

behind him had taken a fancy to his horse, that they were broken men (as the phrase of the country put it), and that when he had passed them at the cataract—a haughty, well-set-up *duine uasail* all alone with a fortune of silk and silver lace on his apparel and the fob of a watch dangling at his groin most temptingly—they had promptly put a valuation upon himself and his possessions, and decided that the same were sent by Providence for their enrichment.

Ten of them ran after him clamouring loudly to give the impression of larger numbers; he heard them with relief when oppressed by the inhuman solemnity of the scenery that was too deep in its swoon to give back even an echo to the breaker on the shore, and he drew up his horse, turned his head a little and listened, flushing with annoyance when the rude calls of his pursuers became, even in their unknown jargon, too plainly peremptory and meant for him.

"Dogs!" said he, "I wish I had a chance to open school here and teach manners," and without more deliberation he set his horse to an amble, designed to betray neither complacency nor a poltroon's terrors.

"*Stad! stad!*" cried a voice closer than any of the rest behind him; he knew what was ordered by its accent, but no Montaignon stopped to an insolent summons. He put the short rowels to the flanks of the sturdy lowland pony he bestrode, and conceded not so little as a look behind.

There was the explosion of a bell-mouthed musket, and something smote the horse and spattered behind the rider's left boot. The beast swerved, gave a scream of pain, fell clumsily on its side. With an effort, Count Victor saved himself from the falling body and clutched his pistols. For a moment he stood bewildered at the head of the suffering animal. The pursuing shouts had ceased. Behind him, short hazel-trees clustering thick with nuts, reddening bramble, and rusty bracken, tangled together in a