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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE LAIRD O' COUL'S GHOST ***



The Laird o' Coul's Ghost.



The Laird o' Coul's Ghost.

FROM THE ORIGINAL MS. IN THE POSSESSION OF
THE REV. DR. GORDON, ST. ANDREW'S, GLASGOW.

LONDON:
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1892.



INTROIT.

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The MS. of *Coul's Ghost* was found among the Papers of Collector Hamilton, of Dalzell (pronounced *Dëëll*), who died in the summer of 1788, aged 91 years. This incident made him 25 years old when this Story was fledged, which was in 1722. In 1733 Lady Anne Spencer, Duchess of Hamilton, came to Hamilton Palace, and the Collector gave to Her Grace this Story to read. The Duke, to play a practical joke on the Collector, caused one of his servants to whisper to him while at supper, that there was a Gentleman calling, who desired to see him immediately. Being asked Who he was, the valet answered, "*The Laird o' Coul.*" The Guests were all amused at the Collector's embarrassment, who sat still and allowed the "Gentleman" to await in the Hall!

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The Laird o' Coul's Ghost first appeared in type in 1750, and was eagerly bought by all and sundry from the *Flying Stationers* who hawked it about the country. Mrs. Ogilvie delivered it to Watkins, the King's Printer, which was Published from Newcastle. In 1788 a fanatical character, Mrs. Elizabeth Steuart, of Coltness, termed "Aunt Betty," became a convert to the Halcyon notions of Emmanuel Swedenborg, founder of "the New Jerusalem Sect." This personage was related to Henry Erskine, Lord Advocate for Scotland, and was enraptured with the Penny Chap-Book: so much so that she embodied it in her "Remarks and Illustrations of the World of Spirits," which she strictly enjoined her Nephew to print after her decease. Not a Copy of this Brochure of 206 pages is in any of our University Libraries; and a few weeks ago £3 3s. were paid for a soiled copy. "Aunt Betty" does not miss to note one point in *The Laird o' Coul's Ghost* that may insinuate her imaginations about Angels and the Unseen; while she adverts to the Ghosts of Lord Clarendon, Sir George Villiers, the father of the Duke of Buckingham, and to the Dialogue of Dives and Lazarus, in that remarkable Parable. She ferreted out from Mrs. Henrietta Hog, Edinburgh, daughter of the Rev. Mr. Ogilvie, Innerwick, that the Sequel was undoubtedly the genuine Copy in her father's handwriting. No declaration has been given how the MS. came into Collector Hamilton's possession. Mr. Ogilvie died soon after the Conference.

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J. F. S. G.

ABBACY OF SUSANNA RIG,
GLASGOW,
Xtmas, 1891.

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The First Conference

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An Account of Mr. Maxwell Laird of Coul his Appearance after Death to Mr. Ogilvie a Minister of the present Establishment at Innerwick, 3 Miles East from Dunbar.

Upon the 3d Day of February, 1722, at seven a clock at Night after I had parted with Thurston [his Name Cant], and was coming up the Burial Road, one came riding up after me: upon hearing the Noise of his Horse's feet, I took it to be Thurston, but upon looking back, and seeing the Horse of a greyish Colour, I called "Who is there?" The Answer was, "The Laird of Coul [his Name Maxwell], be not afraid." Then looking to him by the Help of the dark Light which the Moon afforded, I took him to be Collector Castellow designing to put a Trick upon me, and immediately I struck at him with all my Force, with my Cane, thinking I mould leave upon him a Mark, to make him remember his Presumption; but being sensible I aimed as well as ever I did in my Life, yet my Cane finding no Resistance, but flying out of my Hand the Distance of about 60 Feet, and observing it by its white Head, I dismounted and took it up, and had some Difficulty in mounting again, what by the ramping of my Horse, and what by Reason of a certain Kind of Trembling throughout my whole Joints; Something likewise of Anger had its share in the Confusion; for, as I thought, he laughed when my Staff flew away; Coming up with him again, who halted all the Time I sought my Staff, I asked once more, "Who he was?" He answered, "The Laird of Coul." I enquired—jst, "If he was the Laird of Coul, what brought him hither?" and "What was his Business with me?"

