

"So? And yet he was a man generally full of Highland spirit."

Count Victor smiled.

"It is perhaps his only weakness that nowadays he carries it with less dignity than he used to do. A good deal too much of the Highland spirit, M. le Baron, wears hoops, and comes into France in Leith frigates."

"Ay, man!" said the Baron, heedless of the irony, "and Hugh wears the tartan?"

"Only in the waistcoat," repeated Count Victor, complacently looking at his own scallops.

"Even that!" said the Baron, with the odd wistfulness in his voice. And then he added hurriedly, "Not that the tartan's anything wonderful. It cost the people of this country a bonny penny one way or another. There's nothing honest men will take to more readily than the breeks, say I—the douce, honest breeks——"

"Unless it be the petticoats," murmured the Count, smiling, and his fingers went to the pointing of his moustache.

"Nothing like the breeks; the philabeg was aye telling your parentage in every line, so that you could not go over the moor to Lennox there but any drover by the roadside kent you for a small clan or a family of caterans. Some people will be grumbling that the old dress should be proscribed, but what does it matter?"

"The tartan is forbidden?" guessed Count Victor, somewhat puzzled.

Doom flushed; a curious gleam came into his eyes; he turned to fumble noisily with the glasses as he replaced them in the cupboard.

"I thought that was widely enough known," said he. "Put down by the law, and perhaps a good business too. *Diaoul!*" He came back to the table with this muttered objurgation, sat and stared into the grey film of the peat-fire. "There was a