

to intimate that the word of a Macdonald was by no means a royal decree.

"Yes," pursued Colkitto, drawing himself up and looking hard at the Tutor. "His Majesty's command and Montrose's to call Athole to arms. And, gentlemen, let me remind you that I have made great haste to reach you, bidding for neither bite nor sup. The king's enemies are out and busy."

"Did you fall in with any of them?" asked the Tutor.

"A pretty question, as I live," laughed Colkitto loudly. "Did I fall in with any of them? Did Eve of blessed memory fall in with Satan? I tell you it is God's truth I have been most scurvily used by the knaves. 'Tis a hungry, frowsy, itchy clan, the Campbell, but I warrant they were well scratched ere we parted. Not an ill place for victuals, that land of Lorn, if a man have acquired the art of helping himself; but the folk—as true as you are on two legs, Struan—they are savages and cut-throats. What must our friend of the squint do but have my poor ships burnt behind me. Well, his back quarters were well slashed for that. Again, in Glen Spey, where I fain would have rested my men, the Grants with the scabby Frasers and Forbeses were for swallowing us alive. So that I had no peace, but must jouk and double like a hunted hare."

"Methought you would have charged like a lion," said young Murray, his nose in the air.

"And been speared like a wild boar," returned Colkitto. "That were indeed to do the king a service."