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C. The reason of my waiting on you is, that I know you are disposed to do for me a Thing which none of your Brethren in Nithsdale will so much as attempt, tho' it serve to ever so good Purposes. I told him I would never refuse to do a Thing to serve a good Purpose, If I thought I was obliged to do it as my Duty. He answered, since I had undertaken what he found few in Nithsdale would, for he had tryed some upon that Subject, who were more obliged to him than ever I was, or to any Person living: I drew my Horse, and halted in Surprise, asking What I had undertaken? He answered, that on the Sabbath last, I had heartily condemned M^r. Paton, and the Rest of the Ministers in Dumfries Presbytery for dissuading Dr. Menzies's Man, from keeping his Appointment with me, and that if you had been in their Place, you would have persuaded the Lad to do as I desired him; and that you would have gone with him, lest he had been feared; and that if you had been in Mr. Paton's Place, you would have delivered my Commissions your self, since it tended to do some People Justice.

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O. Pray, Coul, who informed you that I talked at that Rate?

C. You must know, that we are acquainted with many Things, that the Living know nothing about. These Things you did say, and much more to that Purpose, and all that I want is, that you fulfill your Promise, and deliver my Commissions to my loving Wife.

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O. 'Tis a Pity, Coul, that you who know so many Things, should not know the Difference between an absolute, and a conditional Promise. I did indeed at the Time you mention, blame Mr. Paton, for I think him justly blameable, for hindering the Lad to meet with you, and if I had been in his Place, I would have acted quite the Reverse: but did I ever say, that if you would come to Innerwick, and employ me, that I would go all the way to Dumfries upon that Errand? That is what never so much as once entered into my Thought.

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C. What was in your Thought I do not pretend to know; but I can depend upon my Information, that these were your *Words*: but I see you are in some Disorder, I will wait on you again, when you have more presence of mind.

By the Time we were got to James Dickson's Inclosure below the Churchyard, and while I was recollecting in my mind, whether ever I had spoken these Words he alledged, he broke from me thro' the Churchyard with greater violence, than ever any man on horseback is capable of, and with such a singing and buzzing noise, as put me in greater Disorder, than I was all the Time I was with him. I came to my House, and my Wife observed something more than ordinary Paleness in my Countenance, and would alledge that something ailed me. I called for a Dram & told her I was a little uneasie; after I found myself a little eased and refreshed, I retired to my Closet, to meditate on this the most astonishing Adventure of my whole Life.

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Upon the 5th of March 1722. Being at Blarehead baptizing the Shepherd's Child, I came off at Sunsetting, or, a very little after. Near Will. White's March the Laird of Coul came up with me on Horseback as formerly, and, after his first Salutation bid me not be afraid, for he would do me no Harm. I told him I was not in the least afraid, in the Name of God, and of Christ my Saviour, that he would do the least Harm to me: for, I knew that He in whom I trusted was stronger than all them put together, and if any of them should attempt even to do the Horse I rode upon, Harm, as you have done to Dr. Menzies' man,^[1] if it be true that is said, and generally believed about Dumfries, I have free access to complain to my Lord and Master, to the Lash of whose Resentment you are as much liable now as before.

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C. You need not multiply Words upon that Head, for you are as safe with me, and safer, if safer can be, than when I was alive.

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I said, Well then, Coul, Let me have a peaceable and easy Conversation with you for the Time we ride together, and give me some Information about the Affairs of the other World, for no man inclines to lose his Time, in conversing with the Dead, without having a Prospect of hearing and learning something that may be usefull.

C. Well, Sir, I will satisfy you, as far as I think it proper and convenient. Let me know what Information you want from me.

O. May I then ask you, if you be in a State of Happiness or not?

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C. There are a great many Things that I *can* answer, which the Living are entirely ignorant of: there are many more Things, that notwithstanding the additional Knowledge I have acquired, since my Death, that I *cannot* answer, and there are several Things and Questions that you may start, of which the last is one, that I *will* not answer.

O. Then I know not how to manage our Conversation, for whatever I shall enquire of you, I see you can easily shift me, so that I might profit more by conversing with myself.

C. You may try.

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O. Well then, what sort of a Body is it that you appear in, and what sort of a Horse is it that you ride on, that appears so full of mettle?

