# РОБЕРТ СТИВЕНСОН

# DAVID BALFOUR

# Роберт Льюис Стивенсон
# David Balfour

*http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=25476055*
*David Balfour / Being Memoirs Of His Adventures At Home And Abroad, The Second Part: In Which Are Set Forth His Misfortunes Anent The Appin Murder; His Troubles With Lord Advocate Grant; Captivity On The Bass Rock; Journey Into Holland And France; And Singular Relations With James More Drummond Or Macgregor, A Son Of The Notorious Rob Roy, And His Daughter Catriona:*

# Содержание

# Robert Louis Stevenson David Balfour / Being Memoirs Of His Adventures At Home And Abroad, The Second Part: In Which Are Set Forth His Misfortunes Anent The Appin Murder; His Troubles With Lord Advocate Grant; Captivity On The Bass Rock; Journey Into Holland And France; And Singular Relations With James More Drummond Or Macgregor, A Son Of

It is the fate of sequels to disappoint those who have waited for them; and, my David having been left to kick his heels for more than a lustre in the British Linen Company's office, must expect his late reappearance to be greeted with hoots, if not with missiles. Yet, when I remember the days of our explorations, I am not without hope. There should be left in our native city some seed of the elect; some long-legged, hot-headed youth must repeat to-day our dreams and wanderings of so many years ago; he will relish the pleasure, which should have been ours, to follow among named streets and numbered houses the country walks of David Balfour, to identify Dean, and Silvermills, and Broughton, and Hope Park and Pilrig, and poor old Lochend-if it still be standing, and the Figgate Whins-if there be any of them left; or to push (on a long holiday) so far afield as Gillane or the Bass. So, perhaps, his eye shall be opened to behold the series of the generations, and he shall weigh with surprise his momentous and nugatory gift of life.

You are still-as when first I saw, as when I last addressed you-in the venerable city which I must always think of as my home. And I have come so far; and the sights and thoughts of my youth pursue me; and I see like a vision the youth of my father, and of his father, and the whole stream of lives flowing down there, far in the north, with the sound of laughter and tears, to cast me out in the end, as by a sudden freshet, on those ultimate islands. And I admire and bow my head before the romance of destiny.

R.L.S.

VAILIMA,
UPOLU,
SAMOA,
1902.

# Part I
# THE LORD ADVOCATE

## CHAPTER I
## A BEGGAR ON HORSEBACK

The 25th day of August, 1751, about two in the afternoon, I, David Balfour, came forth of the British Linen Company, a porter attending me with a bag of money, and some of the chief of these merchants bowing me from their doors. Two days before, and even so late as yestermorning, I was like a beggarman by the wayside, clad in rags, brought down to my last shillings, my companion a condemned traitor, a price set on my own head for a crime with the news of which the country rang. To-day I was served heir to my position in life, a landed laird, a bank porter by me carrying my gold, recommendations in my pocket, and (in the words of the saying) the ball directly at my foot.

There were two circumstances that served me as ballast to so much sail. The first was the very difficult and deadly business I had still to handle; the second, the place that I was in. The tall, black city, and the numbers and movement and noise of so many folk, made a new world for me, after the moorland braes, the sea-sands, and the still country-sides that I had frequented up to then.

The throng of the citizens in particular abashed me. Rankeillor's son was short and small in the girth; his clothes scarce held on me; and it was plain I was ill qualified to strut in the front of a bank-porter. It was plain, if I did so, I should but set folk laughing, and (what was worse in my case) set them asking questions. So that I behooved to come by some clothes of my own, and in the meanwhile to walk by the porter's side, and put my hand on his arm as though we were a pair of friends.

At a merchant's in the Luckenbooths, I had myself fitted out: none too fine, for I had no idea to appear like a beggar on horseback; but comely and responsible, so that servants should respect me. Thence to an armourer's, where I got a plain sword, to suit with my degree in life. I felt safer with the weapon, though (for one so ignorant of defence) it might be called an added danger. The porter, who was naturally a man of some experience, judged my accoutrement to be well chosen.

"Naething kenspeckle,"[1] said he, "plain, dacent claes. As for the rapier, nae doubt it sits wi' your degree; but an I had been you, I would hae waired my siller better-gates than that." And proposed I should buy winter-hosen from a wife in the Cowgate-back, that was a cousin of his own, and made them "extraordinar endurable."

But I had other matters on my hand more pressing. Here I was in this old, black city, which was for all the world like a rabbit-warren, not only by the number of its indwellers, but the

[1] Conspicuous.

complication of its passages and holes. It was indeed a place where no stranger had a chance to find a friend, let be another stranger. Suppose him even to hit on the right close, people dwelt so thronged in these tall houses, he might very well seek a day before he chanced on the right door. The ordinary course was to hire a lad they called a *caddie*, who was like a guide or pilot, led you where you had occasion, and (your errands being done) brought you again where you were lodging. But these caddies, being always employed in the same sort of services, and having it for obligation to be well informed of every house and person in the city, had grown to form a brotherhood of spies; and I knew from tales of Mr. Campbell's how they communicated one with another, what a rage of curiosity they conceived as to their employer's business, and how they were like eyes and fingers to the police. It would be a piece of little wisdom, the way I was now placed, to tack such a ferret to my tails. I had three visits to make, all immediately needful: to my kinsman Mr. Balfour of Pilrig, to Stewart the Writer that was Appin's agent, and to William Grant Esquire of Prestongrange, Lord Advocate of Scotland. Mr. Balfour's was a non-committal visit; and besides (Pilrig being in the country) I made bold to find way to it myself, with the help of my two legs and a Scots tongue. But the rest were in a different case. Not only was the visit to Appin's agent, in the midst of the cry about the Appin murder, dangerous in itself, but it was highly inconsistent with the other. I was like to have a bad enough time of it with my Lord Advocate Grant, the best of ways; but to

go to him hot-foot from Appin's agent, was little likely to mend my own affairs, and might prove the mere ruin of friend Alan's. The whole thing, besides, gave me a look of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds that was little to my fancy. I determined, therefore, to be done at once with Mr. Stewart and the whole Jacobitical side of my business, and to profit for that purpose by the guidance of the porter at my side. But it chanced I had scarce given him the address, when there came a sprinkle of rain-nothing to hurt, only for my new clothes-and we took shelter under a pend at the head of a close or alley.

Being strange to what I saw, I stepped a little farther in. The narrow paved way descended swiftly. Prodigious tall houses sprang upon each side and bulged out, one story beyond another, as they rose. At the top only a ribbon of sky showed in. By what I could spy in the windows, and by the respectable persons that passed out and in, I saw the houses to be very well occupied; and the whole appearance of the place interested me like a tale.

I was still gazing, when there came a sudden brisk tramp of feet in time and clash of steel behind me. Turning quickly, I was aware of a party of armed soldiers, and, in their midst, a tall man in a great-coat. He walked with a stoop that was like a piece of courtesy, genteel and insinuating: he waved his hands plausibly as he went, and his face was sly and handsome. I thought his eye took me in, but could not meet it. This procession went by to a door in the close, which a serving-man in a fine livery set open; and two of the soldier-lads carried the prisoner within, the rest

lingering with their firelocks by the door.

There can nothing pass in the streets of a city without some following of idle folk and children. It was so now; but the more part melted away incontinent until but three were left. One was a girl; she was dressed like a lady, and had a screen of the Drummond colours on her head; but her comrades or (I should say) followers were ragged gillies, such as I had seen the matches of by the dozen in my Highland journey. They all spoke together earnestly in Gaelic, the sound of which was pleasant in my ears for the sake of Alan; and though the rain was by again, and my porter plucked at me to be going, I even drew nearer where they were, to listen. The lady scolded sharply, the others making apologies and cringeing before her, so that I made sure she was come of a chief's house. All the while the three of them sought in their pockets, and by what I could make out, they had the matter of half a farthing among the party; which made me smile a little to see all Highland folk alike for fine obeisances and empty sporrans.

It chanced the girl turned suddenly about, so that I saw her face for the first time. There is no greater wonder than the way the face of a young woman fits in a man's mind, and stays there, and he could never tell you why; it just seems it was the thing he wanted. She had wonderful bright eyes like stars, and I daresay the eyes had a part in it; but what I remember the most clearly was the way her lips were a trifle open as she turned. And whatever was the cause, I stood there staring like a fool. On her side, as she

had not known there was anyone so near, she looked at me a little longer, and perhaps with more surprise, than was entirely civil.

It went through my country head she might be wondering at my new clothes; with that, I blushed to my hair, and at the sight of my colouring it's to be supposed she drew her own conclusions, for she moved her gillies farther down the close, and they fell again to this dispute where I could hear no more of it.

I had often admired a lassie before then, if scarce so sudden and strong; and it was rather my disposition to withdraw than to come forward, for I was much in fear of mockery from the womenkind. You would have thought I had now all the more reason to pursue my common practice, since I had met this young lady in the city street, seemingly following a prisoner, and accompanied with two very ragged, indecent-like Highlandmen. But there was here a different ingredient; it was plain the girl thought I had been prying in her secrets; and with my new clothes and sword, and at the top of my new fortunes, this was more than I could swallow. The beggar on horseback could not bear to be thrust down so low, or at the least of it, not by this young lady.

I followed, accordingly, and took off my new hat to her, the best that I was able.

"Madam," said I, "I think it only fair to myself to let you understand I have no Gaelic. It is true I was listening, for I have friends of my own across the Highland line, and the sound of that tongue comes friendly; but for your private affairs, if you had spoken Greek, I might have had more guess at them."

She made me a little, distant curtsey. "There is no harm done," said she, with a pretty accent, most like the English (but more agreeable). "A cat may look at a king."

"I do not mean to offend," said I. "I have no skill of city manners; I never before this day set foot inside the doors of Edinburgh. Take me for a country lad-it's what I am; and I would rather I told you than you found it out."

"Indeed, it will be a very unusual thing for strangers to be speaking to each other on the causeway," she replied. "But if you are landward[2] bred it will be different. I am as landward as yourself; I am Highland as you see, and think myself the farther from my home."

"It is not yet a week since I passed the line," said I. "Less than a week ago I was on the Braes of Balwhidder."

"Balwhither?" she cries; "come ye from Balwhither? The name of it makes all there is of me rejoice. You will not have been long there, and not known some of our friends or family?"

"I lived with a very honest, kind man called Duncan Dhu Maclaren," I replied.

"Well I know Duncan, and you give him the true name!" she said; "and if he is an honest man, his wife is honest indeed."

"Ay," said I, "they are fine people, and the place is a bonny place."

"Where in the great world is such another?" she cries; "I am loving the smell of that place and the roots that grew there."

---

[2] Country.

I was infinitely taken with the spirit of the maid. "I could be wishing I had brought you a spray of that heather," says I. "And though I did ill to speak with you at the first, now it seems we have common acquaintance, I make it my petition you will not forget me. David Balfour is the name I am known by. This is my lucky day when I have just come into a landed estate and am not very long out of a deadly peril. I wish you would keep my name in mind for the sake of Balquidder," said I, "and I will yours for the sake of my lucky day."

"My name is not spoken," she replied, with a great deal of haughtiness. "More than a hundred years it has not gone upon men's tongues, save for a blink. I am nameless like the Folk of Peace.[3] Catriona Drummond is the one I use."

Now indeed I knew where I was standing. In all broad Scotland there was but the one name proscribed, and that was the name of the Macgregors. Yet so far from fleeing this undesirable acquaintancy, I plunged the deeper in.

"I have been sitting with one who was in the same case with yourself," said I, "and I think he will be one of your friends. They called him Robin Oig."

"Did ye so?" cries she. "Ye met Rob?"

"I passed the night with him," said I.

"He is a fowl of the night," said she.

"There was a set of pipes there," I went on, "so you may judge if the time passed."

---

[3] The Fairies.

"You should be no enemy, at all events," said she. "That was his brother there a moment since, with the red soldiers round him. It is him that I call father."

"Is it so?" cried I. "Are you a daughter of James More's?"

"All the daughter that he has," says she: "the daughter of a prisoner; that I should forget it so, even for one hour, to talk with strangers!"

Here one of the gillies addressed her in what he had of English, to know what "she" (meaning by that himself) was to do about "ta sneeshin." I took some note of him for a short, bandy-legged, red-haired, big-headed man, that I was to know more of to my cost.

"There can be none the day, Neil," she replied. "How will you get 'sneeshin,' wanting siller? It will teach you another time to be more careful; and I think James More will not be very well pleased with Neil of the Tom."

"Miss Drummond," I said, "I told you I was in my lucky day. Here I am, and a bank-porter at my tail. And remember I have had the hospitality of your own country of Balwhidder."

"It was not one of my people gave it," said she.

"Ah, well," said I, "but I am owing your uncle at least for some springs upon the pipes. Besides which, I have offered myself to be your friend, and you have been so forgetful that you did not refuse me in the proper time."

"If it had been a great sum, it might have done you honour," said she. "But I will tell you what this is. James More lies shackled

in prison; but this time past, they will be bringing him down here daily to the Advocate's…"

"The Advocate's?" I cried. "Is that.. ?"

