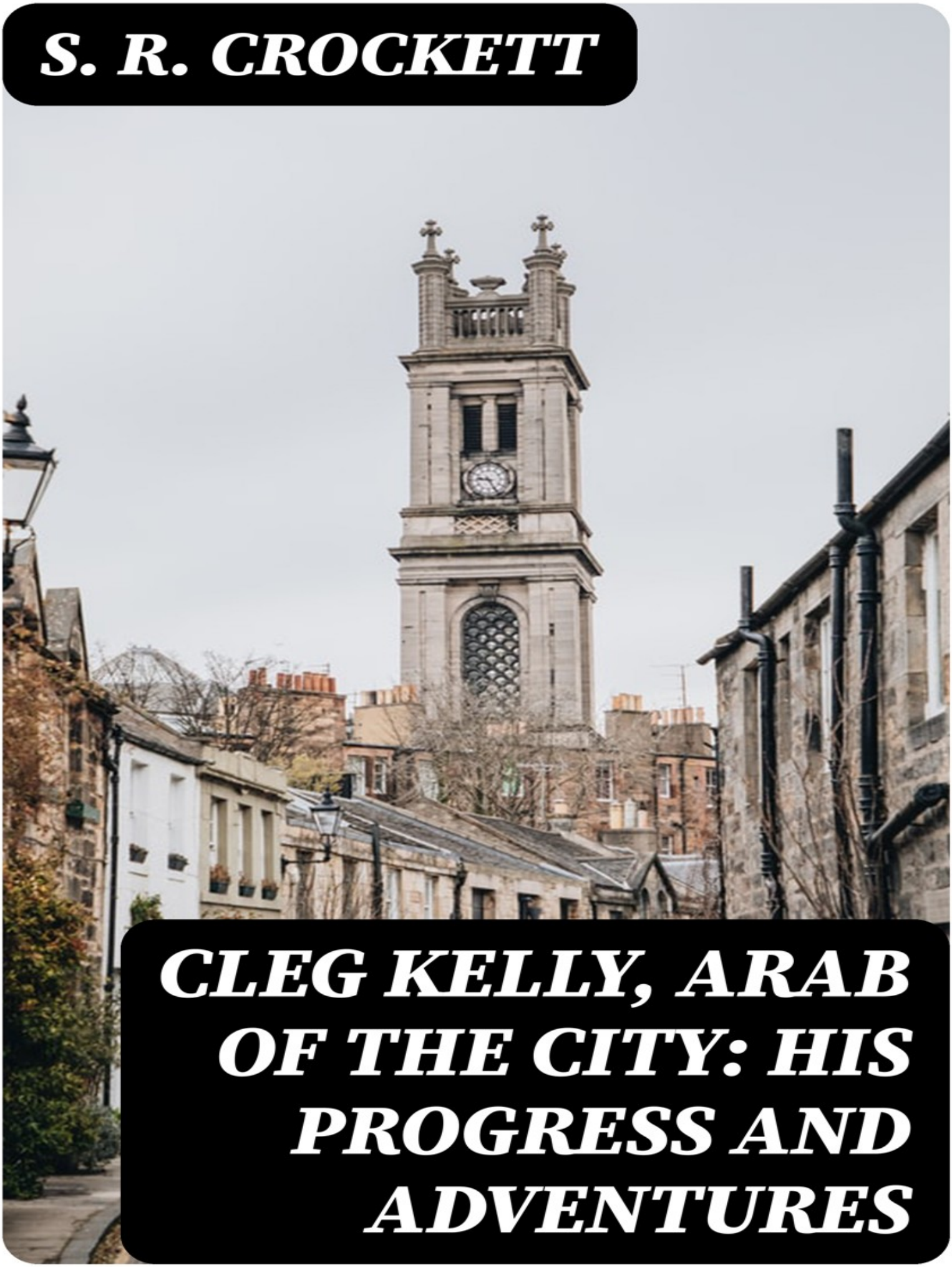
S. R. CROCKETT



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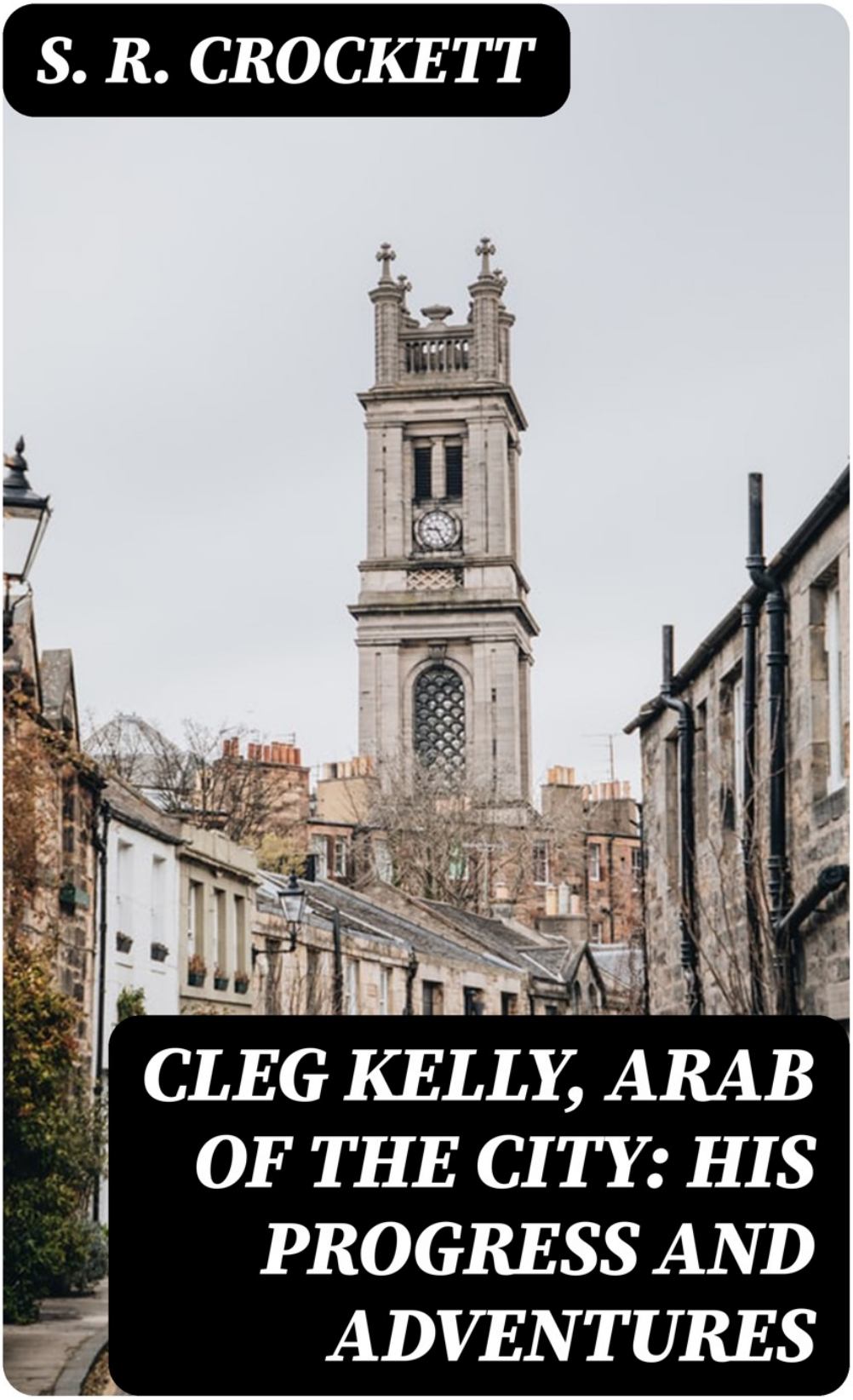

CLEG KELLY, ARAB OF THE CITY: HIS PROGRESS AND ADVENTURES

S. R. Crockett

Cleg Kelly, Arab of the City: His Progress and Adventures

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ADVENTURE I.
THE OUTCASTING OF CLEG KELLY.

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"It's all a dumb lie—God's dead!"

Such a silence had never fallen upon the Sunday school, since the fatal day when the gate was blown into the middle of the floor by Mickey McGranaghan, a recent convert (and a temporary one) to the peculiar orthodoxy of Hunker Court. But the new explosion far outstripped the old in its effects. For it contained a denial of all the principles upon which the school was founded, and especially it confounded and blasphemed the cheerful optimism of Mr. James Lugton, its superintendent, otherwise and more intimately known as "Pund o' Cannles."

The statement which contained so emphatic a denial of the eternity of the Trinity was made by Cleg Kelly, a barelegged loon of eleven, who stood lone and unfriended on the floor before the superintendent's desk in the gloomy cellar known as Hunker Court school. Cleg Kelly had been reported by his teacher for incorrigible persistence in misconduct. He had introduced pins point upwards through the cracks in the forms. He had an instrument of wire cunningly plaited about his fingers, by means of which he could nip unsuspecting boys sitting as many as three or four from him—which is a great advantage to a boy in a Sunday school. Lastly, he had fallen backwards over a seat when asked a question; he had stood upon his hands and head while answering it, resuming his first position as if nothing had happened so soon as the examination passed on to the

next boy. In fact, he had filled the cup of his iniquities to the brim.

His teacher did not so much object to the pranks of Cleg Kelly himself. He objected mainly because, being ragged, barelegged, with garments picturesquely ventilated, and a hat without a crown, he was as irresistible in charm and fascination to all the other members of his class as if he had been arrayed in silver armour starry clear. For though Hunker Court was a mission school, it was quite a superior mission. And (with the exception of one class, which was much looked down upon) the lowest class of children were not encouraged to attend. Now Cleg Kelly, by parentage and character, was almost, if not quite, as the mothers of the next social grade said, "the lowest of the low."

So when Cleg's teacher, a respectable young journeyman plumber, could stand no more pranks and had grown tired of cuffing and pulling, he led Cleg up to the awful desk of the superintendent from which the rebukes and prizes were delivered.