C. You may depend upon it, 'tis not the same Body that I was witness to your Marriage in, nor in which I died, for that is in the Grave rotting; but it is such a Body as answers me in a Moment, for I can fly as fast as my Soul can do without it, so that I can go to Dumfries and return again, before you ride twice the Length of your Horse; nay if I incline to go to London, or to Jerusalem, or to the Moon, if you please, I can perform all these Journeys equally soon, for it costs me nothing but a Thought or Wish; for this Body you see, is as fleet as your Thought, for in the same Moment of Time that you can carry your Thoughts to Rome, I can go there in Person. And for my Horse, he is, much like myself, for 'tis Andrew Johnstoun who was seven years my Tennant, and he died about 48 Hours before me.

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O. So it seems when Andrew Johnstoun inclines to ride, you must serve him for an Horse, as he now does you.

C. You are mistaken.

O. I thought all Distinction between Mistresses and Maids, Lairds & Tennants had been done away at Death.

C. True 'tis so, yet still you don't take up the matter.

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O. Is then, Sir, this one of the Questions you *will not* answer?

C. You are still mistaken; for that Question I *can* answer, and after this you may readily understand.

O. Tell me then, Coul, have you never yet appeared before God, nor received any Sentence from him as a Judge.

C. Never yet.

O. I know you was a Scholar, Coul; and 'tis generally believed there is a private Judgment, besides the general at the great Day. The former is immediately after Death. Upon this he interrupted me, crying, No such Thing, no such Thing, no Tryal till the last Day: The Heaven which good Men enjoy immediately after Death, consists only in the Serenity of their Thoughts, the Satisfaction of a good Conscience, and the certain Hope they have of an Eternity of Joy when that Day shall come. The Punishment or Hell of the wicked immediately after Death, consists in the dreadful Things of their awakened Conscience, and the Terror of facing the great Judge, and the sensible Apprehensions of eternal Torments ensuing; and this bears still a due Proportion to the Evils they have done, when they were living. So indeed the State of some good Folks differs but little in Happiness from what they enjoyed upon Earth, save only they are freed from the Body and the Sins and Sorrows that attend it. And, on the other Hand, there are some, who may be said rather not to have been *good* than that they have been *wicked* while living: their Condition is not easily distinguished from that

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of the *former*, and under that Class comes a great Herd of Souls, a vast Number of your ignorant People, who have not much minded the Concerns of Eternity, but, at the same Time, have lived in much Indolence, Ignorance, and Innocence.

O. I always thought that their rejecting the Terms of Salvation offered, was sufficient Ground for God to punish them with his eternal Displeasure. And as to their Ignorance, that could never excuse them, since they lived in a Place of the World, where the Knowledge of these Things might easily have been attained. [Pg 28]

C. They never properly rejected the Terms of Salvation, they never, strictly speaking, rejected Christ, poor Souls! they had as great Liking both to Him, and to Heaven, as their gross understandings were capable of; and as to their Ignorance, impartial Reason must make many allowances, such as, the Stupidity of their Parents, their want of Education, their Distance from People of good Sense and Knowledge, the uninterrupted Application they were obliged to give to their secular affairs, for their daily Bread, the impious Treachery of their Pastor, whom they heard perhaps but once a month, or so, and thro' his unfaithfulness are perswaded, that if they be of such or such a Party all is well; and many other Considerations of the like Nature, which God who is pure and perfect Reason itself will not overlook. These are not so much under the Load of the Divine Displeasure, as they are *out of His Graces and Favours*, for you know it is one Thing to be discouraged, and quite anoyr Thing to be persecuted with all the Power and Rage of an incensed earthly King. So I assure you, men's Faces in this World are not more various and different, than their Conditions are after Death. [Pg 29]

O. I am loath to believe all that you have said at this Time, Cou; but I will not dispute these matters with you, besides, some Things you have advanced, seem to contradict the Scriptures, which I shall ever look upon as the infallible Truths of God; for I find by the Parable of Dives and Lazarus, that one was immediately carried up by the Angels to Abraham's Bosom, and the other thrust down to a Place of Torment. [Pg 30]

C. Excuse me, Sir, that does not contradict one word that I have said; but you seem not to understand the Parable, whose only End is to illustrate the Truth, that a Man may be very happy and flourishing in this World, and most wretched in the next; and that a man may be most miserable and wretched in this World, and most glorious and happy in the next.