"It is the house of the Lord Advocate, Grant of Prestongrange," said she. "There they bring my father one time and another, for what purpose I have no thought in my mind; but it seems there is some hope dawned for him. All this same time they will not let me be seeing him, nor yet him write; and we wait upon the King's street to catch him; and now we give him his snuff as he goes by, and now something else. And here is this son of trouble, Neil, son of Duncan, has lost my fourpenny-piece that was to buy that snuff, and James More must go wanting, and will think his daughter has forgotten him."

I took sixpence from my pocket, gave it to Neil, and bade him go about his errand. Then to her, "That sixpence came with me by Balwhidder," said I.

"Ah!" she said, "you are a friend to the Gregara!"

"I would not like to deceive you either," said I. "I know very little of the Gregara and less of James More and his doings; but since the while I have been standing in this close, I seem to know something of yourself; and if you will just say 'a friend to Miss Catriona' I will see you are the less cheated."

"The one cannot be without the other," said she.

"I will even try," said I.

"And what will you be thinking of myself?" she cried, "to be holding my hand to the first stranger!"

"I am thinking nothing but that you are a good daughter," said I.

"I must not be without repaying it," she said; "where is it you stop?"

"To tell the truth, I am stopping nowhere yet," said I, "being not full three hours in the city; but if you will give me your direction, I will be so bold as come seeking my sixpence for myself."

"Will I can trust you for that?" she asked.

"You have little fear," said I.

"James More could not bear it else," said she. "I stop beyond the village of Dean, on the north side of the water, with Mrs. Drummond-Ogilvy of Allardyce, who is my near friend and will be glad to thank you."

"You are to see me then, so soon as what I have to do permits," said I; and the remembrance of Alan rolling in again upon my mind, I made haste to say farewell.

I could not but think, even as I did so, that we had made extraordinary free upon short acquaintance, and that a really wise young lady would have shown herself more backward. I think it was the bank-porter that put me from this ungallant train of thought.

"I thoucht ye had been a lad of some kind o' sense," he began, shooting out his lips. "Ye're no likely to gang far this gate. A fule and his siller's shune parted. Eh, but ye're a green callant!" he cried, "an' a veecious, tae! Cleikin' up wi' baubee-joes!"

"If you dare to speak of the young lady …" I began.

"Leddy!" he cried. "Haud us and safe us, whatten leddy? Ca' *thon* a leddy? The toun's fu' o' them. Leddies! Man, it's weel seen ye're no very acquant in Embro'!"

A clap of anger took me.

"Here," said I, "lead me where I told you, and keep your foul mouth shut!"

He did not wholly obey me, for though he no more addressed me directly, he sang at me as he went in a very impudent manner of innuendo, and with an exceedingly ill voice and ear-

> "As Mally Lee cam doun the street, her capuchin did flee.
> She cuist a look ahint her to see her negligee,
> And we're a' gaun east and wast, we're a' gaun ajee,
> We're a' gaun east and wast courtin' Mally Lee."

# CHAPTER II
# THE HIGHLAND WRITER

Mr. Charles Stewart the Writer dwelt at the top of the longest stair that ever mason set a hand to; fifteen flights of it, no less; and when I had come to his door, and a clerk had opened it, and told me his master was within, I had scarce breath enough to send my porter packing.

"Awa' east and wast wi' ye!" said I, took the money bag out of his hands, and followed the clerk in.

The outer room was an office with the clerk's chair at a table spread with law papers. In the inner chamber, which opened from it, a little brisk man sat poring on a deed, from which he scarce raised his eyes upon my entrance; indeed, he still kept his finger in the place, as though prepared to show me out and fall again to his studies. This pleased me little enough; and what pleased me less, I thought the clerk was in a good posture to overhear what should pass between us.

I asked if he was Mr. Charles Stewart the Writer.

"The same," says he; "and if the question is equally fair, who may you be yourself?"

"You never heard tell of my name nor of me either," said I, "but I bring you a token from a friend that you know well. That you know well," I repeated, lowering my voice, "but maybe are not just so keen to hear from at this present being. And the bits of

business that I have to propone to you are rather in the nature of being confidential. In short, I would like to think we were quite private."

He rose without more words, casting down his paper like a man ill-pleased, sent forth his clerk of an errand, and shut to the house-door behind him.

"Now, sir," said he, returning, "speak out your mind and fear nothing; though before you begin," he cries out, "I tell you mine misgives me! I tell you beforehand, ye're either a Stewart or a Stewart sent ye. A good name it is, and one it would ill-become my father's son to lightly. But I begin to grue at the sound of it."

"My name is called Balfour," said I, "David Balfour of Shaws. As for him that sent me, I will let his token speak." And I showed the silver button.

"Put it in your pocket, sir!" cries he, "Ye need name no names. The deevil's buckie, I ken the button of him! And de'il hae't! Where is he now?"

I told him I knew not where Alan was, but he had some sure place (or thought he had) about the north side, where he was to lie until a ship was found for him; and how and where he had appointed to be spoken with.

"It's been always my opinion that I would hang in a tow for this family of mine," he cried, "and, dod! I believe the day's come now! Get a ship for him, quot' he! And who's to pay for it? The man's daft!"

"That is my part of the affair, Mr. Stewart," said I. "Here is

a bag of good money, and if more be wanted, more is to be had where it came from."

"I needn't ask your politics," said he.

"Ye need not," said I, smiling, "for I'm as big a Whig as grows."

"Stop a bit, stop a bit," says Mr. Stewart. "What's all this? A Whig? Then why are you here with Alan's button? and what kind of a black-foot traffic is this that I find ye out in, Mr. Whig? Here is a forfeited rebel and an accused murderer, with two hundred pounds on his life, and ye ask me to meddle in his business, and then tell me ye're a Whig! I have no mind of any such Whigs before, though I've kent plenty of them."

"He's a forfeited rebel, the more's the pity," said I, "for the man's my friend." I can only wish he had been better guided. And an accused murderer, that he is too, for his misfortune; but wrongfully accused."

"I hear you say so," said Stewart.

"More than you are to hear me say so, before long," said I. "Alan Breck is innocent, and so is James."

"Oh!" says he, "the two cases hang together. If Alan is out, James can never be in."

Hereupon I told him briefly of my acquaintance with Alan, of the accident that brought me present at the Appin murder, and the various passages of our escape among the heather, and my recovery of my estate. "So, sir, you have now the whole train of these events," I went on, "and can see for yourself how I come

to be so much mingled up with the affairs of your family and friends, which (for all of our sakes) I wish had been plainer and less bloody. You can see for yourself, too, that I have certain pieces of business depending, which were scarcely fit to lay before a lawyer chosen at random. No more remains, but to ask if you will undertake my service?"

"I have no great mind to it; but coming as you do with Alan's button, the choice is scarcely left me," said he. "What are your instructions?" he added, and took up his pen.

"The first point is to smuggle Alan forth of this country," said I, "but I need not be repeating that."

"I am little likely to forget it," said Stewart.

"The next thing is the bit money I am owing to Cluny," I went on. "It would be ill for me to find a conveyance, but that should be no stick to you. It was two pounds five shillings and three-halfpence farthing sterling."

He noted it.

"Then," said I, "there's a Mr. Henderland, a licensed preacher and missionary in Ardgour, that I would like well to get some snuff into the hands of; and as I daresay you keep touch with your friends in Appin (so near by), it's a job you could doubtless overtake with the other."

"How much snuff are we to say?" he asked.

"I was thinking of two pounds," said I.

"Two," said he.

"Then there's the lass Alison Hastie, in Limekilns," said I.

"Her that helped Alan and me across the Forth. I was thinking if I could get her a good Sunday gown, such as she could wear with decency in her degree, it would be an ease to my conscience: for the mere truth is, we owe her our two lives."

"I am glad to see you are thrifty, Mr. Balfour," says he, making his notes.

"I would think shame to be otherwise the first day of my fortune," said I. "And now, if you will compute the outlay and your own proper charges, I would be glad to know if I could get some spending-money back. It's not that I grudge the whole of it to get Alan safe; it's not that I lack more; but having drawn so much the one day, I think it would have a very ill appearance if I was back again seeking, the next. Only be sure you have enough," I added, "for I am very undesirous to meet with you again."

"Well, and I'm pleased to see you're cautious too," said the Writer. "But I think ye take a risk to lay so considerable a sum at my discretion."

He said this with a plain sneer.

"I'll have to run the hazard," I replied. "O, and there's another service I would ask, and that's to direct me to a lodging, for I have no roof to my head. But it must be a lodging I may seem to have hit upon by accident, for it would never do if the Lord Advocate were to get any jealousy of our acquaintance."

"Ye may set your weary spirit at rest," said he. "I will never name your name, sir; and it's my belief the Advocate is still so much to be sympathised with that he doesnae ken of your

existence."

I saw I had got to the wrong side of the man.

"There's a braw day coming for him, then," said I, "for he'll have to learn of it on the deaf side of his head no later than to-morrow, when I call on him."

"When ye *call* on him!" repeated Mr. Stewart. "Am I daft, or are you? What takes ye near the Advocate?"

"O, just to give myself up," said I.

"Mr. Balfour," he cried, "are ye making a mock of me?"

"No, sir," said I, "though I think you have allowed yourself some such freedom with myself. But I give you to understand once and for all that I am in no jesting spirit."

"Nor yet me," says Stewart. "And I give you to understand (if that's to be the word) that I like the looks of your behaviour less and less. You come here to me with all sorts of propositions, which will put me in a train of very doubtful acts and bring me among very undesirable persons this many a day to come. And then you tell me you're going straight out of my office to make your peace with the Advocate! Alan's button here or Alan's button there, the four quarters of Alan wouldnae bribe me further in."

"I would take it with a little more temper," said I, "and perhaps we can avoid what you object to. I can see no way for it but to give myself up, but perhaps you can see another; and if you could, I could never deny but what I would be rather relieved. For I think my traffic with his lordship is little likely to agree with my health.

There's just the one thing clear, that I have to give my evidence; for I hope it'll save Alan's character (what's left of it), and James's neck, which is the more immediate."

He was silent for a breathing-space, and then, "My man," said he, "you'll never be allowed to give such evidence."

"We'll have to see about that," said I; "I'm stiff-necked when I like."

"Ye muckle ass!" cried Stewart, "it's James they want; James has got to hang-Alan too, if they could catch him-but James whatever! Go near the Advocate with any such business, and you'll see! he'll find a way to muzzle ye."

"I think better of the Advocate than that," said I.

"The Advocate be damned!" cries he. "It's the Campbells, man! You'll have the whole clanjamfry of them on your back; and so will the Advocate too, poor body! It's extraordinar ye cannot see where ye stand! If there's no fair way to stop your gab, there's a foul one gaping. They can put ye in the dock, do ye no see that?" he cried, and stabbed me with one finger in the leg.

"Ay," said I, "I was told that same no further back than this morning by another lawyer."

"And who was he?" asked Stewart. "He spoke sense at least."

I told I must be excused from naming him, for he was a decent stout old Whig, and had little mind to be mixed up in such affairs.

"I think all the world seems to be mixed up in it!" cries Stewart. "But what said you?"

I told him what had passed between Rankeillor and myself

before the house of Shaws.

"Well, and so ye will hang!" said he. "Ye'll hang beside James Stewart. There's your fortune told."

"I hope better of it yet than that," said I; "but I could never deny there was a risk."

"Risk!" says he, and then sat silent again. "I ought to thank you for your staunchness to my friends, to whom you show a very good spirit," he says, "if you have the strength to stand by it. But I warn you that you're wading deep. I wouldn't put myself in your place (me that's a Stewart born!) for all the Stewarts that ever there were since Noah. Risk? ay, I take over-many, but to be tried in court before a Campbell jury and a Campbell judge, and that in a Campbell country and upon a Campbell quarrel-think what you like of me, Balfour, it's beyond me."

"It's a different way of thinking, I suppose," said I; "I was brought up to this one by my father before me."

"Glory to his bones! he has left a decent son to his name," says he. "Yet I would not have you judge me over-sorely. My case is dooms hard. See, sir! ye tell me ye're a Whig: I wonder what I am. No Whig to be sure; I couldnae be just that. But-laigh in your ear, man-I'm maybe no very keen on the other side."

"Is that a fact?" cried I. "It's what I would think of a man of your intelligence."

"Hut! none of your whillywhas!"[4] cries he. "There's intelligence upon both sides. But for my private part I have no

[4] Flatteries.

particular desire to harm King George; and as for King James, God bless him! he does very well for me across the water. I'm a lawyer, ye see: fond of my books and my bottle, a good plea, a well-drawn deed, a crack in the Parliament House with other lawyer bodies, and perhaps a turn at the golf on a Saturday at e'en. Where do ye come in with your Hieland plaids and claymores?"

"Well," said I, "it's a fact ye have little of the wild Highlandman."

