible from the spot where he stood -- the stable yard of Lossie House, ancient and roughly paved. It was a hundred years since the stones had been last relaid and levelled: none of the horses of the late Marquis minded it but one -- her whom the young man in Highland dress was now grooming -- and she would have fidgeted had it been an oak floor. The yard was a long and wide space, with two storied buildings on all sides of it. In the centre of one of them rose the clock, and the morning sun shone red on its tarnished gold. It was an ancient clock, but still capable of keeping good time -- good enough, at least, for all the requirements of the house, even when the family was at home, seeing it never stopped, and the church clock was always ordered by it.



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