O. Be it so, Cou, I yield that Point, and shall pass to another, which has afforded me much Speculation since our last encounter, and that is, how you came to know that I talked after the manner I did concerning Mr. Paton and you on the jst Sabbath of February. Was you present with us but invisible. [Pg 31]

He answered somewhat haughtily, No, Sir, I was not present myself.

O. I would not have you to be angry, Cou; I proposed this Question for my own satisfaction, but, if you judge it improper to answer it, Let it pass.

After he had paused, with his Eyes fixed, as I thought, on the Ground for about 3 or 4 Seconds at most; with some Haste and seeming Cheerfulness, he says: Well, Sir, I will satisfy you in that Point. You must know, that from Time to Time, there are sent from Heaven Angels to guard and Comfort, and to do oyr special Services to good People, and even the Spirits of good men departed are employed on that very Errand. [Pg 32]

O. And do you think every Man has a Guardian Angel?

C. No, but a great many particular Men have, and there are but few Houses, of Distinction especially, but what have one attending them. And from what you have already heard of these Spirits, 'tis no difficult Matter to understand, how he may be serviceable to each particular Member of it, tho' in different Places, at a great Distance. Many are the good offices that the Angels do to Men that fear God, tho' many Times they are not sensible of it, and I know assuredly, that one powerful Angel, or even an active clever Spirit departed, may be sufficient for some villages: But for your great Cities, such as London, Edinburgh, or the like, there is one great Angel that has the Superintendency of the whole; and there are inferior ones, or Spirits departed, to whose particular Charge, such a particular man of Weight and Bussiness is committed. Now, Sir, the Kingdom of Sathan does ape the Kingdom of Christ as much in matters of Politicks as can be: well knowing that the Court of Wisdom is above; so that, hence are sent out Missionaries too in the same order. But because, the Kingdom of Sathan is much better replenished than the other, instead of one Devil, in many Instances, there are 2 or 3 commissioned to attend a particular Family, if it be a Family of great Influence, Power, or Distinction. [Pg 33]

O. I read that there are 10-000d Times 10-000d Angels that wait on God, and sing his Praise, and do his Will; and I cannot understand how the good Angels should be inferior in Number to the Evil.

C. Did I not say that whatever the Number be, yet the Spirits departed were employed in the same Bussiness? So, as to the Number of original Devils, whereof Sathan is the chief, I cannot determine. But you need not doubt that there are more Spirits departed in that Place you in a loose general Sense call *Hell*, by almost an Infinity, by what are gone to that Place, which in the like Sense, you call *Heaven*, which likewise are employed to the same Purpose. And I can assure you, by the Bye, that there are as great Differences between Angels, both [Pg 34]

good and bad, as there are amongst Men, with Respect to their Sense, Knowledge, Cleverness, and Cunning or Action. Nay, which is more, the departed Spirits on both Sides, out doe Severals, from their jst Departure, of the Original Angels; This you'l think a Paradox, yet 'tis true.

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O. I don't doubt of it, but what is that to my Question, concerning which I am solicitous?

C. Take a little Patience, Sir; from what I have said, you might have understood me, if you had your Thoughts about you, but, I shall explain my self to you. Both the good and bad Angels have their stated Times of Rendezvous, and the particular Angel that has the charge either of Towns, Cities or Kingdoms, not to mention inferiour Villages and Families, and Persons; all that are transacted in these several Parts of the Country, are then made open, and at their Encounters, on each Side, every Thing is told, as in your Paroch, at Milns, Kilns and Smiddies, only with this Difference, that many Things false are told at the living Encounters, but nothing but what is exact Truth is told amongst the Dead. Only, I must observe to you, that as I am credibly informed, several of the inferiour bad Angels, or Spirits of wicked departed, have told mighty Things which they have done; and when a more intelligent Spirit has been sent out upon Enquiry, and, the Report of the former, seeming doubtful, he brings in a contrary Report, and making it appear Truth, the former fares very ill.

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O. Does ever the like happen among good Angels?

C. I believe never, for their Regard to Truth prevents it; for while they observe Truth, they do their Bussiness, and keep their Station, and God is Truth.

