

While he loosened his mails with one hand, with the other he directed at the thicket one of the pistols that seemed of such wholesome influence. Then he slung the bags upon his shoulder and encouraged the animal to get upon its legs, but vainly, for the shot was fatal.

"Ah!" said he regretfully, "I must sacrifice my bridge and my good comrade. This is an affair!"

Twice—three times, he placed the pistol at the horse's head and as often withdrew it, reluctant, a man, as all who knew him wondered at, gentle to womanliness with a brute, though in a cause against men the most bitter and sometimes cruel of opponents.

A rustle in the brake at last compelled him. "*Allons!*" said he impatiently with himself, "I do no more than I should have done with myself in the like case," and he pulled the trigger.

Then having deliberately charged the weapon anew, he moved off in the direction he had been taking when the attack was made.

It was still, he knew, some distance to the castle. Half an hour before his rencontre with those broken gentry, now stealing in his rear with the cunning and the bloodthirstiness of their once native wolves (and always, remember, with the possibility of the blunderbuss for aught that he could tell), he had, for the twentieth time since he left the port of Dysart, taken out the rude itinerary, written in ludicrous Scoto-English by Hugh Bethune, one time secretary to the Lord Marischal in exile, and read:—

... and so on to the Water of Leven (the brewster-wife at the howff near Loch Lomond mouth keeps a good glass of *aqua*), then by Luss (with an eye on the Gregarach), thereafter a bittock to Glencroe and down upon the House of Ardkinglas, a Hanoverian rat whom 'ware. Round the loch head and three miles further the Castle o' the Baron. Give him my devoirs and hopes to challenge him to a Bowl when Yon comes off which God kens there seems no hurry.