"Little?" quoth he. "Nothing, man! And yet I'm Hieland born, and when the clan pipes, who but me has to dance? The clan and the name, that goes by all. It's just what you said yourself; my father learned it to me, and a bonny trade I have of it. Treason and traitors, and the smuggling of them out and in; and the French recruiting, weary fall it! and the smuggling through of the recruits; and their pleas-a sorrow of their pleas! Here haye I been moving one for young Ardshiel, my cousin; claimed the estate under the marriage contract-a forfeited estate! I told them it was nonsense: muckle they cared! And there was I cocking behind a yadvocate that liked the business as little as myself, for it was fair ruin to the pair of us-a black mark, *disaffected*, branded on our hurdies, like folk's names upon their kye! And what can I do? I'm a Stewart, ye see, and must fend for my clan and family. Then no later by than yesterday there was one of our Stewart lads carried to the Castle. What for? I ken fine: Act of 1736: recruiting for King Lewie. And you'll see, he'll whistle me in to be his lawyer, and there'll be another black mark on my chara'ter! I tell you fair:

if I but kent the heid of a Hebrew word from the hurdies of it be dammed but I would fling the whole thing up and turn minister!"

"It's rather a hard position," said I.

"Dooms hard!" cries he. "And that's what makes me think so much of ye-you that's no Stewart-to stick your head so deep in Stewart business. And for what, I do not know; unless it was the sense of duty."

"I hope it will be that," said I.

"Well," says he, "it's a grand quality. But here is my clerk back; and, by your leave, we'll pick a bit of dinner, all the three of us. When that's done, I'll give you the direction of a very decent man, that'll be very fain to have you for a lodger. And I'll fill your pockets to ye, forbye, out of your ain bag. For this business'll not be near as dear as ye suppose-not even the ship part of it."

I made him a sign that his clerk was within hearing.

"Hoot, ye neednae mind for Robbie," cries he. "A Stewart too, puir deevil! and has smuggled out more French recruits and trafficking Papists than what he has hairs upon his face. Why, it's Robin that manages that branch of my affairs. Who will we have now, Rob, for across the water?"

"There'll be Andie Scougal, in the *Thristle*," replied Rob. "I saw Hoseason the other day, but it seems he's wanting the ship. Then there'll be Tarn Stobo; but I'm none so sure of Tam. I've seen him colloguing with some gey queer acquaintances; and if it was anybody important, I would give Tam the go-by."

"The head's worth two hundred pounds, Robin," said Stewart.

"Gosh, that'll no be Alan Breck?" cried the clerk.

"Just Alan," said his master.

"Weary winds! that's sayrious," cried Robin. "I'll try Andie then; Andie'll be the best."

"It seems it's quite a big business," I observed.

"Mr. Balfour, there's no end to it," said Stewart.

"There was a name your clerk mentioned," I went on: "Hoseason. That must be my man, I think: Hoseason, of the brig *Covenant*. Would you set your trust on him?"

"He didnae behave very well to you and Alan," said Mr. Stewart; "but my mind of the man in general is rather otherwise. If he had taken Alan on board his ship on an agreement, it's my notion he would have proved a just dealer. How say ye, Rob?"

"No more honest skipper in the trade than Eli," said the clerk. "I would lippen to[5] Eli's word-ay, if it was the Chevalier, or Appin himsel'," he added.

"And it was him that brought the doctor, wasnae't?" asked the master.

"He was the very man," said the clerk.

"And I think he took the doctor back?" says Stewart.

"Ay, with his sporran full!" cried Robin. "And Eli kent of that!"[6]

"Well, it seems it's hard to ken folk rightly," said I.

"That was just what I forgot when ye came in, Mr. Balfour!"

---

[5] Trust to.

[6] This must have reference to Dr. Cameron on his first visit. – D.B.

says the Writer.

# CHAPTER III
# I GO TO PILRIG

The next morning, I was no sooner awake in my new lodging than I was up and into my new clothes; and no sooner the breakfast swallowed, than I was forth on my adventures. Alan, I could hope, was fended for; James was like to be a more difficult affair, and I could not but think that enterprise might cost me dear, even as everybody said to whom I had opened my opinion. It seemed I was come to the top of the mountain only to cast myself down; that I had clambered up, through so many and hard trials, to be rich, to be recognised, to wear city clothes and a sword to my side, all to commit mere suicide at the last end of it, and the worst kind of suicide besides, which is to get hanged at the King's charges.

What was I doing it for? I asked, as I went down the High Street and out north by Leith Wynd. First I said it was to save James Stewart, and no doubt the memory of his distress, and his wife's cries, and a word or so I had let drop on that occasion worked upon me strongly. At the same time I reflected that it was (or ought to be) the most indifferent matter to my father's son, whether James died in his bed or from a scaffold. He was Alan's cousin, to be sure; but so far as regarded Alan, the best thing would be to lie low, and let the King, and his Grace of Argyll, and the corbie crows, pick the bones of his kinsman their

own way. Nor could I forget that, while we were all in the pot together, James had shown no such particular anxiety whether for Alan or me.

Next it came upon me I was acting for the sake of justice: and I thought that a fine word, and reasoned it out that (since we dwelt in polities, at some discomfort to each one of us) the main thing of all must still be justice, and the death of any innocent man a wound upon the whole community. Next, again, it was the Accuser of the Brethren that gave me a turn of his argument; bid me think shame for pretending myself concerned in these high matters, and told me I was but a prating vain child, who had spoken big words to Rankeillor and to Stewart, and held myself bound upon my vanity to make good that boastfulness. Nay, and he hit me with the other end of the stick; for he accused me of a kind of artful cowardice, going about at the expense of a little risk to purchase greater safety. No doubt, until I had declared and cleared myself, I might any day encounter Mungo Campbell or the sheriff's officer, and be recognised, and dragged into the Appin murder by the heels; and, no doubt, in case I could manage my declaration with success, I should breathe more free for ever after. But when I looked this argument full in the face I could see nothing to be ashamed of. As for the rest, "Here are the two roads," I thought, "and both go to the same place. It's unjust that James should hang if I can save him; and it would be ridiculous in me to have talked so much and then do nothing. It's lucky for James of the Glens that I have boasted beforehand; and none so

unlucky for myself, because now I'm committed to do right. I have the name of a gentleman and the means of one; it would be a poor discovery that I was wanting in the essence." And then I thought this was a Pagan spirit, and said a prayer in to myself, asking for what courage I might lack, and that I might go straight to my duty like a soldier to battle, and come off again scatheless as so many do.

This train of reasoning brought me to a more resolved complexion; though it was far from closing up my sense of the dangers that surrounded me, nor of how very apt I was (if I went on) to stumble on the ladder of the gallows. It was a plain, fair morning, but the wind in the east. The little chill of it sang in my blood, and gave me a feeling of the autumn, and the dead leaves, and dead folks' bodies in their graves. It seemed the devil was in it, if I was to die in that tide of my fortunes and for other folks' affairs. On the top of the Calton Hill, though it was not the customary time of year for that diversion, some children were crying and running with their kites. These toys appeared very plain against the sky; I remarked a great one soar on the wind to a high altitude and then plump among the whins; and I thought to myself at sight of it, "There goes Davie."

My way lay over Mouter's Hill, and through an end of a clachan on the braeside among fields. There was a whirr of looms in it went from house to house; bees bummed in the gardens; the neighbours that I saw at the doorsteps talked in a strange tongue; and I found out later that this was Picardy, a village

where the French weavers wrought for the Linen Company. Here I got a fresh direction for Pilrig, my destination; and a little beyond, on the wayside, came by a gibbet and two men hanged in chains. They were dipped in tar, as the manner is; the wind span them, the chains clattered, and the birds hung about the uncanny jumping-jacks and cried. The sight coming on me suddenly, like an illustration of my fears, I could scarce be done with examining it and drinking in discomfort. And as I thus turned and turned about the gibbet, what should I strike on, but a weird old wife, that sat behind a leg of it, and nodded, and talked aloud to herself with becks and courtesies.

"Who are these two, mother?" I asked, and pointed to the corpses.

"A blessing on your precious face!" she cried. "Twa joes[7] o' mine: just twa o' my old joes, my hinny dear."

"What did they suffer for?" I asked.

"Ou, just for the guid cause," said she. "Aften I spaed to them the way that it would end. Twa shillin' Scots; no pickle mair; and there are twa bonny callants hingin' for 't! They took it frae a wean[8] belanged to Brouchton."

"Ay!" said I to myself, and not to the daft limmer, "and did they come to such a figure for so poor a business? This is to lose all indeed."

---

[7] Sweethearts.

[8] Child.

"Gie's your loof,[9] hinny," says she, "and let me spae your weird to ye."

"No, mother," said I, "I see far enough the way I am. It's an unco thing to see too far in front."

"I read it in your bree," she said. "There's a bonnie lassie that has bricht een, and there's a wee man in a braw coat, and a big man in a pouthered wig, and there's the shadow of the wuddy,[10] joe, that lies braid across your path. Gie's your loof, hinny, and let Auld Merren spae it to ye bonny."

The two chance shots that seemed to point at Alan and the daughter of James More, struck me hard; and I fled from the eldritch creature, casting her a baubee, which she continued to sit and play with under the moving shadows of the hanged.

My way down the causeway of Leith Walk would have been more pleasant to me but for this encounter. The old rampart ran among fields, the like of them I had never seen for artfulness of agriculture; I was pleased, besides, to be so far in the still countryside; but the shackles of the gibbet clattered in my head; and the mops and mows of the old witch, and the thought of the dead men, hag-rode my spirits. To hang on a gallows, that seemed a hard case; and whether a man came to hang there for two shillings Scots, or (as Mr. Stewart had it) from the sense of duty, once he was tarred and shackled and hung up, the difference seemed small. There might David Balfour hang, and other lads

---

[9] Palm.

[10] Gallows.

pass on their errands and think light of him; and old daft limmers sit at leg-foot and spae their fortunes; and the clean genty maids go by, and look to the other side, and hold a nose. I saw them plain, and they had grey eyes, and their screens upon their heads were of the Drummond colours.

I was thus in the poorest of spirits, though still pretty resolved, when I came in view of Pilrig, a pleasant gabled house set by the walkside among some brave young woods. The laird's horse was standing saddled at the door as I came up, but himself was in the study, where he received me in the midst of learned works and musical instruments, for he was not only a deep philosopher but much of a musician. He greeted me at first pretty well, and when he had read Rankeillor's letter, placed himself obligingly at my disposal.

"And what is it, cousin David?" says he-"since it appears that we are cousins-what is this that I can do for you? A word to Prestongrange? Doubtless that is easily given. But what should be the word?"

"Mr. Balfour," said I, "if I were to tell you my whole story the way it fell out, it's my opinion (and it was Rankeillor's before me) that you would be very little made up with it."

"I am sorry to hear this of you, kinsman," says he.

"I must not take that at your hands, Mr. Balfour," said I; "I have nothing to my charge to make me sorry, or you for me, but just the common infirmities of mankind. 'The guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption

of my whole nature,' so much I must answer for, and I hope I have been taught where to look for help," I said; for I judged from the look of the man he would think the better of me if I knew my questions.[11] "But in the way of worldly honour I have no great stumble to reproach myself with; and my difficulties have befallen me very much against my will and (by all that I can see) without my fault. My trouble is to have become dipped in a political complication, which it is judged you would be blythe to avoid a knowledge of."

"Why, very well, Mr. David," he replied, "I am pleased to see you are all that Rankeillor represented. And for what you say of political complications, you do me no more than justice. It is my study to be beyond suspicion, and indeed outside the field of it. The question is," says he, "how, if I am to know nothing of the matter, I can very well assist you?"

"Why, sir," said I, "I propose you should write to his lordship, that I am a young man of reasonable good family and of good means: both of which I believe to be the case."

"I have Rankeillor's word for it," said Mr. Balfour, "and I count that a warrandice against all deadly."

"To which you might add (if you will take my word for so much) that I am a good churchman, loyal to King George, and so brought up," I went on.

"None of which will do you any harm," said Mr. Balfour.

"Then you might go on to say that I sought his lordship on a

[11] My Catechism.

matter of great moment, connected with His Majesty's service and the administration of justice," I suggested.

"As I am not to hear the matter," says the laird, "I will not take upon myself to qualify its weight. 'Great moment' therefore falls, and 'moment' along with it. For the rest, I might express myself much as you propose."

"And then, sir," said I, and rubbed my neck a little with my thumb, "then I would be very desirous if you could slip in a word that might perhaps tell for my protection."

"Protection?" says he. "For your protection? Here is a phrase that somewhat dampens me. If the matter be so dangerous, I own I would be a little loath to move in it blindfold."

"I believe I could indicate in two words where the thing sticks," said I.

"Perhaps that would be the best," said he.

"Well, it's the Appin murder," said I.

He held up both the hands. "Sirs! sirs!" cried he.

I thought by the expression of his face and voice that I had lost my helper.

"Let me explain …" I began.

"I thank you kindly, I will hear no more of it," says he. "I decline *in toto* to hear more of it. For your name's sake and Rankeillor's, and perhaps a little for your own, I will do what I can to help you; but I will hear no more upon the facts. And it is my first clear duty to warn you. These are deep waters, Mr. David, and you are a young man. Be cautious and think twice."