O. So much Truth being among the good Angels, I shall be apt to think, that Lyes and Falshood will be as much in Vogue amongst the bad.

C. A gross mistake, and 'tis not the alone mistake, that the living Folks labour under anent another World: for the Case is plainly this; as an ill man will not stick at any Falshood, that may promote his Design, so as little will an evil Spirit departed stand at any Thing which may make him successfull; but in making Reports, he must tell the Truth, and nothing but the Truth, or, Wo be to him; But besides their stated monthly, Quarterly, and yearly meetings, or whatever they happen to be, the departed Spirits acquainted can make a Trip to sea, and converse with one another, yearly, daily and weekly, or oftener if they please. Thus I answer the Question you are so much concerned about; for, my Information was from no less than three, viz. Andrew Aikman, who attends Thurston's Family, and James Corbet who waits upon M^r Paton's for the Time, and was then looking after M^{rs} Sarah Paton, when shee was at your House, and an original Emissary appointed to wait on your's.

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O. At this I was much surprized, and after a little thinking, I asked him; and is there really, Coul, an Emissary from Hell, in whatever Sense you take it, who attends my Family?

C. Yes, you may depend upon it.

O. And what do you think is his Bussiness?

C. To divert you from your Duty, and to cause you under hand do as many ill Things as he can, for much depends on having the Minister on their Side.

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O. Upon this I was struck with a Sort of Terrour, that I cannot account for, nor express. In the mean Time, he said several Things that I did not notice, but after a little, I coming to my former Presence of mind, said. But Coul, tell me in earnest, if there be a Devil that attends my Family, tho' invisible to us all?

C. Just as sure as you are breathing; but be not too much dejected upon this Information; for, I tell you likewise, there is a good Angel that attends you, who is stronger than the other.

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O. Are you sure of that, Coul?

C. Yes, there is one just now riding at your Right-hand, who might as well have been else where, for I meant you no Harm.

O. And how long has he been with me?

C. Only since we past Brunsley, but now he is gone.

O. Coul, we are just now upon Elmscleugh, and I desire to part with you, tho' I have gained more from our Conversation together, than what perhaps I would have done otherwise in a twelve month, I chuse rather to see you at another Time, when you are at Leisure, and I wish it may be at as great a Distance from Innerwick as you can.

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C. Be it so, but I hope you will be as obliging to me, next Encounter, as I have been to you this.

O. I promise you, I will, as far as it consists with my Duty to my Lord and Master Christ Jesus; and since you oblige me so much by Information, you may depend upon it, I will answer all the Questions you can propose, so far as it consists with my Knowledge; but I believe you want no Information from me.

C. I came not to be instructed by you, but I want your Help of anyr Kind. but more of this at next meeting, so, says he, I bid you Farewell and went off peaceably at the Head of the Paith[2] opposite to Elmscleugh.

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The Third Conference.

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Upon the 9th of April 1722. as I was returning from Old Hamstocks, Coul struck up with me upon the Back, at the Foot of the ruinous Inclosure before we come to Dodds. I told him his last Conversation had proven so acceptable to me, that I was well pleased to see him again, and that there was a vast number of Things, which I wanted to inform my Self further of, if he would be so good as to satisfy me.

C. Last Time we met, I refused you nothing that you asked, and now I expect, you will refuse me nothing that I ask.

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O. Nothing, Sir, that is in my Power, or, that I can with safety to my Reputation and Character. What then are your Demands upon me?

C. All I desire is, that as you proposed that Sabbath Day, you will go to my wife, who now possesses all my Effects, and tell her the following Particulars, and desire her, in my Name,

to rectify these Matters. 1st That I was justly owing to Provost Crosby £500 Scots, and three

years Interest, but upon hearing of his Death, my good Brother, the Laird of Chapel and I, did forge a Discharge narrating the Date of the Bond, the Sum, and oyr Particulars, with this

onerous Clause, that at that Time it was fallen by, and could not be found, with an

Obligation on the Provost's Part, to deliver up the Bond assoon as he could hit upon it, and

this Discharge was dated three Months before the Provost's Death: and when his only Son

and Successor Andrew Crosby wrote to me concerning this Bond, I came to him, and shewed

him that Discharge, which silenced him, so that I got my Bond without more adoe. And when

