

Prelude to the Orpheus

by

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Introduction by

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

An author's note is often an abomination. I generally give it the slip, and pass on to the book itself. I am glad you are not following my bad example. Let me explain. While the proof sheets of this book were being corrected, my attention was drawn to the fact that my tale had already been told, told indeed as far back as 1915, when it appeared in the program of the tenth annual concert of the Glasgow Orpheus Choir. Here was a dilemma. I immediately turned up the article and, after reading it, realised that I could not bring myself to turn it down. That it was a bairn o' my ain did not weigh with me, for I have many bairns. What weighed with me was that it had a picturesqueness, a verve, and a buoyancy so essentially belonging to the forties of one's life, and so very difficult of evocation when one has reached (as I have) the sober seventies, that I felt it must go in, even at the risk of being regarded as redundant.

How to incorporate the old story within the framework of the new was the problem. It was at this stage that there came to me the idea of adding an appendix; and, since appendices are seldom read, I had, in turn, to write an author's note in order that you might be induced to do what I rarely do myself.

Now that the appendix has come into being, I am specially pleased, if for no other reason than that it enables me to find room to round off in, I hope, a befittingly gracious way, the lives and labours of two of my principal characters—Tom M'Dougall and Willie Jackson. That all things work together for good, I have never been in any doubt.

The Introduction by my old friend F. H. Bisset will, I am sure, be greatly appreciated, especially by those readers to whom the *Orpheus*, rather than the *Toynbee*, is the thing.