Thereupon "Pund o' Cannles," excellent but close-fisted tallow chandler and general dealer, proceeded to rebuke Cleg. Now the rebukes of "Pund o' Cannles" smelt of the counter, and were delivered in the tones in which he addressed his apprentice boys when there were no customers in the shop—a tone which was entirely different from the bland suavity which he used when he joined his hands and asked, "And what is the next article, madam?"

"Do you know, boy," said the superintendent, "that by such sinful conduct you are wilfully going on the downward road? You are a wicked boy, and instead of becoming better

under your kind teacher, and taking advantage of the many advantages of this place devoted to religious instruction, you stick pins—brass pins—into better conducted boys than yourself. And so, if you do not repent, God will take you in your iniquity and cast you into hell. For, remember, God sees everything and punishes the bad people and rewards the good."

The superintendent uttered, though he knew it not, the most ancient of heresies—that which Job refuted.

It was at this point in the oration of "Pund o' Cannles" that Cleg Kelly's startling interruption occurred. The culprit stopped making O's on the dusty floor with his toe, amongst the moist paper pellets which were the favourite distraction of the inattentive at Hunker Court; and, in a clear voice, which thrilled through the heart of every teacher and scholar within hearing, he uttered his denial of the eternity of the Trinity.

"It's all a dumb lie—God's dead!" he said.

There was a long moment's silence, and small wonder, as the school waited for the shivering trump of doom to split the firmament. And the patient and self-sacrificing teachers who gave their unthanked care to the youth of the court every Sunday, felt their breaths come short, and experienced a feeling as if they were falling over a precipice in a dream. At last Mr. James Lugton found his voice.

"Young and wicked blasphemer!" he said sternly, "your presence must no longer, like that of the serpent in Paradise, poison the instruction given at this Sabbath school —I shall expel you from our midst——"

Here Cleg's teacher interposed. He was far from disliking his scholar, and had anticipated no such result arising from his most unfortunate reference of his difficulty to the superintendent. For he liked Cleg's ready tongue, and was amused by the mongrel dialect of Scots and Irish into which, in moments of excitement, he lapsed.

"I beg pardon, sir," he said, "but I am quite willing to give Kelly another chance—he is not such a bad boy as you might think."

The superintendent waved his hand in a dignified way. He rather fancied himself in such scenes, and considered that his manner was quite as distinguished as that of his minister, when the latter was preaching his last memorable course of sermons upon the imprecatory psalms, and making solemn applications of them to the fate of members of a sister denomination which worshipped just over the way.

"The boy is a bold blasphemer and atheist!" he said; "he shall be cast out from among our innocent lambs. Charles Kelly, I solemnly expel you upon this Christian Sabbath day, as a wicked and incorrigible boy, and a disgrace to any respectable mission school."

The attitude of the superintendent was considered especially fine at this point. And he went home personally convinced that the excellent and fitting manner in which he vindicated the good name of Hunker Court upon this occasion, was quite sufficient to balance an extensive practice of the use of light weights in the chandler's shop at the corner of Hunker's Row. He further entirely believed

judicious severity of this kind to be acceptable in the highest quarters.

So as the resisting felon is taken to prison, Cleg Kelly, heathen of eleven years, was haled to the outer door and cast forth of Hunker Court. But as the culprit went he explained his position.

"It's all gammon, that about prayin'," he cried; "I've tried it heaps of times—never fetched it once! An' look at my mother. She just prays lashings, and all the time. An' me father, he's never a bit the better—no, nor her neither. For he thrashes us black and blue when he comes hame just the same. Ye canna gammon me, Pund o' Cannles, with your lang pray-prayin' and your short weight. I tell you God's dead, and it's all a dumb lie!"

The last accents of the terrible renunciation lingered upon the tainted air even after the door had closed, and Cleg Kelly was an outcast. But the awed silence was broken by a whiz and jingle which occurred close to the superintendent's ear, as Cleg Kelly, Iconoclast, punctuated his thesis of defiance by sending a rock of offence clear through the fanlight over the door of Hunker Court mission school.

ADVENTURE II.

THE BURNING OF THE WHINNY KNOWES.

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Cleg Kelly was now outcast and alien from the commonwealth. He had denied the faith, cast aside every known creed, and defied the Deity Himself. Soon he would

defy the policeman and break the laws of man—which is the natural course of progression in iniquity, as every one knows.

So leaving Hunker Court he struck across the most unfrequented streets, where only a stray urchin (probably a benighted Episcopalian) was spending the Sabbath chivying cats, to the mountainous regions of Craigside, where the tall "lands" of St. Leonards look out upon the quarried crags and steep hill ridges of Arthur's Seat. For Cleg was fortunate enough to be a town boy who had the country at his command just over the wall—and a wall, too, which he could climb at as many as twenty points. Only bare stubby feet, however, could overpass these perilous clefts. Cleg's great toes, horny as if shod with iron, fitted exactly into the stone crevices from which the mortar had been loosened. His grimy little fingers found a purchase in the slightest nicks. And once on the other side, there was no policeman, park-keeper, or other person in authority, who could make the pace with Cleg's bare brown legs, at least up the loose clatter of the shingle between the lower greensward and the Radical Road.