I heard of Robert Kennedy's Death, with the same Help of Chapel, I got a Bill upon him, for

£190 sterline, which I got full and compleat Payment of, and Chapel got the half. When I was

in Dumfries the Day Thomas Greer died, to whom I was owing an account of £36 sterline,

Chapel my good Brother at that Time was at London, and not being able of my Self, being

but a bad writer to get a Discharge of the account, which I wanted exceedingly, I met

accidentally with Robert Boyd a poor Writer Lad in Dumfries. I took him to Mrs Carricks,

gave him a Bottle of wine, and told him, that I had payed Thomas Greer's Account, but

wanted a Discharge, and if he would help me to it, I would reward him. He flew away from

me in great Passion, saying he would rayr be hanged; but, if I had a mind for these Things, I

had best wait till Chapel came home. This gave me great Trouble, fearing that what he & I

had formerly done, was no Secret. I followed Boyd to the street, made an Apology that I was

jesting, commended him for his Honesty, and took him solemnly engaged that he should not

repeat what had passed. I sent for my Cousin Barn-howrie your good Brother, who with no

Difficulty for one Guinea and an half, undertook and performed all that I wanted, and for one

Guinea more, made me up a Discharge for £200 Scots, which I was owing to your Fayr in

Law and his friend M^r Morehead, which Discharge I gave in to John Ewart, when he

required the Money, and he, at my Desire, produced it to you, which you sustained. A great

many of the like Instances were told, which I cannot remember, the Person's Names, and

Sums: But added he, what vexes me more than all these, is the Injustice I did to Homer

Maxwell Tenant to Lord Nithsdale for whom I was Factor. I had borrowed 2,000^d merks

from him, 500^d of which he borrowed from another Hand, and I gave him my Bond; for

Reasons I contrived, I obliged him to Secrecy, he dyed within the year, he had nine Children,

and his wife had dyed a month before himself. I came to seal up his Papers for my Lord's

Security. His eldest Daughter intreated me to look through them all, and to give her an

account what was their Stock, and what was their Debt. I very willingly undertook it, and in

going through his Papers, I put my own Bond in my Pocket. His circumstances proved bad,

and the nine Children are now starving. These Things I desire you to represent to my Wife;

take her Brother with you, and let them be immediately rectified, for shee has sufficient

Fund to do it upon, and, if that were done, I think I would be easie and happy; therefore I

hope you will make no Delay.

O. After a short Pause I answered; 'tis a good Errand, Coul, that you are sending me to do Justice to the oppressed and injured; but notwithstanding that I see my Self among the Rest, that come in for £200^d Scots, yet I beg a little Time to consider on the Matter, and since I

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find you are as much master of Reason *now* and more than ever; I'll jst reason with you upon the matter in it's general view; and then, w^t Respect to the Expediency of my being the particular messenger; and this I'll do, w^t all manner of Frankness. For, from what you have said, I see clearly what your present state is, so that, I need not ask any more Questions upon that Head, and you need not bid me take Courage, or not be afraid, for at this moment, I am no more afraid of you, than of a new born Child.

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C. Well, say on.

O. Tell me then, since such is your Agility, that in the twinkling of an Eye, you can fly 1000^d miles, if your Desire to do Justice to the oppressed Persons be so great as you pretend; what is the Reason, that you do not fly to the Coffers of some rich Jew or Banker, where is thousands of Gold and money, invisibly lift it, and invisibly return it to the Persons injured. Or, since your wife has sufficient Fund and more, why can't you empty her Purse in your Hat invisibly to make the People amends?

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C. Because I *cannot*.

O. If these Things were rectified, *you would be easy and happy*. I do not at all credit that; for whatever Justice may now be done to these People, yet the Guilt of the base Action must still belong to you.

C. Now, you think you have silenced me, and gained a notable victory, but, I will shew you your Mistake immediately, for I cannot touch any Man's Gold or Money by Reason of these Spirits, which are the stated Guardians of Justice and Honesty.

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O. What is that you tell me, Coul; Do not unworthy Fellows break Houses every Night, and yet you, who can put your Self in 100^d Shapes in a Moment, cannot do it; what is that you say Coul?

