

"Have a care then!" ordered the Laird. "I'll have no playing with poisons, mind."

Robin turned sourly.

"With regard to playing," he said, "it has been shown to me that the folk in the village are thinking they will have a fine playing when you are not still among them."

"Indeed!" said the Laird, lost in thought.

"They are saying you are wearing away," the old man continued, "and I was not denying it; and that the day of your death will be a day of Jubilee in Hepburn."

The Laird came back from thought.

"They do not cherish me in Hepburn then?" he asked.

"They'd vomit ye if they could," said Robin.

"Nor you?" asked the Laird.

"Nor me!" Robin admitted with sleek complacency. "I have put the terror on them fine."

"Now tell me," said the Laird, "think you there is any one of them would dare to do a hurt to Danny for love of me," said the Laird, "or of you."

"If they'd dare do what they would do," Robin replied, "nor you, nor me, nor Danny here, would be long in this flesh I'se uphold."

"They dare not," said the Laird. "I know them, as my fathers knew their fathers."

"I kenna," said Robin, "there's many would dare do to-day what not a buckie of them a' would have dared dream a year or two since."

"Any above all?" asked the Laird.

"Certainly so," said Robin; "Simon Ogg above a'."

"Simon Ogg!" said the Laird. "When is the lad coming to see me?"

"He is not coming," said Robin.

"Why not?" sharply.

"He says if your Honour would murder him, you must go to him, he winna come to you."

"Murder him?" said the Laird harshly; "what should he think I want to murder him for?"