So, after being expelled from Hunker Court, Cleg made straight for a nook of his own among the crags. Here, like a prudent outlaw, he took account of his possessions with a view to arranging his future career of crime. He turned out his pockets into his hat. This was, indeed, a curious thing to do. For the article which he wore upon his shaggy locks was now little more than the rim of what had once been a covering for the head, proof against wind and water. But though Cleg's treasures rested upon the ground, the fact

that they were within his hat-rim focussed them, as it were, and their relative worth was the more easily determined.

The first article which Cleg deposited upon the ground inside his hat was a box of matches, which had been given him to light the gas with in the outlying corners of Hunker Court school, for that dank cellar was gloomy enough even on a summer afternoon. Then came some string, the long-pronged nipping-wires which he had taken from his father's stores, a pair of pincers, a knife with one whole and one broken blade, a pipe, some brown-paper tobacco of a good brand, a half-written exercise-book from the day-school at which Cleg occasionally looked in, five marbles of a variety known as "commonies," one noble knuckler of alabaster which Cleg would not have parted with for his life, a piece of dry bread, and, lastly, half an apple, with encroaching bays and projecting promontories, which indicated in every case but one the gap in Cleg's dental formation on the left side of his upper jaw, which dated from his great fight with Hole in the Wa' in the police yard. The exception was a clean semicircle, bitten right into the apple-core. This was the tidemark of a friendly bite Cleg had given to a friend, in whose double row were no gaps. The perfect crescent had been made by the teeth of a lassie—one Vara Kavannah.

The box of matches was to its owner the most attractive article in all this array of wealth. Cleg looked into his hat-rim with manifest pleasure. He slapped his knee. He felt that he was indeed well adapted to the profession of outlaw. If he had to be a Cain, he could at least make it exceedingly lively in the Land of Nod.

It was a chilly day on the craigs, the wind blowing bask from the East, and everything underfoot as dry as tinder. The wild thought of a yet untried ploy surged up in Cleg's mind. He grasped the matchbox quickly, with thoughts of arson crystallising in his mind. He almost wished that he had set Hunker Court itself on fire. But just in time he remembered Vara Kavannah and her little brother Hugh.

"I'll get them to gang to anither school first," he said.

But in the meantime, with the thought of setting fire to something in his heart and the matchbox in his hand, it was necessary to find the materials for a blaze. He had no powder with him or he would have made a "peeoye"—the simple and inexpensive firework of metropolitan youth.

He looked up at the heather and whin which covered the Nether Hill. His heart bounded within him at the thought. He looked again at his matchbox, which was one of the old oval shape, containing matches so exceedingly and gratuitously sulphurous, that the very smell of one of them was well worth the halfpenny charged for the lot. So, without any further pause for reflection, Cleg stowed away all the possessions, inventoried with such accuracy above, into various outlying nooks and crevices among the seams and pockets of his flapping attire.

Having collected the last one of these, Cleg climbed up a crumbling cliff at the eastern end of the craigs, where the stones lie about in slats. Upon each of them, for all the world like green post-office wax dripped upon grey paper, was some curious mineral, which Cleg, in his hours of decent citizenship, collected and sold at easy rates to the boys of the Pleasance as a charm. This mysterious green

stuff had even been made a seal of initiation into one of the most select, aristocratic, and bloody secret societies of which Cleg was a member. Indeed, if the truth must be told, Cleg had formed the association chiefly that he might be able to supply the badges of membership, for he had a corner in green mineral wax—at least so long as the mine at the east corner of the craigs remained undiscovered by the other adventurous loons of the south side.

Cleg soon reached the tawny, thin-pastured, thick-furzed slopes which constitute the haunch of Arthur's lion hill. In the days of Cleg's youth these were still clad thick with whins and broom, among which the birds built in the spring, and lovers sat in long converse on little swarded oases.

"I'll juist set fire to this wee bit knowe," said Cleg, his heart beating within him at the enormity of the offence. "There's no a 'keelie' in the toon that wad dare to do as muckle!"

For the ranger of that particular part of the hill was an old soldier of great size and surprising swiftness in a race. And many had been the Arthur Street urchins who had suffered a sore skin and a night in the cells after being taken in dire offence. So "the Warrior" they called him, for an all-sufficient name.

In a sheltered spot, and with the wind behind him, Cleg opened his matchbox. He struck a match upon the rough oval bottom. It spurted faintly blue, burned briskly, and then flickered out within Cleg's hollowed hands. Cleg grunted.

"A fizz an' a stink," said he, summing up the case in a popular phrase.

The next went somewhat better. The flame reached the wood, dipped as if to expire, took hold again, and finally burned up in a broad-based yellow triangle. Cleg let it drop among the crisp, dry, rustling grasses at the roots of the whin bushes. Instantly a little black line ran forward and crossways, with hardly any flame showing. Cleg was interested, and laid the palm of his hand upon the ground. He lifted it instantly with a cry of pain. What had seemed a black line with an edge of flickering blue was really a considerable fire, which, springing from the dry couch grass and bent, was briskly licking up the tindery prickles of the gorse.

