

“Muckle Kate”

Not a very ordinary name! But then, Muckle Kate, or Big Kate, or Kate-Mhor, or Kate of Lochcarron was not a very ordinary woman! The actual day of her salvation is difficult to trace to its sunrising, but being such a glorious day as it was, we simply wish to relate something of what shone forth in the redeemed life of that "ill-looking woman without any beauty in the sight of God or man."

Muckle Kate was born and lived in Lochcarron in the county of Ross-shire. By the time she had lived her life to its eighty-fifth year she had well-earned the reputation of having committed every known sin against the Law of God with the exception murder. Speaking after the manner of men, if it took "Grace Abounding" to save a hardened sinner like John Bunyan, it was going to take "Grace Much More Abounding" to save Muckle Kate. However, Grace is Sovereign and cannot be thwarted when God sends it on the errand of salvation, and even the method used in bring Muckle Kate into the day of full salvation only serves to magnify that wonder-working power.

Lachlan MacKenzie, Minister at Lochcarron, had laboured long and hard to bring the old sinful Kate under the sound of God's Word, but to no avail, for Kate flatly refused to so much as set her foot within the four walls of the Minister's Kirk.

Knowing, however, that it was Kate's custom to attend the local "ceilidhs", Mr. Lachlan – as the Godly old minister was affectionately known – decided to take a rather more unorthodox road to show the old sinner her perilous state. Sitting down at his desk one day he wrote a song, listing all of Kate's known sins and heaven's judgments against them. This composition was then given to one of the "singers" of the "ceilidhs" who, in turn, sang the song in the hearing of Kate of Lochcarron.

The result was shattering to the conscience of Muckle Kate and from the very first line of the song, it would seem, she fell into the deepest conviction of soul and began to pour out her heart before the Lord. The hills around Lochcarron began to shake and to echo with her weeping and in course of time poor Kate wept away her eyesight and became physically, as well as spiritually, blind. That physical eyesight was never to be restored again in this life, but spiritual eyesight was to be given to her to "look" unto Him and be saved, and to taste and to "see" that the Lord is good.

The Day of her Salvation was perhaps the closing day of one of the Communion seasons at Lochcarron. Kate had no intention of going near the "blessed Ordinance" and she had made this plain to her Minister; she had been sorrowing now for three whole years, but had still found no assurance that Christ had given her His peace. "I go forward to that Holy Table!" she said, "I

who have had my arms up to the shoulders in a Saviour's blood!" And as the sermons for the day were preached and the bread and the wine served to the communicants Muckle Kate sat through it all still under the burden of the wrath of God upon her soul.

At last, it was all over and the benediction pronounced. Kate, believing that she was once more alone in the hillside where the communion had been held returned to her sorrows and crying and her piercing cry once more rent the air. The congregation homeward bound, were arrested in their steps and their interests. The congregation, however, was not alone in viewing the burdened old sinner crying for mercy before the heavens of God that appeared as brass unto her, for, Mr. Lachlan was watching, too. Going forward to the aged sinner, he took her by the hand and led her to where the communion tables still stood. Placing the bread and the wine of Christ's Atonement before her, he exhorted her to eat and to drink, and there, unconscious of the thousands of eyes upon her, Muckle Kate ate "his flesh and drank his blood" and until the day of her death, when she was almost ninety, showed forth the praises of Him who had called her by His grace in such an unusual way.

"Tell them that the worst of sinners," she used to say thereafter, "Tell them that the worst of sinners – the drunkard, the profligate, the Sabbath-breaker, the thief, the blasphemer, the liar, the scoffer, the infidel - tell them that I, a living embodiment of every sin, even I, have found a Saviour's Person, even I have known a Saviour's love."