"It is to be supposed I will have thought oftener than that, Mr. Balfour," said I, "and I will direct your attention again to Rankeillor's letter, where (I hope and believe) he has registered his approval of that which I design."

"Well, well," said he; and then again, "Well, well! I will do what I can for you." Therewith he took a pen and paper, sat awhile in thought, and began to write with much consideration. "I understand that Rankeillor approves of what you have in mind?" he asked presently.

"After some discussion, sir, he bade me to go forward in God's name," said I.

"That is the name to go in," said Mr. Balfour, and resumed his writing. Presently, he signed, re-read what he had written, and addressed me again. "Now here, Mr. David," said he, "is a letter of introduction, which I will seal without closing, and give into your hands open, as the form requires. But since I am acting in the dark, I will just read it to you, so that you may see if it will secure your end-

> "PILRIG, *August 26th*, 1751.
>
> "MY LORD, – This is to bring to your notice my namesake andcousin, David Balfour Esquire of Shaws, a young gentleman of unblemished descent and good estate. He has enjoyed besides the more valuable advantages of a godly training, and his political principles are all that your lordship can desire. I am not in Mr. Balfour's confidence, but I understand him to have a matter to declare, touching His Majesty's service and the administration of justice:

> purposes for which your lordship's zeal is known. I should add that the young gentleman's intention is known to and approved by some of his friends, who will watch with hopeful anxiety the event of his success or failure.'

"Whereupon," continued Mr. Balfour, "I have subscribed myself with the usual compliments. You observe I have said 'some of your friends;' I hope you can justify my plural?"

"Perfectly, sir; my purpose is known and approved by more than one," said I. "And your letter, which I take a pleasure to thank you for, is all I could have hoped."

"It was all I could squeeze out," said he; "and from what I know of the matter you design to meddle in, I can only pray God that it may prove sufficient."

# CHAPTER IV
# LORD ADVOCATE PRESTONGRANGE

My kinsman kept me to a meal, "for the honour of the roof," he said; and I believe I made the better speed on my return. I had no thought but to be done with the next stage, and have myself fully committed; to a person circumstanced as I was, the appearance of closing a door on hesitation and temptation was itself extremely tempting; and I was the more disappointed, when I came to Prestongrange's house, to be informed he was abroad. I believe it was true at the moment, and for some hours after; and then I have no doubt the Advocate came home again, and enjoyed himself in a neighbouring chamber among friends, while perhaps the very fact of my arrival was forgotten. I would have gone away a dozen times, only for this strong drawing to have done with my declaration out of hand and be able to lay me down to sleep with a free conscience. At first I read, for the little cabinet where I was left contained a variety of books. But I fear I read with little profit; and the weather falling cloudy, the dusk coming up earlier than usual, and my cabinet being lighted with but a loophole of a window, I was at last obliged to desist from this diversion (such as it was), and pass the rest of my time of waiting in a very burthensome vacuity. The sound of people talking in a

naer chamber, the pleasant note of a harpsichord, and once the voice of a lady singing, bore me a kind of company.

I do not know the hour, but the darkness was long come, when the door of the cabinet opened, and I was aware, by the light behind him, of a tall figure of a man upon the threshold. I rose at once.

"Is anybody there?" he asked. "Who is that?"

"I am bearer of a letter from the laird of Pilrig to the Lord Advocate," said I.

"Have you been here long?" he asked.

"I would not like to hazard an estimate of how many hours," said I.

"It is the first I hear of it," he replied, with a chuckle. "The lads must have forgotten you. But you are in the bit at last, for I am Prestongrange."

So saying, he passed before me into the next room, whither (upon his sign) I followed him, and where he lit a candle and took his place before a business-table. It was a long room, of a good proportion, wholly lined with books. That small spark of light in a corner struck out the man's handsome person and strong face. He was flushed, his eye watered and sparkled, and before he sat down I observed him to sway back and forth. No doubt he had been supping liberally; but his mind and tongue were under full control.

"Well, sir, sit ye down," said he, "and let us see Pilrig's letter."

He glanced it through in the beginning carelessly, looking up

and bowing when he came to my name; but at the last words I thought I observed his attention to redouble, and I made sure he read them twice. All this while you are to suppose my heart was beating, for I had now crossed my Rubicon and was come fairly on the field of battle.

"I am pleased to make your acquaintance, Mr. Balfour," he said, when he had done. "Let me offer you a glass of claret."

"Under your favour, my lord, I think it would scarce be fair on me," said I. "I have come here, as the letter will have mentioned, on a business of some gravity to myself; and as I am little used with wine, I might be the sooner affected."

"You shall be the judge," said he. "But if you will permit, I believe I will even have the bottle in myself."

He touched a bell, and the footman came, as at a signal, bringing wine and glasses.

"You are sure you will not join me?" asked the Advocate. "Well, here is to our better acquaintance! In what way can I serve you?"

"I should perhaps begin by telling you, my lord, that I am here at your own pressing invitation," said I.

"You have the advantage of me somewhere," said he, "for I profess I think I never heard of you before this evening."

"Right, my lord; the name is indeed new to you," said I. "And yet you have been for some time extremely wishful to make my acquaintance, and have declared the same in public."

"I wish you would afford me a clue," says he. "I am no Daniel."

"It will perhaps serve for such," said I, "that if I was in a jesting humour-which is far from the case-I believe I might lay a claim on your lordship for two hundred pounds."

"In what sense?" he inquired.

"In the sense of rewards offered for my person," said I.

He thrust away his glass once and for all, and sat straight up in the chair where he had been previously lolling. "What am I to understand?" said he.

"*A tall strong lad of about eighteen*," I quoted, "*speaks like a Lowlander, and has no beard*."

"I recognise those words," said he, "which, if you have come here with any ill-judged intention of amusing yourself, are like to prove extremely prejudicial to your safety."

"My purpose in this," I replied, "is just entirely as serious as life and death, and you have understood me perfectly. I am the boy who was speaking with Glenure when he was shot."

"I can only suppose (seeing you here) that you claim to be innocent," said he.

"The inference is clear," I said. "I am a very loyal subject to King George, but if I had anything to reproach myself with, I would have had more discretion than to walk into your den."

"I am glad of that," said he. "This horrid crime, Mr. Balfour, is of a dye which cannot permit any clemency. Blood has been barbarously shed. It has been shed in direct opposition to his Majesty and our whole frame of laws, by those who are their known and public oppugnants. I take a very high sense of this.

I will not deny that I consider the crime as directly personal to his Majesty."

"And unfortunately, my lord," I added a little drily, "directly personal to another great personage who may be nameless."

"If you mean anything by those words, I must tell you I consider them unfit for a good subject; and were they spoke publicly I should make it my business to take note of them," said he. "You do not appear to me to recognise the gravity of your situation, or you would be more careful not to pejorate the same by words which glance upon the purity of justice. Justice, in this country, and in my poor hands, is no respecter of persons."

"You give me too great a share in my own speech, my lord," said I. "I did but repeat the common talk of the country, which I have heard everywhere, and from men of all opinions as I came along."

"When you are come to more discretion you will understand such talk is not to be listened to, how much less repeated," says the Advocate. "But I acquit you of an ill intention. That nobleman, whom we all honour and who has indeed been wounded in a near place by the late barbarity, sits too high to be reached by these aspersions. The Duke of Argyle-you see that I deal plainly with you-takes it to heart as I do, and as we are both bound to do by our judicial functions and the service of his Majesty; and I could wish that all hands, in this ill age, were equally clean of family rancour. But from the accident that this is a Campbell who has fallen martyr to his duty-as who else but

the Campbells have ever put themselves foremost on that path? I may say it, who am no Campbell-and that the chief of that great house happens (for all our advantages) to be the present head of the College of Justice, small minds and disaffected tongues are set agog in every changehouse in the country; and I find a young gentleman like Mr. Balfour so ill-advised as to make himself their echo." So much he spoke with a very oratorical delivery, as if in court, and then declined again upon the manner of a gentleman. "All this apart," said he. "It now remains that I should learn what I am to do with you."

"I had thought it was rather I that should learn the same from your lordship," said I.

"Ay, true," says the Advocate. "But, you see, you come to me well recommended. There is a good honest Whig name to this letter," says he, picking it up a moment from the table. "And-extra-judicially, Mr. Balfour-there is always the possibility of some arrangement. I tell you, and I tell you beforehand that you may be the more upon your guard, your fate lies with me singly. In such a matter (be it said with reverence) I am more powerful than the king's Majesty; and should you please me-and of course satisfy my conscience-in what remains to be held of our interview, I tell you it may remain between ourselves."

"Meaning how?" I asked.

"Why, I mean it thus, Mr. Balfour," said he, "that if you give satisfaction, no soul need know so much as that you visited my house; and you may observe that I do not even call my clerk."

I saw what way he was driving. "I suppose it is needless anyone should be informed upon my visit," said I, "though the precise nature of my gains by that I cannot see. I am not at all ashamed of coming here."

"And have no cause to be," says he, encouragingly. "Nor yet (if you are careful) to fear the consequences."

"My lord," said I, "speaking under your correction, I am not very easy to be frightened."

"And I am sure I do not seek to frighten you," says he. "But to the interrogation; and let me warn you to volunteer nothing beyond the questions I shall ask you. It may consist very immediately with your safety. I have a great discretion, it is true, but there are bounds to it."

"I shall try to follow your lordship's advice," said I.

He spread a sheet of paper on the table and wrote a heading. "It appears you were present, by the way, in the wood of Lettermore at the moment of the fatal shot," he began. "Was this by accident?"

"By accident," said I.

"How came you in speech with Colin Campbell?" he asked.

"I was inquiring my way of him to Aucharn," I replied.

I observed he did not write this answer down.

"H'm, true," said he, "I had forgotten that. And do you know, Mr. Balfour, I would dwell, if I were you, as little as might be on your relations with these Stewarts? It might be found to complicate our business. I am not yet inclined to regard these

matters as essential."

"I had thought, my lord, that all points of fact were equally material in such a case," said I.

"You forget we are now trying these Stewarts," he replied, with great significance. "If we should ever come to be trying you, it will be very different; and I shall press these very questions that I am now willing to glide upon. But to resume: I have it here in Mr. Mungo Campbell's precognition that you ran immediately up the brae. How came that?"

"Not immediately, my lord, and the cause was my seeing of the murderer."

"You saw him, then?"

"As plain as I see your lordship, though not so near hand."

"You know him?"

"I should know him again."

"In your pursuit you were not so fortunate, then, as to overtake him?"

"I was not."

"Was he alone?"

"He was alone."

"There was no one else in that neighbourhood?"

"Alan Breck Stewart was not far off, in a piece of a wood."

The Advocate laid his pen down. "I think we are playing at cross purposes," said he, "which you will find to prove a very ill amusement for yourself."

"I content myself with following your lordship's advice, and

answering what I am asked," said I.

"Be so wise as to bethink yourself in time," said he. "I use you with the most anxious tenderness, which you scarce seem to appreciate, and which (unless you be more careful) may prove to be in vain."

"I do appreciate your tenderness, but conceive it to be mistaken," I replied, with something of a falter, for I saw we were come to grips at last. "I am here to lay before you certain information, by which I shall convince you Alan had no hand whatever in the killing of Glenure."

The Advocate appeared for a moment at a stick, sitting with pursed lips, and blinking his eyes upon me like an angry cat. "Mr. Balfour," he said at last, "I tell you pointedly you go an ill way for your own interests."

"My lord," I said, "I am as free of the charge of considering my own interests in this matter as your lordship. As God judges me, I have but the one design, and that is to see justice executed and the innocent go clear. If in pursuit of that I come to fall under your lordship's displeasure, I must bear it as I may."

At this he rose from his chair, lit a second candle, and for a while gazed upon me steadily. I was surprised to see a great change of gravity fallen upon his face, and I could have almost thought he was a little pale.

"You are either very simple, or extremely the reverse, and I see that I must deal with you more confidentially," says he. "This is a political case-ah, yes, Mr. Balfour! whether we like it or no,

the case is political-and I tremble when I think what issues may depend from it. To a political case, I need scarce tell a young man of your education, we approach with very different thoughts from one which is criminal only. *Salus populi suprema lex* is a maxim susceptible of great abuse, but it has that force which we find elsewhere only in the laws of nature: I mean it has the force of necessity. I will open this out to you, if you will allow me, at more length. You would have me believe-"

"Under your pardon, my lord, I would have you to believe nothing but that which I can prove," said I.

"Tut! tut! young gentleman," says he, "be not so pragmatical, and suffer a man who might be your father (if it was nothing more) to employ his own imperfect language, and express his own poor thoughts, even when they have the misfortune not to coincide with Mr. Balfour's. You would have me to believe Breck innocent. I would think this of little account, the more so as we cannot catch our man. But the matter of Breck's innocence shoots beyond itself. Once admitted, it would destroy the whole presumptions of our case against another and a very different criminal; a man grown old in treason, already twice in arms against his king and already twice forgiven; a fomenter of discontent, and (whoever may have fired the shot) the unmistakable original of the deed in question. I need not tell you that I mean James Stewart."

