

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE COBBLER'S SONG.

HE dashed home, spattering through the dubs, for now the rain was falling; found his daughter absent; opened a press, and got a pair of shoes, his own, much worn. These were each thrust in a deep skirt-pocket of his coat, and away he went to the house of a cobbler near the jail.

"Here's a pair of shoes," he said; "put thou fresh heels on them, just man, that I can walk in grandeur. I want them for Drimdorran's funeral."

The cobbler was an old wee man with grizzled whiskers, and lips for ever puckered up for whistling. He was a bard, made ditties, mostly scurrilous, which were sung in taverns. As he sat on a stool and hammered leather on a lap-stone, Ninian set him chanting at a song. It was about a tenant in the glen, and a horse he had neither bred nor bought, yet brought in a cunning way to market; the poet clearly hinted theft.

"Capital!" cried Ninian. "A splendid song! Many a time, I'm sure, it put a fury on Mackellar. It's a long time now since I heard it last, on a Hogmanay. It came into my head to-day, and I just was wondering to myself did he steal the horse in truth, or was it poetry."

"I'll warrant thee he stole him!" said the bard. "Or else he were a warlock brute got from the waters."

"When was this?" asked Ninian sharply.

"It was twelve—ay, fourteen years ago," said the cobbler. "Son of the Worst! he got a pair of shoes