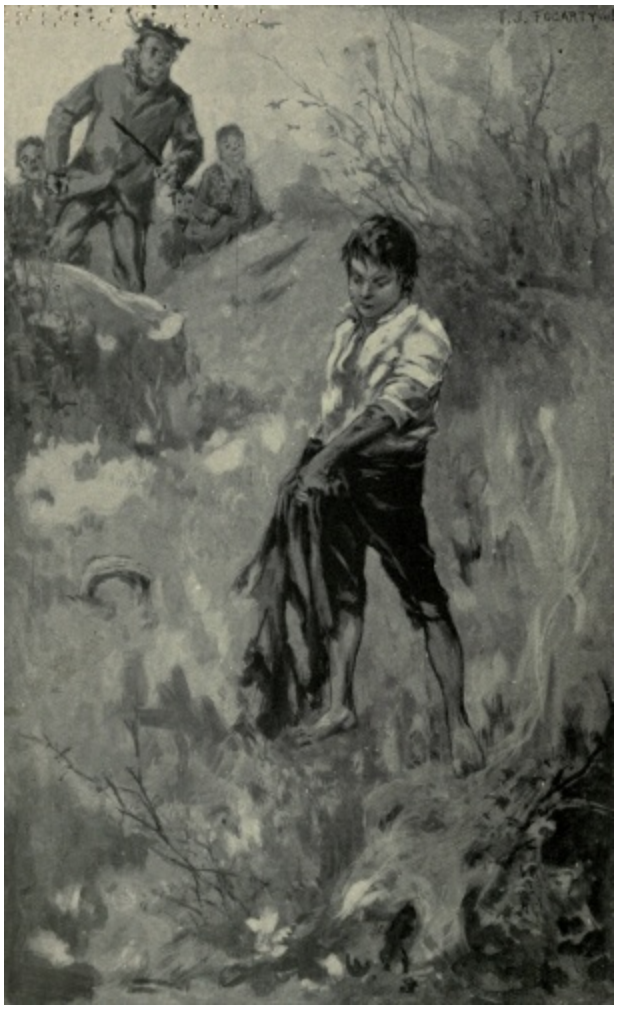
The next moment, with an upward bound and a noise like the flapping of a banner, the flame sprang clear of the whin bushes, and the blue smoke streamed heavenwards. Cleg watched the progress, chained to the spot. He well knew that it was time for him to be off. But with the unhallowed fascination of the murderer for the scene of his crime upon him, he watched bush after bush being swallowed up, and shouted and leaped with glee. But the progress of the flame was further and swifter than he had intended. One little knoll would have satisfied him. But in a minute, driven forward by a level-blowing, following wind, the flame overleaped the little strait of short turf, and grasped the next and far larger continent of whin.

Cleg, surprised, began to shrink from the consequences of his act. He had looked to revenge himself upon society for his expulsion from Hunker Court by making a little private fire, and lo! he had started a world conflagration. He ran round to the edge of the gorse covert. Two hedge-sparrows

were fluttering and dashing hither and thither, peeping and crying beseechingly. Cleg looked at the objective point of their anxiety, and there, between two whin branches, was the edge of a nest, and a little compact yellow bundle of three gaping mouths, without the vestige of a body to be seen.

"Guid life," cried Cleg, who kept kindness to birds and beasts as the softest spot of his heart, "guid life, I never thocht the birds wad be biggin' already!"

And with that he took off his coat, and seizing it in both hands he charged boldly into the front of the flame, disdainful of prickles and scorchings. He dashed the coat down upon a bush which was just beginning to crackle underneath; and by dint of hard fighting and reckless bravery he succeeded in keeping the fire from the little island, on the central bush of which was situated the hedge-sparrow's nest. Here he stood, with his coat threshing every way, keeping the pass with his life—brave as Horatius at the bridge (or any other man)—while the flames crackled and roared past him.



When "the Warrior" came.

Suddenly there was a great fizzing and spitting from the ragged coat which Cleg wielded as a quenching weapon. The fatal matchbox, cause of all the turmoil, had exploded. The fumes were stifling, but the flames still threatened to spread, and Cleg still laid about him manfully. The tails of the coat disappeared. There was soon little left but the collar. Cleg stood like a warrior whose sword has broken in his hand in the face of the triumphant enemy. But the boy had a resource which is not usually open to the soldier. He cast the useless coat-collar from him, stripped a sleeved waistcoat, which had been given him by the wife of a mason's labourer, and, taking the garment by the two arms,

he made an exceedingly efficient beater of the moleskin, which had the dried lime yet crumbly upon it at the cuffs.

When at last "the Warrior" came speeding up the hill, warned out of his Sabbath afternoon sleep by the cry that the whins were on fire, he was in no pleasant temper. He found, however, that the fire had been warded from the greater expanses by a black imp of a boy, burned and smutted, with the remains of a moleskin garment clasped in a pair of badly burned hands.