"And I can just say plainly that the innocence of Alan and of James is what I am here to declare in private to your lordship,

and what I am prepared to establish at the trial by my testimony," said I.

"To which I can only answer by an equal plainness, Mr. Balfour," said he, "that (in that case) your testimony will not be called by me, and I desire you to withhold it altogether."

"You are at the head of Justice in this country," I cried, "and you propose to me a crime!"

"I am a man nursing with both hands the interests of this country," he replied, "and I press on you a political necessity. Patriotism is not always moral in the formal sense. You might be glad of it, I think: it is your own protection; the facts are heavy against you; and if I am still trying to except you from a very dangerous place, it is in part of course because I am not insensible to your honesty in coming here; in part because of Pilrig's letter; but in part, and in chief part, because I regard in this matter my political duty first and my judicial duty only second. For the same reason-I repeat it to you in the same frank words-I do not want your testimony."

"I desire not to be thought to make a repartee, when I express only the plain sense of our position," said I. "But if your lordship has no need of my testimony, I believe the other side would be extremely blythe to get it."

Prestongrange arose and began to pace to and fro in the room. "You are not so young," he said, "but what you must remember very clearly the year '45 and the shock that went about the country. I read in Pilrig's letter that you are sound in Kirk and

State. Who saved them in that fatal year? I do not refer to his Royal Highness and his ramrods, which were extremely useful in their day; but the country had been saved and the field won before ever Cumberland came upon Drummossie. Who saved it? I repeat; who saved the Protestant religion and the whole frame of our civil institutions? The late Lord President Culloden, for one; he played a man's part, and small thanks he got for it-even as I, whom you see before you, straining every nerve in the same service, look for no reward beyond the conscience of my duties done. After the President, who else? You know the answer as well as I do; 'tis partly a scandal, and you glanced at it yourself, and I reproved you for it, when you first came in. It was the Duke and the great clan of Campbell. Now here is a Campbell foully murdered, and that in the King's service. The Duke and I are Highlanders. But we are Highlanders civilised, and it is not so with the great mass of our clans and families. They have still savage virtues and defects. They are still barbarians, like these Stewarts; only the Campbells were barbarians on the right side, and the Stewarts were barbarians on the wrong. Now be you the judge. The Campbells expect vengeance. If they do not get it-if this man James escape-there will be trouble with the Campbells. That means disturbance in the Highlands, which are uneasy and very far from being disarmed: the disarming is a farce…"

"I can bear you out in that," said I.

"Disturbance in the Highlands makes the hour of our old watchful enemy," pursued his lordship, holding out a finger as

he paced; "and I give you my word we may have a '45 again with the Campbells on the other side. To protect the life of this man Stewart-which is forfeit already on half-a-dozen different counts if not on this-do you propose to plunge your country in war, to jeopardise the faith of your fathers, and to expose the lives and fortunes of how many thousand innocent persons?.. These are considerations that weigh with me, and that I hope will weigh no less with yourself, Mr. Balfour, as a lover of your country, good government, and religious truth."

"You deal with me very frankly, and I thank you for it," said I. "I will try on my side to be no less honest. I believe your policy to be sound. I believe these deep duties may lie upon your lordship; I believe you may have laid them on your conscience when you took the oaths of the high office which you hold. But for me, who am just a plain man-or scarce a man yet-the plain duties must suffice. I can think but of two things, of a poor soul in the immediate and unjust danger of a shameful death, and of the cries and tears of his wife that still tingle in my head. I cannot see beyond, my lord. It's the way that I am made. If the country has to fall, it has to fall. And I pray God, if this be wilful blindness, that he may enlighten me before too late."

He had heard me motionless, and stood so a while longer.

"This is an unexpected obstacle," says he, aloud, but to himself.

"And how is your lordship to dispose of me?" I asked.

"If I wished," said he, "you know that you might sleep in

gaol?"

"My lord," says I, "I have slept in worse places."

"Well, my boy," said he, "there is one thing appears very plainly from our interview, that I may rely on your pledged word. Give me your honour that you will be wholly secret, not only on what has passed to-night, but in the matter of the Appin case, and I let you go free."

"I will give it till to-morrow or any other near day that you may please to set," said I. "I would not be thought too wily; but if I gave the promise without qualification, your lordship would have attained his end."

"I had no thought to entrap you," said he.

"I am sure of that," said I.

"Let me see," he continued. "To-morrow is the Sabbath. Come to me on Monday by eight in the morning, and give me your promise until then."

"Freely given, my lord," said I. "And with regard to what has fallen from yourself, I will give it for as long as it shall please God to spare your days."

"You will observe," he said next, "that I have made no employment of menaces."

"It was like your lordship's nobility," said I. "Yet I am not altogether so dull but what I can perceive the nature of those you have not uttered."

"Well," said he, "good-night to you. May you sleep well, for I think it is more than I am like to do."

With that he sighed, took up a candle, and gave me his conveyance as far as the street door.

# CHAPTER V
# IN THE ADVOCATE'S HOUSE

The next day, Sabbath, August 27th, I had the occasion I had long looked forward to, to hear some of the famous Edinburgh preachers, all well known to me already by the report of Mr. Campbell. Alas! and I might just as well have been at Essendean, and sitting under Mr. Campbell's worthy self! the turmoil of my thoughts, which dwelt continually on the interview with Prestongrange, inhibiting me from all attention. I was indeed much less impressed by the reasoning of the divines than by the spectacle of the thronged congregation in the churches, like what I imagined of a theatre or (in my then disposition) of an assize of trial; above all at the West Kirk, with its three tiers of galleries, where I went in the vain hope that I might see Miss Drummond.

On the Monday I betook me for the first time to a barber's, and was very well pleased with the result. Thence to the Advocate's, where the red coats of the soldiers showed again about his door, making a bright place in the close. I looked about for the young lady and her gillies; there was never a sign of them. But I was no sooner shown into the cabinet or antechamber, where I had spent so wearyful a time upon the Saturday, than I was aware of the tall figure of James More in a corner. He seemed a prey to a painful uneasiness, reaching forth his feet and hands, and his eyes speeding here and there without rest about the walls of

the small chamber, which recalled to me with a sense of pity the man's wretched situation. I suppose it was partly this, and partly my strong continuing interest in his daughter, that moved me to accost him.

"Give you a good-morning, sir," said I.

"And a good-morning to you, sir," said he.

"You bide tryst with Prestongrange?" I asked.

"I do, sir, and I pray your business with that gentleman be more agreeable than mine," was his reply.

"I hope at least that yours will be brief, for I suppose you pass before me," said I.

"All pass before me," he said, with a shrug and a gesture upward of the open hands. "It was not always so, sir, but times change. It was not so when the sword was in the scale, young gentleman, and the virtues of the soldier might sustain themselves."

There came a kind of Highland snuffle out of the man that raised my dander strangely.

"Well, Mr. Macgregor," said I, "I understand the main thing for a soldier is to be silent, and the first of his virtues never to complain."

"You have my name, I perceive" – he bowed to me with his arms crossed-"though it's one I must not use myself. Well, there is a publicity-I have shown my face and told my name too often in the beards of my enemies. I must not wonder if both should be known to many that I know not."

"That you know not in the least, sir," said I, "nor yet anybody else; but the name I am called, if you care to hear it, is Balfour."

"It is a good name," he replied, civilly; "there are many decent folk that use it. And now that I call to mind, there was a young gentleman, your namesake, that marched surgeon in the year '45 with my battalion."

"I believe that would be a brother to Balfour of Baith," said I, for I was ready for the surgeon now.

"The same, sir," said James More. "And since I have been fellow-soldier with your kinsman, you must suffer me to grasp your hand."

He shook hands with me long and tenderly, beaming on me the while as though he had found a brother.

"Ah!" says he, "these are changed days since your cousin and I heard the balls whistle in our lugs."

"I think he was a very far-away cousin," said I, drily, "and I ought to tell you that I never clapped eyes upon the man."

"Well, well," said he, "it makes no change. And you-I do not think you were out yourself, sir-I have no clear mind of your face, which is one not probable to be forgotten."

"In the year you refer to, Mr. Macgregor, I was getting skelped in the parish school," said I.

"So young!" cries he. "Ah, then you will never be able to think what this meeting is to me. In the hour of my adversity, and in the house of my enemy, to meet in with the blood of an old brother-in-arms-it heartens me, Mr. Balfour, like the skirling of

the Highland pipes! Sir, this is a sad look-back that many of us have to make: some with falling tears. I have lived in my own country like a king; my sword, my mountains, and the faith of my friends and kinsmen sufficed for me. Now I lie in a stinking dungeon; and do you know, Mr. Balfour," he went on, taking my arm and beginning to lead me about, "do you know, sir, that I lack mere necessaries? The malice of my foes has quite sequestered my resources. I lie, as you know, sir, on a trumped-up charge, of which I am as innocent as yourself. They dare not bring me to my trial, and in the meanwhile I am held naked in my prison. I could have wished it was your cousin I had met, or his brother Baith himself. Either would, I know, have been rejoiced to help me; while a comparative stranger like yourself-"

I would be ashamed to set down all he poured out to me in this beggarly vein, or the very short and grudging answers that I made to him. There were times when I was tempted to stop his mouth with some small change; but whether it was from shame or pride-whether it was for my own sake or Catriona's-whether it was because I thought him no fit father for his daughter, or because I resented that grossness of immediate falsity that clung about the man himself-the thing was clean beyond me. And I was still being wheedled and preached to, and still being marched to and fro, three steps and a turn, in that small chamber, and had already, by some very short replies, highly incensed, although not finally discouraged, my beggar, when Prestongrange appeared in the doorway and bade me eagerly into his big chamber.

"I have a moment's engagement," said he; "and that you may not sit empty-handed I am going to present you to my three braw daughters, of whom perhaps you may have heard, for I think they are more famous than papa. This way."

He led me into another long room above, where a dry old lady sat at a frame of embroidery, and the three handsomest young women (I suppose) in Scotland stood together by a window.

"This is my new friend, Mr. Balfour," said he, presenting me by the arm. "David, here is my sister, Miss Grant, who is so good as keep my house for me, and will be very pleased if she can help you. And here," says he, turning to the three younger ladies, "here are my *three braw dauchters.* A fair question to ye, Mr. Davie: which of the three is the best favoured? And I wager he will never have the impudence to propound honest Alan Ramsay's answer!"

Hereupon all three, and the old Miss Grant as well, cried out against this sally, which (as I was acquainted with the verses he referred to) brought shame into my own cheek. It seemed to me a citation unpardonable in a father, and I was amazed that these ladies could laugh even while they reproved, or made believe to.

Under cover of this mirth, Prestongrange got forth of the chamber, and I was left, like a fish upon dry land, in that very unsuitable society. I could never deny, in looking back upon what followed, that I was eminently stockish; and I must say the ladies were well drilled to have so long a patience with me. The aunt indeed sat close at her embroidery, only looking now and again and smiling; but the misses, and especially the eldest, who was

besides the most handsome, paid me a score of attentions which I was very ill able to repay. It was all in vain to tell myself I was a young fellow of some worth as well as good estate, and had no call to feel abashed before these lasses, the eldest not so much older than myself, and no one of them by any probability half as learned. Reasoning would not change the fact; and there were times when the colour came into my face to think I was shaved that day for the first time.

The talk going, with all their endeavours, very heavily, the eldest took pity on my awkwardness, sat down to her instrument, of which she was a passed mistress, and entertained me for a while with playing and singing, both in the Scots and in the Italian manners; this put me more at my ease, and being reminded of Alan's air that he had taught me in the hole near Carriden, I made so bold as to whistle a bar or two, and ask if she knew that.

She shook her head. "I never heard a note of it," said she. "Whistle it all through. And now once again," she added, after I had done so.

Then she picked it out upon the keyboard, and (to my surprise) instantly enriched the same with well-sounding chords, and sang, as she played, with a very droll expression and broad accent:

> "Haenae I got just the lilt of it?
> Isnae this the tune that ye whustled?"

"You see," she says, "I can do the poetry too, only it won't

rhyme." And then again:

> "I am Miss Grant, sib to the Advocate:
> You, I believe, are Dauvit Balfour."

I told her how much astonished I was by her genius.

"And what do you call the name of it?" she asked.

"I do not know the real name," said I. "I just call it *Alan's air*."

She looked at me directly in the face. "I shall call it *David's air*," said she; "though if it's the least like what your namesake of Israel played to Saul I would never wonder that the king got little good by it, for it's but melancholy music. Your other name I do not like; so, if you was ever wishing to hear your tune again you are to ask for it by mine."

This was said with a significance that gave my heart a jog. "Why that, Miss Grant?" I asked.

"Why," says she, "if ever you should come to get hanged, I will set your last dying speech and confession to that tune and sing it."

