

but without taking his eyes from the peats, and made a curious suggestion.

"You would not take it to be me, would you?" he asked.

Count Victor laughed, with a gesture of his hands that made denial all unnecessary.

"Oh! but you do not know," went on the Baron.

"Some months of caballing with our friends—even our Hielan' friends—in the France, left me with an unwholesome heart that would almost doubt my father in his grave. You mentioned the name Drimdarroch—is it not the odd thing that you should speak it to the only man in the shire that ever had the right to use it? Do you see this?" and rising he stepped to a recess in the wall, only half curtained, so that its contents overflowed into the chamber, and by a jerk of the hand revealed a strange accumulation of dusty documents in paper and in parchment. He looked at them with an aspect of disgust, and stirred them with a contemptuous toe as if he meddled with the litter of a sty.

"That's Drimdarroch!" said he, intensely bitter; "that's Drimdarroch, and Duntorvil, that's the Isles, the bonny Isles of Lochow; that's damn like to be Doom too! That and this ruckle of stones we sit in are all that's left of what was my father's and my grandfather's and their forebears, back till the dark of time. And how is it, ye may ask? Let us pre-termit the question till another occasion; anyway here's Drimdarroch wi' the lave, at any rate the weight of it in processes, records, caveats, multiple-poidings, actions of suspension and declarator, interrim decrees, fugie warrants, compts and reckonings—God! I have the cackle of the law in my head like a ballant, and what's the wonder at that wi' all my practice?"

He stooped and picked up from the confused heap of legal scrivenings by finger-tips that seemed to fear infection a parchment fouled with its passage through the courts and law offices. "You're in luck indecd,"