C. 'Tis true, Sir, that among the Living, Men may find some probable way of securing themselves, but, if Spirits departed were allowed, then no Man would be secure, for, in that Case, every Man they had a Prejudice at, would soon be beggared.

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O. But might not you go, to the Mines of Mexico, where these little Sums would never be missed?

C. No, for the same Reason.

O. But, Coul there is so much Treasure lost in the Sea, you can easily dive into the Bottom of it, search that, and refund these People their Losses, and thereby no Man is injured.

C. You are a little too forward, and incline much to banter; what I said might satisfie you; but since it does not, I tell you further, that no Spirits, good or bad, have any Power to take any Money or Gold: the Good never do. And the Bad, if once in an Age they do, it is no Small Parcel [so, in the Copy]; for if it were allowed them, then, they would be very successful in their Bussiness, for they would never fail to gain their Point.

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O. What hinders them, said I, Coul?

C. Superior Power, that guards & governs all.

O. You have satisfied me entirely upon that Head, said I; but prithee, Coul, what is the Reason, that you cannot go to your Wife yourself, and tell her what you have a Mind to; I should think this a sure way to gain your Point.

C. The Reason is, *because I cannot*.

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O. That does not satisfy me Coul.

C. And that is one of the Questions that I told you long ago, I *would not* answer. But, if you will go, as I desired, I promise I will give you full satisfaction, after you have done your Bussiness. Trust me for once, and believe me I will not disappoint you.



The Fourth Conference.

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Upon the 10th of April 1722. coming from old-Camus upon the Post road, I met with Coul as

formerly, upon the Head of the Pathe called the *Pease*. He asked me, if I had considered the matter he had recommended? I told him, I had, and was in the same opinion that I was of, when we parted: that I could not possibly undertake his Commission, unless he would give it in Writing under his Hand. I wanted nothing but Reason to determine me, not only in that, but all oyr Affairs of my Life. I added that the List of his Grievances was so long, that I could not possibly remember them w^tout being in Writing.

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I know, said he, that this is a mere Evasion: but tell me, if your Neighbour, the Laird of Thurston will do it? I would gladly wait upon him.

O. I am sure, said I, he will not: and, if he inclined so, I would do what I could to hinder him; for, I think, he has as little Concern in these matters, as I. But tell me, Coul, is it not as easie for you to write your story, as to tell it, or to ride on What is it you call him, for I have forgotten your Horse's Name.

C. No, Sir, 'tis not, and perhaps I may convince you of it afterwards.

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O. I would be glad to hear a Reason that is solid, for your not speaking to your Wife your Self. But however, any rational Creature may see, what a Fool I would make of my self, if I should go to Dumfries and tell your Wife, that you had appeared to me, and told me of so many Forgeries and Villanies which you had committed, and that shee behoved to make Reparation. The Event might, perhaps, be, that shee would scold me: for, as 'tis very probable, shee will be loth to part with any money shee possesses, and therefore tell me, I was mad, or possibly might pursue me for Calumny. How could I vindicate my Self, how should I prove, that ever you had spoken with me? M^r Paton, and the Rest of my Broym would tell me, that it was a Devil who had appeared to me, and why should I repeat these Things as Truth, which he that was a Lyar from the Beginning had told me? Chapel and Barn-howrie would be upon my Top, and pursue me before the Commissary, and every Body will look upon me, as brainsick or mad. Therefore, I entreat you, do not insist upon sending me an April-Errand: The Reasonableness of my Demand I leave to your Consideration, as you did your former to mine; for I think what I ask is very just. But dropping these matters till our next Interview; give me leave to enter upon some more diverting Subject; and I do not know, Coul, but thro' the Information given to me, you may do as much Service to Mankind, as the Redress of all the Wrongs, you have mentioned would amount to, &c.

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[Pg 64]

THE END.

Elliot Stock, Paternoster Row, London.

Footnotes:

[1] The first appearance that Coul made was to Dr. Menzies's Servant at a Time he was watering his Master's Horse. At some subsequent Appearance, while the Lad was about the same Business, whether Coul had done him any real Harm, or, that the Lad had fallen from his Horse thro' Fear and Confusion, is uncertain, but so it was, that the Lad was found Dead on the Road.

[2] A Paith in Scottish signifies a steep, and oft times rugged Road.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE LAIRD O' COUL'S GHOST ***

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