This put it beyond a doubt that she was partly informed of my story and peril. How, or just how much, it was more difficult to guess. It was plain she knew there was something of danger in the name of Alan, and thus warned me to leave it out of reference; and plain she knew that I stood under some criminal suspicion. I judged besides that the harshness of her last speech (which besides she had followed up immediately with a very noisy piece of music) was to put an end to the present conversation. I stood

beside her, affecting to listen and admire, but truly whirled away by my own thoughts. I have always found this young lady to be a lover of the mysterious; and certainly this first interview made a mystery that was beyond my plummet. One thing I learned long after, the hours of the Sunday had been well employed, the bank porter had been found and examined, my visit to Charles Stewart was discovered, and the deduction made that I was pretty deep with James and Alan, and most likely in a continued correspondence with the last. Hence this broad hint that was given me across the harpsichord.

In the midst of the piece of music, one of the younger misses, who was at a window over the close, cried on her sisters to come quick, for there was "*Grey eyes* again." The whole family trooped there at once, and crowded one another for a look. The window whither they ran was in an odd corner of that room, gave above the entrance door, and flanked up the close.

"Come, Mr. Balfour," they cried, "come and see. She is the most beautiful creature! She hangs round the close-head these last days, always with some wretched-like gillies, and yet seems quite a lady."

I had no need to look; neither did I look twice, or long. I was afraid she might have seen me there, looking down upon her from that chamber of music, and she without, and her father in the same house, perhaps begging for his life with tears, and myself come but newly from rejecting his petitions. But even that glance set me in a better conceit of myself, and much less awe of the

young ladies. They were beautiful, that was beyond question, but Catriona was beautiful too, and had a kind of brightness in her like a coal of fire. As much as the others cast me down, she lifted me up. I remembered I had talked easily with her. If I could make no hand of it with these fine maids, it was perhaps something their own fault. My embarrassment began to be a little mingled and lightened with a sense of fun; and when the aunt smiled at me from her embroidery, and the three daughters unbent to me like a baby, all with "papa's orders" written on their faces, there were times when I could have found it in my heart to smile myself.

Presently papa returned, the same kind, happy-like, pleasant-spoken man.

"Now, girls," said he, "I must take Mr. Balfour away again; but I hope you have been able to persuade him to return where I shall be always gratified to find him."

So they each made me a little farthing compliment, and I was led away.

If this visit to the family had been meant to soften my resistance, it was the worst of failures. I was no such ass but what I understood how poor a figure I had made, and that the girls would be yawning their jaws off as soon as my stiff back was turned. I felt I had shown how little I had in me of what was soft and graceful; and I longed for a chance to prove that I had something of the other stuff, the stern and dangerous.

Well, I was to be served to my desire, for the scene to which he was conducting me was of a different character.

# CHAPTER VI
# UMQUILE THE MASTER OF LOVAT

There was a man waiting us in Prestongrange's study, whom I distasted at the first look, as we distaste a ferret or an earwig. He was bitter ugly, but seemed very much of a gentleman; had still manners, but capable of sudden leaps and violences; and a small voice, which could ring out shrill and dangerous when he so desired.

The Advocate presented us in a familiar, friendly way.

"Here, Fraser," said he, "here is Mr. Balfour whom we talked about. Mr. David, this is Mr. Symon Fraser, whom we used to call by another title, but that is an old song. Mr. Fraser has an errand to you."

With that he stepped aside to his book-shelves, and made believe to consult a quarto volume in the far end.

I was thus left (in a sense) alone with perhaps the last person in the world I had expected. There was no doubt upon the terms of introduction; this could be no other than the forfeited Master of Lovat and chief of the great clan Fraser. I knew he had led his men in the Rebellion; I knew his father's head-my old lord's, that grey fox of the mountains-to have fallen on the block for that offence, the lands of the family to have been seized, and their nobility attainted. I could not conceive what he should be doing in Grant's house; I could not conceive that he had been called to

the bar, had eaten all his principles, and was now currying favour with the Government even to the extent of acting Advocate-Depute in the Appin murder.

"Well, Mr. Balfour," said he, "what is all this I hear of ye?"

"It would not become me to prejudge," said I, "but if the Advocate was your authority he is fully possessed of my opinions."

"I may tell you I am engaged in the Appin case," he went on; "I am to appear under Prestongrange; and from my study of the precognitions I can assure you your opinions are erroneous. The guilt of Breck is manifest; and your testimony, in which you admit you saw him on the hill at the very moment, will certify his hanging."

"It will be rather ill to hang him till you catch him," I observed. "And for other matters I very willingly leave you to your own impressions."

"The Duke has been informed," he went on. "I have just come from his Grace, and he expressed himself before me with an honest freedom like the great nobleman he is. He spoke of you by name, Mr. Balfour, and declared his gratitude beforehand in case you would be led by those who understand your own interests and those of the country so much better than yourself. Gratitude is no empty expression in that mouth: *experto crede*. I daresay you know something of my name and clan, and the damnable example and lamented end of my late father, to say nothing of my own errata. Well, I have made my peace with that good Duke;

he has intervened for me with our friend Prestongrange; and here I am with my foot in the stirrup again and some of the responsibility shared into my hand of prosecuting King George's enemies and avenging the late daring and barefaced insult to his Majesty."

"Doubtless a proud position for your father's son," says I.

He wagged his bald eyebrows at me. "You are pleased to make experiments in the ironical, I think," said he. "But I am here upon duty, I am here to discharge my errand in good faith, it is in vain you think to divert me. And let me tell you, for a young fellow of spirit and ambition like yourself, a good shove in the beginning will do more than ten years' drudgery. The shove is now at your command; choose what you will to be advanced in, the Duke will watch upon you with the affectionate disposition of a father."

"I am thinking that I lack the docility of the son," says I.

"And do you really suppose, sir, that the whole policy of this country is to be suffered to trip up and tumble down for an ill-mannered colt of a boy?" he cried. "This has been made a test case, all who would prosper in the future must put a shoulder to the wheel. Look at me! Do you suppose it is for my pleasure that I put myself in the highly invidious position of prosecuting a man that I have drawn the sword alongside of? The choice is not left me."

"But I think, sir, that you forfeited your choice when you mixed in with that unnatural rebellion," I remarked. "My case is happily otherwise; I am a true man, and can look either the Duke

or King George in the face without concern."

"Is it so the wind sits?" says he. "I protest you are fallen in the worst sort of error. Prestongrange has been hitherto so civil (he tells me) as not to combat your allegations; but you must not think they are not looked upon with strong suspicion. You say you are innocent. My dear sir, the facts declare you guilty."

"I was waiting for you there," said I.

"The evidence of Mungo Campbell; your flight after the completion of the murder; your long course of secresy-my good young man!" said Mr. Symon, "here is enough evidence to hang a bullock, let be a David Balfour! I shall be upon that trial; my voice shall be raised; I shall then speak much otherwise from what I do to-day, and far less to your gratification, little as you like it now! Ah, you look white!" cries he. "I have found the key of your impudent heart. You look pale, your eyes waver, Mr. David! You see the grave and the gallows nearer by than you had fancied."

"I own to a natural weakness," said I. "I think no shame for that. Shame." I was going on.

"Shame waits for you on the gibbet," he broke in.

"Where I shall but be even'd with my lord your father," said I.

"Aha, but not so!" he cried, "and you do not yet see to the bottom of this business. My father suffered in a great cause, and for dealing in the affairs of kings. You are to hang for a dirty murder about boddle-pieces. Your personal part in it, the treacherous one of holding the poor wretch in talk, your accomplices a pack of ragged Highland gillies. And it can be

shown, my great Mr. Balfour-it can be shown, and it *will* be shown, trust *me* that has a finger in the pie-it can be shown, and shall be shown, that you were paid to do it. I think I can see the looks go round the court when I adduce my evidence, and it shall appear that you, a young man of education, let yourself be corrupted to this shocking act for a suit of cast clothes, a bottle of Highland spirits, and three-and-fivepence-halfpenny in copper money."

There was a touch of the truth in these words that knocked me like a blow: clothes, a bottle of *usquebaugh*, and three-and-fivepence-halfpenny in change made up, indeed, the most of what Alan and I had carried from Aucharn; and I saw that some of James's people had been blabbing in their dungeons.

"You see I know more than you fancied," he resumed in triumph. "And as for giving it this turn, great Mr. David, you must not suppose the Government of Great Britain and Ireland will ever be stuck for want of evidence. We have men here in prison who will swear out their lives as we direct them; as I direct, if you prefer the phrase. So now you are to guess your part of glory if you choose to die. On the one hand, life, wine, women, and a duke to be your hand-gun; on the other, a rope to your craig, and a gibbet to clatter your bones on, and the lousiest, lowest story to hand down to your namesakes in the future that was ever told about a hired assassin. And see here!" he cried, with a formidable shrill voice, "see this paper that I pull out of my pocket. Look at the name there: it is the name of the great David, I believe, the

ink scarce dry yet. Can you guess its nature? It is the warrant for your arrest, which I have but to touch this bell beside me to have executed on the spot. Once in the Tolbooth upon this paper, may God help you, for the die is cast!"

I must never deny that I was greatly horrified by so much baseness, and much unmanned by the immediacy and ugliness of my danger. Mr. Symon had already gloried in the changes of my hue; I make no doubt I was now no ruddier than my shirt; my speech besides trembled.

"There is a gentleman in this room," cried I. "I appeal to him. I put my life and credit in his hands."

Prestongrange shut his book with a snap. "I told you so, Symon," said he; "you have played your hand for all it was worth, and you have lost. Mr. David," he went on, "I wish you to believe it was by no choice of mine you were subjected to this proof. I wish you could understand how glad I am you should come forth from it with so much credit. You may not quite see how, but it is a little of a service to myself. For had our friend here been more successful than I was last night, it might have appeared that he was a better judge of men than I; it might have appeared we were altogether in the wrong situations, Mr. Symon and myself. And I know our friend Symon to be ambitious," says he, striking lightly on Fraser's shoulder. "As for this stage play, it is over; my sentiments are very much engaged in your behalf; and whatever issue we can find to this unfortunate affair, I shall make it my business to see it is adopted with tenderness to you."

These were very good words, and I could see besides that there was little love, and perhaps a spice of genuine ill-will, between those two who were opposed to me. For all that, it was unmistakable this interview had been designed, perhaps rehearsed, with the consent of both; it was plain my adversaries were in earnest to try me by all methods; and now (persuasion, flattery, and menaces having been tried in vain) I could not but wonder what would be their next expedient. My eyes besides were still troubled, and my knees loose under me, with the distress of the late ordeal; and I could do no more than stammer the same form of words: "I put my life and credit in your hands."

"Well, well," says he, "we must try to save them. And in the meanwhile let us return to gentler methods. You must not bear any grudge upon my friend, Mr. Symon, who did but speak by his brief. And even if you did conceive some malice against myself, who stood by and seemed rather to hold a candle, I must not let that extend to innocent members of my family. These are greatly engaged to see more of you, and I cannot consent to have my young women-folk disappointed. To-morrow they will be going to Hope Park, where I think it very proper you should make your bow. Call for me first, when I may possibly have something for your private hearing; then you shall be turned abroad again under the conduct of my misses; and until that time repeat to me your promise of secrecy."

I had done better to have instantly refused, but in truth I was beside the power of reasoning; did as I was bid; took my leave I

know not how; and when I was forth again in the close, and the door had shut behind me, was glad to lean on a house wall and wipe my face. That horrid apparition (as I may call it) of Mr. Symon rang in my memory, as a sudden noise rings after it is over on the ear. Tales of the man's father, of his falseness, of his manifold perpetual treacheries, rose before me from all that I had heard and read, and joined on with what I had just experienced of himself. Each time it occurred to me, the ingenious foulness of that calumny he had proposed to nail upon my character startled me afresh. The case of the man upon the gibbet by Leith Walk appeared scarce distinguishable from that I was now to consider as my own. To rob a child of so little more than nothing was certainly a paltry enterprise for two grown men; but my own tale, as it was to be represented in a court by Symon Fraser, appeared a fair second in every possible point of view of sordidness and cowardice.

The voices of two of Prestongrange's liveried men upon his doorstep recalled me to myself.

"Ha'e," said the one, "this billet as fast as ye can link to the captain."

"Is that for the cateran back again?" asked the other.

"It would seem sae," returned the first. "Him and Symon are seeking him."

"I think Prestongrange is gane gyte," says the second. "He'll have James More in bed with him next."

"Weel, it's neither your affair nor mine's," says the first.

And they parted, the one upon his errand, and the other back into the house.

This looked as ill as possible. I was scarce gone and they were sending already for James More, to whom I thought Mr. Symon must have pointed when he spoke of men in prison and ready to redeem their lives by all extremities. My scalp curdled among my hair, and the next moment the blood leaped in me to remember Catriona. Poor lass! her father stood to be hanged for pretty indefensible misconduct. What was yet more unpalatable, it now seemed he was prepared to save his four quarters by the worst of shame and the most foul of cowardly murders-murder by the false oath; and to complete our misfortunes, it seemed myself was picked out to be the victim.

I began to walk swiftly and at random, conscious only of a desire for movement, air, and the open country.

