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WHITE CLOVER.

The call of the hills! Can you hear it? Whispers from the solitary places are on the soft summer wind, unceasing, insistent. So I commandeered a bicycle. It creaks that its day is over; it is rusty, and its old bones are fit but for a mile or so, and that on level high road; that last climb of a year ago . . . and so on and so forth. Its groanings are unheeded for these rolling hills are calling, calling. Enter once more their solitudes, creep close in the mist to their rocky sides and listen, and listen.

At the first decline Rustysides announces her revenge. Her brake will not grip the tyre. "Keep to the high road," she clanks. "Hills were made before the days of bicycles, and among them a staff will prove a worthier friend than I." A crest of the high road now, just where a half-forgotten path runs to a valley lying deep in the hills to the right. That wriggling, unreliable front wheel turns suddenly. Too late for the level highway now! The brake is on strike, you know, and soon we are flying along the unknown road 'mid banks of tall grasses and heather, until we reach the level at last, and stop at a Highland smithy. From a black cloud of firs on the hill beyond rises the tower of an ancient castle.

"Old, very old," says grey beard at the anvil; "but no history, no history has it at all. Never worth your while to climb that road, only ruins left; and there's no history." But we hardly hear him. Already Rustysides is being dragged reluctantly up the rough road where, in olden days the Lords of Moray drove four-in-hand, or led gay hunting parties from the castle in the firs. Soon we are among the mounds and terraces where once was spread a garden; its crumbling walls serve still to keep the sheep in pasture. They are fringed, those walls, here and there, with yellow "Star of Bethlehem." A tiny root was planted, perhaps five hundred years ago; now it is the last reigning monarch of the garden.

Among the ruins a mountain pony, jealous of intruders, hastens to his stable to challenge our

right of entry there, or perhaps to guard the wisp of hay between stone window seats where often my lady and her maidens must have watched the road that winds on through the valley for many a mile. The briars are creeping over worn carvings above the window and, as we seek to read them, nettles high on the tower are nodding derisively "No history, no history, you know." A miniature forest of mountain ash on the roof of my lady's chamber takes up the refrain, "No history no history!" as we pass down stone steps, hollowed by feet that are now long dead. But still we linger, Rustysides and I. Such peaceful decay is here; quiet it is as a churchyard, for the castle has no place in materialistic history that voracious sightseers need scramble and chatter among the terraces which are so green against the purple stretches. Near the tower is a patch of white clovers, each one pirouetting in the wind. Theirs is a merry dance withal, for it is not summer though the towers are crumbling and the garden is dead? Watch them. Each little white head on its . . . Listen! Was there rustle of a silken gown? Did it not seem to brush a border of box as light feet passed on a garden path? Hush, the ivy is whispering to the lichens that have stolen the colours of the garden! Whispering, whispering, and surely there was a footstep! Why, the garden is blooming now! Or was it a fragrance from the meadow-sweet that hides, under its creamy cloud, the burn beyond the fir trees? No, for there are figures among the terraces, gay and in old world garments. See them trooping from the castle doorway. No, 'twas but the shadows of the fir trees in the failing light and the clovers are dancing, dancing for they are the lords and ladies of the garden now. But no, it is not theirs alone. Who are those who walk beneath the tower? Methought I saw a plumed hat raised high . . . there were white ruffles about the wrist . . . a velvet sleeve. Surely the name of a Queen was spoken. And then I saw . . . But this that I saw is not written in history, and so it did not happen. I'll speak not of it, utter not, or history might yet be found to rob the crumbling towers of solitude.

The darkness is falling among the fir trees; we must through the heather, Rustysides and I,

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