When the crowd of wanderers had gathered from all parts of the hill, and the fire had been completely trampled out, the ranger began his inquiries. Cleg was the chief suspect, because no one had seen any other person near the fire except himself. On the other hand no one had seen him light the whins, while all had seen him single-handed fighting the flames.

"It's Tim Kelly's loon, the housebreaker, that leeved in the Sooth Back!" said the inevitable officious stranger with the gratuitous local knowledge. At his father's ill-omened name there was an obvious hardening in the faces of the men who stood about.

"At ony rate, the loon is better in the lock-up," said the ranger sententiously.

At this Cleg's heart beat faster than ever. Many had been his perilous ploys, but never yet had he seen the inside of the prison. He acknowledged that he deserved it, but it was hard thus to begin his prison experience after having stayed to fight the fire, when he could easily have run away. There was unfairness somewhere, Cleg felt.

So, with the burnt relics of his sleeved waistcoat still in his hands, Cleg was dragged along down the edge of the Hunter's Bog. The ranger grasped him roughly by a handful of dirty shirt collar, and his strides were so long that Cleg's short legs were not more than half the time upon the ground.

But at a certain spring of clear, crystal water, which gushes out of the hillside from beneath a large round stone, the ranger paused.

He too had fought the flames, and he had cause to thirst. For it was Sunday afternoon, and he had arisen from his usual lethargic after-dinner sleep upon the settle opposite the kitchen fire.

So at the well he stooped to drink, one hand still on Cleg's collar, and the palm of the other set flat on the side of the boulder. It was Cleg's opportunity. He quickly twisted himself suddenly round, just after the ranger's lips had touched the water. The rotten cloth of his shirt tore, and Cleg sprang free. The ranger, jerked from the support of the stone, and at the same moment detached from his prisoner, fell forward with his head in the spring, while Cleg sped downhill like the wind. He was ready stripped for the race. So, leaving the panting chase far behind, he made for a portion of the encompassing wall, which none but he had ever scaled. Having clambered upon the top, he crossed his legs and calmly awaited the approach of the ranger.

"It's a warm day, Warrior," said Cleg; "ye seem to be sweatin'!"

"Ye limb o' Sawtan," panted the ranger, "gin ever I get ye this side o' the dyke, I'll break every bane in your body."

"Faith," answered Cleg, "ye should be braw an' thankfu', Warrior, for ye hae gotten what ye haena had for years, and had muckle need o'!"

"And what was that, ye de'il's buckie?" cried the angry ranger.

"A wash!" said Cleg Kelly, as he dropped down the city side of the wall, and sped home to his fortress.

ADVENTURE III.

WHY CLEG KELLY HATED HIS FATHER.

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This is a bad, black tale; yet, for the sake of what comes after, it must be told.

Cleg Kelly had a father. He was a deeply pockmarked man who hated his son; but not so bitterly as his son hated him. Once on a time Cleg Kelly had also a mother, and it is the story of his mother which remains to tell. The story of most men is the story of their mother. They drank love or hatred, scorn or sympathy, at her breasts.

So it was with Cleg Kelly. So let the story of Isbel Kelly be told. How a woman may be murdered in this land and none swing for it! How a woman may be put to the torture every day and every night for years, and the voice of her crying mount (we must believe it) into the ears of the God of Sabaoth, yet no murmur reach her nearest neighbour upon the earth! Gladlier would I tell a merrier tale, save that it is ever best to get the worst over first, as medicine goes before barley-sugar.

Isbel Kelly had not always been Isbel Kelly. That is to say, she had not always been unhappy. There was a time when Timothy Kelly had not come into her life. Isbel Beattie was once a country girl. She had sung in the morn as she went afield to call the dappled kine, as glad a milkmaid as any in song or story. Her foot was the lightest in the dance at the "kirn," her hand the deftest at the spinning-wheel, her cheerful presence the most desired when the butter would not come. For the butter ever comes fastest for a good-tempered woman. A vixenish disposition only curdles the milk. That is why young men, landward but wise, so eagerly offer to help the maids at the butter-making. And no sweeter maiden than Isbel Beattie ever wore print gowns and lilted "O whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad," in all the parish of Ormiland—that is, till Timothy Kelly came, and Isbel sang no more.

Isbel Beattie was "fey," they said, and would take no advice. Lads tight and trig stood in rows to wait for her as she came out of the kirk, on fine Sabbath days when the lilac blossoms, white and purple, were out, and there was a drooping sprig in every spruce bachelor's coat. But Isbel passed them all by with a toss of her head. She could have married a rather stupid young farmer of the best intentions and unquestioned solvency had she so chosen. But Isbel was "fey," and would take counsel from neither maid nor matron.

Now Timothy Kelly, the weasel-faced Irish harvestman, wormed himself into the girl's affections by ways of his own, as before and after he had undone many a trebly fastened door with his steel picklock.

From that day until the hour of her death Isbel Beattie saw no good day. A week after they were married, Timothy Kelly was drinking Isbel's last half-year's wages in a public-house, and Isbel was crying at home with a bruised cheek. She sang no more late or early; but learned to endure hardness and to pray that the kind Lord of whom she had heard in the kirk, might send a swift and easy death as the best thing to pray for.