# CHAPTER VII
# I MAKE A FAULT IN HONOR

I came forth, I vow I know not how, on the *Lang Dykes*.[12] This is a rural road which runs on the north side over against the city. Thence I could see the whole black length of it tail down, from where the castle stands upon its crags above the loch in a long line of spires and gable ends, and smoking chimneys, and at the sight my heart swelled in my bosom. My youth, as I have told, was already inured to dangers; but such danger as I had seen the face of but that morning, in the midst of what they call the safety of a town, shook me beyond experience. Peril of slavery, peril of shipwreck, peril of sword and shot, I had stood all of these without discredit; but the peril there was in the sharp voice and the fat face of Symon, properly Lord Lovat, daunted me wholly.

I sat by the lake side in a place where the rushes went down into the water, and there steeped my wrists and laved my temples. If I could have done so with any remains of self-esteem I would now have fled from my foolhardy enterprise. But (call it courage or cowardice, and I believe it was both the one and the other) I decided I was ventured out beyond the possibility of a retreat. I had outfaced these men, I would continue to outface them; come what might, I would stand by the word spoken.

---

[12] Now Prince's Street.

The sense of my own constancy somewhat uplifted my spirits, but not much. At the best of it there was an icy place about my heart, and life seemed a black business to be at all engaged in. For two souls in particular my pity flowed. The one was myself, to be so friendless and lost among dangers. The other was the girl, the daughter of James More. I had seen but little of her; yet my view was taken and my judgment made. I thought her a lass of a clean honour, like a man's; I thought her one to die of a disgrace; and now I believed her father to be at that moment bargaining his vile life for mine. It made a bond in my thoughts betwixt the girl and me. I had seen her before only as a wayside appearance, though one that pleased me strangely; I saw her now in a sudden nearness of relation, as the daughter of my blood foe, and I might say, my murderer. I reflected it was hard I should be so plagued and persecuted all my days for other folk's affairs, and have no manner of pleasure myself. I got meals and a bed to sleep in when my concerns would suffer it; beyond that my wealth was of no help to me. If I was to hang, my days were like to be short; if I was not to hang but to escape out of this trouble, they might yet seem long to me ere I was done with them. Of a sudden her face appeared in my memory, the way I had first seen it, with the parted lips; at that, weakness came in my bosom and strength into my legs; and I set resolutely forward on the way to Dean. If I was to hang to-morrow, and it was sure enough I might very likely sleep that night in a dungeon, I determined I should hear and speak once more with Catriona.

The exercise of walking and the thought of my destination braced me yet more, so that I began to pluck up a kind of spirit. In the village of Dean, where it sits in the bottom of a glen beside the river, I inquired my way of a miller's man, who sent me up the hill upon the farther side by a plain path, and so to a decent-like small house in a garden of lawns and apple-trees. My heart beat high as I stepped inside the garden hedge, but it fell low indeed when I came face to face with a grim and fierce old lady, walking there in a white mutch with a man's hat strapped upon the top of it.

"What do ye come seeking here?" she asked.

I told her I was after Miss Drummond.

"And what may be your business with Miss Drummond?" says she.

I told her I had met her on Saturday last, had been so fortunate as to render her a trifling service, and was come now on the young lady's invitation.

"Oh, so you're Saxpence!" she cried, with a very sneering manner. "A braw gift, a bonny gentleman. And hae ye ony ither name and designation, or were ye bapteesed Saxpence?" she asked.

I told my name.

"Preserve me!" she cried. "Has Ebenezer gotten a son?"

"No, ma'am," said I. "I am a son of Alexander's. It's I that am the Laird of Shaws."

"Ye'll find your work cut out for ye to establish that," quoth

she.

"I perceive you know my uncle," said I; "and I daresay you may be the better pleased to hear that business is arranged."

"And what brings ye here after Miss Drummond?" she pursued.

"I'm come after my saxpence, mem," said I. "It's to be thought, being my uncle's nephew, I would be found a careful lad."

"So ye have a spark of sleeness in ye," observed the old lady, with some approval. "I thought ye had just been a cuif-you and your saxpence, and your *lucky day* and your *sake of Balwhidder*" – from which I was gratified to learn that Catriona had not forgotten some of our talk. "But all this is by the purpose," she resumed. "Am I to understand that ye come here keeping company?"

"This is surely rather an early question," said I. "The maid is young, so am I, worse fortune. I have but seen her the once. I'll not deny," I added, making up my mind to try her with some frankness, "I'll not deny but she has run in my head a good deal since I met in with her. That is one thing; but it would be quite another, and I think I would look very like a fool, to commit myself."

"You can speak out of your mouth, I see," said the old lady. "Praise God, and so can I! I was fool enough to take charge of this rogue's daughter: a fine charge I have gotten; but it's mine, and I'll carry it the way I want to. Do ye mean to tell me, Mr. Balfour of Shaws, that you would marry James More's daughter,

and him hanged? Well, then, where there's no possible marriage there shall be no manner of carryings on, and take that for said. Lasses are bruckle things," she added, with a nod; "and though ye would never think it by my wrunkled chafts, I was a lassie mysel', and a bonny one."

"Lady Allardyce," said I, "for that I suppose to be your name, you seem to do the two sides of the talking, which is a very poor manner to come to an agreement. You give me rather a home thrust when you ask if I would marry, at the gallows' foot, a young lady whom I have seen but the once. I have told you already I would never be so untenty as to commit myself. And yet I'll go some way with you. If I continue to like the lass as well as I have reason to expect, it will be something more than her father, or the gallows either, that keeps the two of us apart. As for my family, I found it by the wayside like a lost bawbee! I owe less than nothing to my uncle; and if ever I marry, it will be to please one person: that's myself."

"I have heard this kind of talk before ye were born," said Mrs. Ogilvy, "which is perhaps the reason that I think of it so little. There's much to be considered. This James More is a kinsman of mine, to my shame be it spoken. But the better the family, the mair men hanged or heided, that's always been poor Scotland's story. And if it was just the hanging! For my part, I think I would be best pleased with James upon the gallows, which would be at least an end to him. Catrine's a good lass enough, and a good-hearted, and lets herself be deaved all day with a runt of an auld

wife like me. But, ye see, there's the weak bit. She's daft about that long, false, fleeching beggar of a father of hers, and red-mad about the Gregara, and proscribed names, and King James, and a wheen blethers. And you might think ye could guide her, ye would find yourself sore mista'en. Ye say ye've seen her but the once…"

"Spoke with her but the once, I should have said," I interrupted. "I saw her again this morning from a window at Prestongrange's."

This I daresay I put in because it sounded well; but I was properly paid for my ostentation on the return.

"What's this of it?" cries the old lady, with a sudden pucker of her face. "I think it was at the Advocate's door-cheek that ye met her first."

I told her that was so.

"H'm," she said; and then suddenly, upon rather a scolding tone, "I have your bare word for it," she cries, "as to who and what you are. By your way of it, you're Balfour of the Shaws; but for what I ken you may be Balfour of the Deevil's oxter. It's possible ye may come here for what ye say, and it's equally possible ye may come here for deil care what! I'm good enough whig to sit quiet, and to have keepit all my men-folk's heads upon their shoulders. But I'm not just a good enough whig to be made a fool of neither. And I tell you fairly, there's too much Advocate's door and Advocate's window here for a man that comes taigling after a Macgregor's daughter. Ye can tell that to the Advocate

that sent ye, with my fond love. And I kiss my loof to ye, Mr. Balfour," says she, suiting the action to the word, "and a braw journey to ye back to where ye cam frae."

"If you think me a spy," I broke out, and speech stuck in my throat. I stood and looked murder at the old lady for a space, then bowed and turned away.

"Here! Hoots! The callant's in a creel!" she cried. "Think ye a spy? what else would I think ye-me that kens naething by ye? But I see that I was wrong; and as I cannot fight, I'll have to apologise. A bonny figure I would be with a broadsword. Ay! ay!" she went on, "you're none such a bad lad in your way; I think ye'll have some redeeming vices. But, oh, Davit Balfour, ye're damned countryfeed. Ye'll have to win over that, lad; ye'll have to soople your back-bone, and think a wee pickle less of your dainty self; and ye'll have to try to find out that women-folk are nae grenadiers. But that can never be. To your last day you'll ken no more of women-folk than what I do of sow-gelding."

I had never been used with such expressions from a lady's tongue, the only two ladies I had known, Mrs. Campbell and my mother, being most devout and most particular women; and I suppose my amazement must have been depicted in my countenance, for Mrs. Ogilvy burst forth suddenly in a fit of laughter.

"Keep me!" she cried, struggling with her mirth, "you have the finest timber face-and you to marry the daughter of a Hieland cateran! Davie, my dear, I think we'll have to make a match of

it-if it was just to see the weans. And now," she went on, "there's no manner of service in your daidling here, for the young woman is from home, and it's my fear that the old woman is no suitable companion for your father's son. Forbye that I have nobody but myself to look after my reputation, and have been long enough alone with a sedooctive youth. And come back another day for your saxpence!" she cried after me as I left.

My skirmish with this disconcerting lady gave my thoughts a boldness they had otherwise wanted. For two days the image of Catriona had mixed in all my meditations; she made their background, so that I scarce enjoyed my own company without a glint of her in a corner of my mind. But now she came immediately near; I seemed to touch her, whom I had never touched but the once; I let myself flow out to her in a happy weakness, and looking all about, and before and behind, saw the world like an undesirable desert, where men go as soldiers on a march, following their duty with what constancy they have, and Catriona alone there to offer me some pleasure of my days; I wondered at myself that I could dwell on such considerations in that time of my peril and disgrace; and when I remembered my youth I was ashamed. I had my studies to complete; I had to be called into some useful business; I had yet to take my part of service in a place where all must serve; I had yet to learn, and know, and prove myself a man; and I had so much sense as blush that I should be already tempted with these further-on and holier delights and duties. My education spoke home to me sharply; I

was never brought up on sugar biscuits, but on the hard food of the truth. I knew that he was quite unfit to be a husband who was not prepared to be a father also; and for a boy like me to play the father was a mere derision.

When I was in the midst of these thoughts and about half-way back to town I saw a figure coming to meet me, and the trouble of my heart was heightened. It seemed I had everything in the world to say to her, but nothing to say first; and remembering how tongue-tied I had been that morning at the Advocate's, I made sure that I would find myself struck dumb. But when she came up my fears fled away; not even the consciousness of what I had been privately thinking disconcerted me the least; and I found I could talk with her as easily and rationally as I might with Alan.

"O!" she cried, "you have been seeking your sixpence: did you get it?"

I told her no; but now I had met with her my walk was not in vain. "Though I have seen you to-day already," said I, and told her where and when.

"I did not see you," she said. "My eyes are big, but there are better than mine at seeing far. Only I heard singing in the house."

"That was Miss Grant," said I, "the eldest and the bonniest."

"They say they are all beautiful," said she.

"They think the same of you, Miss Drummond," I replied, "and were all crowding to the window to observe you."

"It is a pity about my being so blind," said she, "or I might have

seen them too. And you were in the house? You must have been having the fine time with the fine music and the pretty ladies."

"There is just where you are wrong," said I; "for I was as uncouth as a sea-fish upon the brae of a mountain. The truth is that I am better fitted to go about with rudas men than pretty ladies."

"Well, I would think so too, at all events!" said she, at which we both of us laughed.

"It is a strange thing, now," said I. "I am not the least afraid with you, yet I could have run from the Miss Grants. And I was afraid of your cousin too."

"O, I think any man will be afraid of her," she cried. "My father is afraid of her himself."

The name of her father brought me to a stop. I looked at her as she walked by my side; I recalled the man, and the little I knew and the much I guessed of him; and comparing the one with the other, felt like a traitor to be silent.

"Speaking of which," said I, "I met your father no later than this morning."

"Did you?" she cried, with a voice of joy that seemed to mock at me. "You saw James More? You will have spoken with him, then?"

"I did even that," said I.

Then I think things went the worst way for me that was humanly possible. She gave me a look of mere gratitude. "Ah, thank you for that!" says she.

"You thank me for very little," said I, and then stopped. But it seemed when I was holding back so much, something at least had to come out. "I spoke rather ill to him," said I; "I did not like him very much; I spoke him rather ill, and he was angry."

"I think you had little to do then, and less to tell it to his daughter!" she cried out. "But those that do not love and cherish him I will not know."

"I will take the freedom of a word yet," said I, beginning to tremble. "Perhaps neither your father nor I are in the best of good spirits at Prestongrange's. I daresay we both have anxious business there, for it's a dangerous house. I was sorry for him too, and spoke to him the first, if I could but have spoken the wiser. And for one thing, in my opinion, you will soon find that his affairs are mending."

"It will not be through your friendship, I am thinking," said she; "and he is much made up to you for your sorrow."

"Miss Drummond," cried I, "I am alone in this world…"

"And I am not wondering at that," said she.

"O, let me speak!" said I. "I will speak but the once, and then leave you, if you will, for ever. I came this day in the hopes of a kind word that I am sore in want of. I know that what I said must hurt you, and I knew it then. It would have been easy to have spoken smooth, easy to lie to you; can you not think how I was tempted to the same? Cannot you see the truth of my heart shine out?"

"I think here is a great deal of work, Mr. Balfour," said she.

"I think we will have met but the once, and will can part like gentle-folk."

