

what manner of literature prevailed in these wilds. And the book gave him great cheer, for it was an old French folio of arms, 'Les Arts de L'homme d'Epée; ou, Le Dictionnaire du Gentilhomme,' by one Sieur de Guille. Doom Castle was a curious place, but apparently Hugh Bethune was in the right when he described its master as "ane o' the auld gentry, wi' a tattie and herrin' to his dejeune, but a scholar's book open against the ale-jug." A poor Baron (of a vastly different state from the Baron of France), English spoken too, with not much of the tang of the heather in his utterance though droll of his idiom, hospitable (to judge from the proffered glass still being fumbled for in the cupboard), a man who had been in France on the right side, a reader of the *beau langage*, and a student of the lore of *arme blanche*—come, here was luck!

And the man himself? He brought forward his spirits in a bottle of quaint Duich cut, with hollow pillars at each of its four corners, and two glasses extravagantly tall of stem, and he filled out the drams upon the table, removing with some embarrassment before he did so the book of arms. It surprised Count Victor that he should not be in the native tartan of the Scots Highlander. Instead he wore a demure coat and breeches of some dark fabric, and a wig conferred on him all the more of the look of a lowland merchant than of a chief of clan. He was a man at least twenty years the senior of his visitor—a handsome man of his kind, dark, deliberate of his movements, bred in the courtesies, but seemingly, to the acuter intuitions of Montaiglon, possessed of one unpardonable weakness in a gentleman—a shame of his obvious penury.

"I have permitted myself, M. le Baron, to interrupt you on the counsel of a common friend," said Count Victor, anxious to put an end to a situation somewhat droll.

"After the goblet, after the goblet," said Lamond softly, himself but sipping at the rim of his glass.