Timothy Kelly was not long in Ormiland ere he removed to Edinburgh in the interests of business. He needed the metropolis for the exercise of his talents. So Isbel packed what he had left her, and followed him, faithful and weary-foot, to the city lane, and Timothy Kelly cursed her over his shoulder all the way. But she did not hear him, and his words did not hurt her. God had stopped her ears. For the sound of a dearer voice was in them, and the promise of the Eden joy answered Isbel, as though the Lord Almighty walked with her through the streets of the city in the cool of the day.

A week after an infant lay on the breast of Isbel Kelly, in a garret up Meggat's Close, off the Pleasance. A kindly neighbour looked in now and then when Tim Kelly was out, and comforted the young mother. When Tim came in he cursed them all impartially. His foul words sent the neighbours forth again, full of pity and indignation; and so he cast himself down to sleep off drink and temper on the couch of rags in the corner.

Towered fair-faced Edinburgh and its seething under-world held no man like Timothy Kelly. A sieve-net might have been drawn through it and no worse rascal caught

than he. Cruel only where he dared with impunity to be cruel, plausible and fawning where it was to his interest so to be, Timothy Kelly was a type of the criminal who lives to profit by the strange infatuations of the weakest women. From silly servant girls at kitchen doors who thought him "a most civil-spoken young man," he obtained the professional information which enabled him to make unrecognised but accurate lists of the family silver upon some stormy midnight, when the policemen stood in doorways, or perambulated the city with their helmets down upon their brows.

Isbel Kelly wore thin and white, and the bruises on her face grew chronic, only occasionally changing the side. For in this matter Timothy Kelly had no weak partiality. Yet, in the midst of all, Cleg Kelly gained in years and strength, his mother many a time shielding him from blows with her own frail body. There was a soft light on her face when she looked at him. When her husband was out Isbel watched Cleg all day long as he lay on the bed and kicked with sturdy limbs, or sprawled restlessly about the house. The dwelling was not extensive. It consisted of one room, and Tim Kelly's "hidie holes," where he kept the weapons of his craft—curious utensils, with iron crab fingers set at various angles upon the end of steel stalks.

Now, it is the strangest, yet one of the commonest, things in this world that Isbel Kelly loved her husband, and at the worst times said no word against him. It was a mistake. She ought to have outfaced him, insulted him, defied him, given him blow for blow. Then he might have

been a reasonably decent husband, according to the standard of Meggat's Close.

But Cleg Kelly made no such mistake. From the time that he was a toddling little fellow till the parish buried his mother, Cleg Kelly looked at his father with level brows of hate and scorn. No one had taught him; but the perception of youth gauged the matter unerringly.

There are but two beings in the universe whom a really bad-hearted man cannot deceive: his Maker and a young child. Cleg Kelly never quailed before his father. Neither words nor blows daunted him. Whenever his father went out, he said:

"Bad mannie gone away, minnie!"

"Na, Cleg," said his mother, "ye mauna speak that way o' yer faither!"

"Bad mannie, minnie!" Cleg repeated determinedly; "bad mannie gone away."

And from this she could not move him.

Then as soon as his father began to beat the lad, and his mother was not able to protect him, Cleg developed a marvellous litheness and speed. He could climb roofs like a cat at five years of age, and watch his father from the ledge of an outlying wall or the side of a reeking chimney-can, where even the foot of the practised burglar dared not venture.

Then came a year black and bitter. It was the year of the small-pox. That part of Edinburgh where the Kellys lived became a walled city. There was one death in every three or four attacked. And Tim Kelly went to the seaside for his health.

But Isbel and her boy battled it out alone. She had seven shillings a week for cleaning a day-school. But soon the schools were closed, and her pay ceased. Nevertheless, she earned money somehow, and the minister of the McGill-Gillespie church visited her. It would take a whole treatise on Church History, and a professor thereof, to tell why that church was called the McGill-Gillespie. But the unlearned may be assured that these excellent gentlemen were not canonised Scottish saints, nor were their effigies worshipped inside. But at this time the minister of the church came very near to being worshipped outside.

The children knew his step, and ran—*to*, not *from*, him. He was the only man, except the doctor, at whom the urchins of Meggat's did not fling dirt. One of these had even been known to touch his hat to the minister of McGill-Gillespie. But this was a great risk, and of course he did not do it when any one was looking.

One day Cleg Kelly sickened, and though at the time he was a great boy of six, his mother carried him about in her arms all day, soothing him. And the hot, dry spots burned ever brighter on his cheeks, and his eyes shone like flame. The minister brought the doctor, for they hunted in couples—these two. Some of the ministers had gone to the seaside with Timothy Kelly, and along with them a few great professional men from the West-End. But the Pleasance doctor, a little fair man, and the minister of McGill-Gillespie, a tall dark man, remained with the small-pox. Also God was there—not very evidently, or obtrusively, perhaps; but the minister of McGill-Gillespie knew where to find Him when He was wanted.

And He was needed badly enough in the sick-room of Cleg Kelly. No doubt Cleg ought to have gone to the hospital. But, for one thing, the hospitals were overcrowded. And, for another, if they had taken Cleg, they might have taken his mother also. At all events Cleg was nursed in his home, while his father remained at the seaside for his health.