"O, let me have one to believe in me!" I pleaded, "I cannae bear it else. The whole world is clanned against me. How am I to go through with my dreadful fate? If there's to be none to believe in me I cannot do it. The man must just die, for I cannot do it."

She had still looked straight in front of her, head in air; but at my words or the tone of my voice she came to a stop. "What is this you say?" she asked. "What are you talking of?"

"It is my testimony which may save an innocent life," said I, "and they will not suffer me to bear it. What would you do yourself? You know what this is, whose father lies in danger. Would you desert the poor soul? They have tried all ways with me. They have sought to bribe me; they offered me hills and valleys. And to-day that sleuth-hound told me how I stood, and to what a length he would go to butcher and disgrace me. I am to be brought in a party to the murder; I am to have held Glenure in talk for money and old clothes; I am to be killed and shamed. If this is the way I am to fall, and me scarce a man-if this is the story to be told of me in all Scotland-if you are to believe it too, and my name is to be nothing but a by-word-Catriona, how can I go through with it? The thing's not possible; it's more than a man has in his heart."

I poured my words out in a whirl, one upon the other; and when I stopped I found her gazing on me with a startled face.

"Glenure! It is the Appin murder," she said softly, but with a

very deep surprise.

I had turned back to bear her company, and we were now come near the head of the brae above Dean village. At this word I stepped in front of her like one suddenly distracted.

"For God's sake!" I cried, "for God's sake, what is this that I have done?" and carried my fists to my temples. "What made me do it? Sure, I am bewitched to say these things!"

"In the name of heaven, what ails you now?" she cried.

"I gave my honour," I groaned, "I gave my honour and now I have broke it. O, Catriona!"

"I am asking you what it is," she said; "was it these things you should not have spoken? And do you think *I* have no honour, then? or that I am one that would betray a friend? I hold up my right hand to you and swear."

"O, I knew you would be true!" said I. "It's me-it's here. I that stood but this morning and out-faced them, that risked rather to die disgraced upon the gallows than do wrong-and a few hours after I throw my honour away by the roadside in common talk! 'There is one thing clear upon our interview,' says he, 'that I can rely on your pledged word.' Where is my word now? Who could believe me now? *You* could not believe me. I am clean fallen down; I had best die!" All this I said with a weeping voice, but I had no tears in my body.

"My heart is sore for you," said she, "but be sure you are too nice. I would not believe you, do you say? I would trust you with anything. And these men? I would not be thinking of them! Men

who go about to entrap and to destroy you! Fy! this is no time to crouch. Look up! Do you not think I will be admiring you like a great hero of the good-and you a boy not much older than myself? And because you said a word too much in a friend's ear, that would die ere she betrayed you-to make such a matter! It is one thing that we must both forget."

"Catriona," said I, looking at her, hang-dog, "is this true of it? Would ye trust me yet?"

"Will you not believe the tears upon my face?" she cried. "It is the world I am thinking of you, Mr. David Balfour. Let them hang you; I will never forget, I will grow old and still remember you. I think it is great to die so; I will envy you that gallows."

"And maybe all this while I am but a child frighted with bogles," said I. "Maybe they but make a mock of me."

"It is what I must know," she said. "I must hear the whole. The harm is done at all events, and I must hear the whole."

I had sat down on the wayside, where she took a place beside me, and I told her all that matter much as I have written it, my thoughts about her father's dealing being alone omitted.

"Well," she said, when I had finished, "you are a hero, surely, and I never would have thought that same! And I think you are in peril, too. O, Symon Fraser! to think upon that man! For his life and the dirty money, to be dealing in such traffic!" And just then she called out aloud with a queer word that was common with her, and belongs, I believe, to her own language. "My torture!" says she, "look at the sun!"

Indeed, it was already dipping towards the mountains.

She bid me come again soon, gave me her hand, and left me in a turmoil of glad spirits. I delayed to go home to my lodging, for I had a terror of immediate arrest; but got some supper at a change house, and the better part of that night walked by myself in the barley-fields, and had such a sense of Catriona's presence that I seemed to bear her in my arms.

# CHAPTER VIII
# THE BRAVO

The next day, August 29th, I kept my appointment at the Advocate's in a coat that I had made to my own measure, and was but newly ready.

"Aha," says Prestongrange, "you are very fine to-day; my misses are to have a fine cavalier. Come, I take that kind of you. I take that kind of you, Mr. David. O, we shall do very well yet, and I believe your troubles are nearly at an end."

"You have news for me?" cried I.

"Beyond anticipation," he replied. "Your testimony is after all to be received; and you may go, if you will, in my company to the trial, which is to be held at Inverary, Thursday, 21st *proximo*."

I was too much amazed to find words.

"In the meanwhile," he continued, "though I will not ask you to renew your pledge, I must caution you strictly to be reticent. To-morrow your precognition must be taken; and outside of that, do you know, I think least said will be soonest mended."

"I shall try to go discreetly," said I. "I believe it is yourself that I must thank for this crowning mercy, and I do thank you gratefully. After yesterday, my lord, this is like the doors of Heaven. I cannot find it in my heart to get the thing believed."

"Ah, but you must try and manage, you must try and manage to believe it," says he, soothing-like, "and I am very glad to hear

your acknowledgment of obligation, for I think you may be able to repay me very shortly" – he coughed-"or even now. The matter is much changed. Your testimony, which I shall not trouble you for to-day, will doubtless alter the complexion of the case for all concerned, and this makes it less delicate for me to enter with you on a side issue."

"My lord," I interrupted, "excuse me for interrupting you, but how has this been brought about? The obstacles you told me of on Saturday appeared even to me to be quite insurmountable; how has it been contrived?"

"My dear Mr. David," said he, "it would never do for me to divulge (even to you, as you say) the councils of the Government; and you must content yourself, if you please, with the gross fact."

He smiled upon me like a father as he spoke, playing the while with a new pen; methought it was impossible there could be any shadow of deception in the man: yet when he drew to him a sheet of paper, dipped his pen among the ink, and began again to address me, I was somehow not so certain, and fell instinctively into an attitude of guard.

"There is a point I wish to touch upon," he began. "I purposely left it before upon one side, which need be now no longer necessary. This is not, of course, a part of your examination, which is to follow by another hand; this is a private interest of my own. You say you encountered Breck upon the hill?"

"I did, my lord," said I.

"This was immediately after the murder?"

"It was."

"Did you speak to him?"

"I did."

"You had known him before, I think?" says my lord, carelessly.

"I cannot guess your reason for so thinking, my lord," I replied, "but such is the fact."

"And when did you part with him again?" said he.

"I reserve my answer," said I. "The question will be put to me at the assize."

"Mr. Balfour," said he, "will you not understand that all this is without prejudice to yourself? I have promised you life and honour; and, believe me, I can keep my word. You are therefore clear of all anxiety. Alan, it appears, you suppose you can protect; and you talk to me of your gratitude, which I think (if you push me) is not ill-deserved. There are a great many different considerations all pointing the same way; and I will never be persuaded that you could not help us (if you chose) to put salt on Alan's tail."

"My lord," said I, "I give you my word I do not so much as guess where Alan is."

He paused a breath. "Nor how he might be found?" he asked.

I sat before him like a log of wood.

"And so much for your gratitude, Mr. David!" he observed. Again there was a piece of silence. "Well," said he, rising, "I am not fortunate, and we are a couple at cross purposes. Let us

speak of it no more; you will receive notice when, where, and by whom we are to take your precognition. And in the meantime, my misses must be waiting you. They will never forgive me if I detain their cavalier."

Into the hands of these graces I was accordingly offered up, and found them dressed beyond what I had thought possible, and looking fair as a posy.

As we went forth from the doors a small circumstance occurred which came afterwards to look extremely big. I heard a whistle sound loud and brief like a signal, and looking all about, spied for one moment the red head of Neil of the Tom, the son of Duncan. The next moment he was gone again, nor could I see so much as the skirt-tail of Catriona, upon whom I naturally supposed him to be then attending.

My three keepers led me out by Bristo and the Bruntsfield Links; whence a path carried us to Hope Park, a beautiful pleasance, laid with gravel-walks, furnished with seats and summer-sheds, and warded by a keeper.

The way there was a little longsome; the two younger misses affected an air of genteel weariness that damped me cruelly, the eldest considered me with something that at times appeared like mirth; and though I thought I did myself more justice than the day before, it was not without some effort. Upon our reaching the park I was launched on a bevy of eight or ten young gentlemen (some of them cockaded officers, the rest chiefly advocates) who crowded to attend upon these beauties; and though I was

presented to all of them in very good words, it seemed I was by all immediately forgotten. Young folk in a company are like to savage animals: they fall upon or scorn a stranger without civility, or I may say, humanity; and I am sure, if I had been among baboons, they would have shown me quite as much of both. Some of the advocates set up to be wits, and some of the soldiers to be rattles; and I could not tell which of these extremes annoyed me most. All had a manner of handling their swords and coat-skirts, for the which (in mere black envy) I could have kicked them from that park. I daresay, upon their side, they grudged me extremely the fine company in which I had arrived; and altogether I had soon fallen behind, and stepped stiffly in the rear of all that merriment with my own thoughts.

From these I was recalled by one of the officers, Lieutenant Hector Duncansby, a gawky, leering, Highland boy, asking if my name was not "Palfour."

I told him it was, not very kindly, for his manner was scant civil.

"Ha, Palfour," says he, and then, repeating it, "Palfour, Palfour!"

"I am afraid you do not like my name, sir," says I, annoyed with myself to be annoyed with such a rustical fellow.

"No," says he, "but I wass thinking."

"I would not advise you to make a practice of that, sir," says I. "I feel sure you would not find it to agree with you."

"Tit you effer hear where Alan Grigor fand the tangs?" said he.

I asked him what he could possibly mean, and he answered, with a heckling laugh, that he thought I must have found the poker in the same place and swallowed it.

There could be no mistake about this, and my cheek burned.

"Before I went about to put affronts on gentlemen," said I, "I think I would learn the English language first."

He took me by the sleeve with a nod and a wink, and led me quietly outside Hope Park. But no sooner were we beyond the view of the promenaders, than the fashion of his countenance changed. "You tam lowland scoon'rel!" cries he, and hit me a buffet on the jaw with his closed fist.

I paid him as good or better on the return; whereupon he stepped a little back and took off his hat to me decorously.

"Enough plows I think," says he. "I will be the offended shentleman, for who effer heard of such suffeeciency as tell a shentlemans that is the king's officer he cannae speak Cot's English? We have swords at our hurdies, and here is the King's Park at hand. Will ye walk first, or let me show ye the way?"

I returned his bow, told him to go first, and followed him. As he went I heard him grumble to himself about *Cot's English* and the *King's coat*, so that I might have supposed him to be seriously offended. But his manner at the beginning of our interview was there to belie him. It was manifest he had come prepared to fasten a quarrel on me, right or wrong; manifest that I was taken in a fresh contrivance of my enemies; and to me (conscious as I was of my deficiencies) manifest enough that I should be the one to

fall in our encounter.

As we came into that rough rocky desert of the King's Park I was tempted half-a-dozen times to take to my heels and run for it, so loath was I to show my ignorance in fencing, and so much averse to die or even to be wounded. But I considered if their malice went as far as this, it would likely stick at nothing; and that to fall by the sword, however ungracefully, was still an improvement on the gallows. I considered besides that by the unguarded pertness of my words and the quickness of my blow I had put myself quite out of court; and that even if I ran, my adversary would, probably pursue and catch me, which would add disgrace to my misfortune. So that, taking all in all, I continued marching behind him, much as a man follows the hangman, and certainly with no more hope.

We went about the end of the long craigs, and came into the Hunter's Bog. Here, on a piece of fair turf, my adversary drew. There was nobody there to see us but some birds; and no resource for me but to follow his example, and stand on guard with the best face I could display. It seems it was not good enough for Mr. Duncansby, who spied some flaw in my manoeuvres, paused, looked upon me sharply, and came off and on, and menaced me with his blade in the air. As I had seen no such proceedings from Alan, and was besides a good deal affected with the proximity of death, I grew quite bewildered, stood helpless, and could have longed to run away.

"Fat, deil, ails her?" cries the lieutenant.

And suddenly engaging, he twitched the sword out of my grasp and sent it flying far among the rushes.

Twice was this manoeuvre repeated; and the third time when I brought back my humiliated weapon, I found he had returned his own to the scabbard, and stood awaiting me with a face of some anger, and his hands clasped under his skirt.

"Pe tamned if I touch you!" he cried, and asked me bitterly what right I had to stand up before "shentlemans" when I did not know the back of a sword from the front of it.

I answered that was the fault of my upbringing; and would he do me the justice to say I had given him all the satisfaction it was unfortunately in my power to offer, and had stood up like a man?

"And that is the truth," said he. "I am fery prave myself, and pold as a lions. But to stand up there-and you ken naething of fence! – the way that you did, I declare it was peyond me. And I am sorry for the plow; though I declare I pelief your own was the elder brother, and my held still sings with it. And I declare if I had kent what way it wass, I would not put a hand to such a piece of pusiness."

"That is handsomely said," I replied, "and I am sure you will not stand up a second time to be the actor for my private enemies."

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.