

"We can scarcely agree by argument," said Murray. "The men yonder who sent me are impatient."

"Faith, and 'tis an itch I have often been troubled with," was the bland reply. "But during these latter months in this dear land of my fathers', I have been much employed in learning wisdom. There is nothing in this world better for a man than to know when he is content. Let well enough alone, say I. Now, as I have already told you, I find myself marvellously well pleased with this Castle of Blair. Another thing, my men are at their rest and their victuals. They have supped but sparely of late. Would you have them up and off before they had well tasted the Athole milk and honey? You see how I am getting rid of impatience. Believe me, Murray, 'tis a disease of youth and inexperience."

"You trifle with me, sir," said Murray, the quick flame mantling his cheek. "Do I understand that you refuse to surrender this Castle which you have most unjustly seized?"

"How the colt gallops!" observed Colkitto, whereat some of his officers laughed, making Murray's cheek flame the brighter. "I meant but to say," Colkitto pursued lightly, "that things being as they are, I am mighty well content with my present condition. I hope Struan, Stewart of Strathtay, Murray the younger of Tullibardine," here he made a mocking bow, "and the other stout and valiant knights and cavaliers assembled in Athole will not push me too sorely. I would be loath to shed blood."