One night, when the trouble was at its height, Cleg ran deliriously on about "the bad mannie." His mother stilled and tended him. The doctor ordered a little warm wine to be given to Cleg occasionally, and the minister of McGill-Gillespie had brought it. But Cleg wavered between life and death in spite of the wine—and much nearer death than life. Isbel had seen the doctor earlier in the day, and she was to go for him again if a certain anticipated change did not come within six hours. The change did not come, though the mother never took her eyes off her boy. Cleg lay back on his pallet bed, inert and flaccid, his eyes glassy and fixed in his head. His mother softly closed the door, took her shawl over her head, and fled through the midnight streets to the doctor's house.

A sudden summer storm had arisen off the sea. The wind swirled about the old many-gabled closes of Edinburgh. It roared over the broken fortress line of the Salisbury Crags. The streets were deserted. The serried ash-backets were driven this way and that by the gale. Random cats scudded from doorstep to cellar, dipped, and disappeared. *Clash!* fell a great shutter on the pavement before her. Isbel Kelly was at the doctor's door. He was not in. Would she leave a message? She would, and the message was that a little boy

was sinking, and that unless the doctor came quickly a mother's only son would die. She cried out in agony as she said it, but the wind swirled the cry away.

So through the turmoil of the storm she came back, and ran up the evil-smelling dark stairs, where the banister was broken, and only the wind-blown fleer of the gas-lamp outside, flickering through the glassless windows of the stairway, lighted her upwards. She had once been a milkmaid, but she had forgotten how the cowslips smelled. And only in her dreams did she recall the scent of beehives over the wall on a still summer night.

She opened the door with a great yearning, but with no presentiment of evil.

"Tim!" she said, her face whitening.

A man, weasel-faced and hateful to look upon, stood by the little cupboard. He had a purse in his hand, and a bottle stood on the mantelshelf beside him.

"Oh, Tim!" she cried, "for the Lord's sake dinna tak' my last shillin'—no frae me an' the boy. He's deein', Tim!"

She ran forward as if to beseech him to give the money back to her; but Tim Kelly, reckless with drink, snatched up the minister's wine-bottle and it met his wife's temple with a dull sound. The woman fell in a heap. She lay loosely on the floor by the wall, and did not even moan. Tim Kelly set the bottle to his lips to drain the last dregs with an empty laugh. But from the bed something small and white flew at his throat.

"Bad mannie, bad mannie, bad mannie!" a shrill voice cried. And before Tim Kelly could set down the bottle, the little figure in flying swathings had dashed itself again and

again upon him, biting and gnashing on him like a wolf's cub. For the blood of Tim Kelly was in the lad, as well as the blood of the milkmaid who lay on the floor as one dead.

And this was what the doctor found, when he stumbled up the stair and opened the door. He had seen many strange things in his day, but none so terrible as this. He does not care to speak about it, though he told the minister that either Providence or the excitement had probably saved the child's life. Yet for all that he tended Timothy Kelly, when his turn came, as well as the best of paying patients. For Tim's was an interesting case, with many complications.

So this adventure tells the reason of three things very important to be known in this history—why, six months after, Isbel Kelly was glad to die, why Cleg Kelly hated his father, and why smooth-faced Tim, who had once deceived the servant girls, was ever after a deeply pockmarked man.

What it does not tell is, why God permitted it all.

ADVENTURE IV.

HOW ISBEL KELLY HEARD SWEET MUSIC.

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Cleg Kelly did not die just then, which was in some ways a good thing. But neither did his mother Isbel, which, for herself, was a pity. It was also a mistake for society, for then Tim Kelly might also have died for the want of a nurse, and Providence and the city authorities would have been saved a vast deal of trouble.

But in spite of all boasts to the contrary, this is so little a free country that people cannot always die when they want—some not even when they ought to. And not a few have got themselves into trouble for assisting manifest destiny. But no one, not even the chief constable, would have been sorry had Isbel Beattie forgotten to help Tim Kelly, her husband, at some crisis of his disease, so that he might have gone betimes to his own place, and thus have been compelled to leave alone a great number of other places and things with which he had no proper concern.

But Isbel Kelly did not think of that. Moreover, Tim Kelly behaved himself better as an invalid than he had ever done as a whole man. And as for little Cleg, he got better rapidly in order to get out of his father's way.

But there came a day when both her invalids were out of her hands, and Isbel had time to clean her house and give her attention to dying on her own account. She did not wish to put any one to an inconvenience. But, indeed, there was little else left for her to do. Tim Kelly was again able to attend to his business—which, strictly speaking, consisted in the porterage of other people's goods out of their houses, without previous arrangement with the owners, and in a manner as unobtrusive as possible.

Cleg was too young for this profession, but according to his father's friends his day was coming. In the meantime he spent most of the day in a brickyard at the back. For Tim Kelly, owing to a little difficulty as to rent, had moved his household goods from Meggat's Close to the outskirts of the city. Now they do not use many bricks about Edinburgh; but