

airmy mysel'. It's the only employ for a man o' spunk, and there's spunk in Mungo Boyd, mind I'm tellin' ye!"

"It is the most obvious thing in the world, good Mungo," said Montaiglon, smiling. "You eviscerate fish with the gusto of a gladiator."

And then an odd thing happened to relieve Mungo's embarrassment and end incontinent his garrulity. Floating on the air round the bulge of the turret came a strain of song in a woman's voice, not powerful but rich and sweet, young in its accent, the words inaudible but the air startling to Count Victor, who heard no more than half a bar before he had realised that it was the unfinished melody of the nocturnal flageolet. Before he could comment upon so unexpected and surprising a phenomenon, Mungo had dropped his gutting-knife, and made with suspicious rapidity for the entrance of the castle, without a word of explanation or leave-taking.

"I become decidedly interested in Annapla," said Montaiglon to himself, witnessing this odd retreat, "and my host gives me no opportunity of paying my homages. Malediction! It cannot be a wife; Bethune said nothing of a wife, and then M. le Baron himself spoke of himself as a widower. A domestic, doubtless; that will more naturally account for the ancient fishmonger's fleet retirement. He goes to chide the erring abigail. Or—or—or the cunning wretch!" continued Montaiglon with new meaning in his eyes, "he is perhaps the essential lover. Let the Baron at breakfast elucidate the mystery."

But the Baron at breakfast said never a word of the domestic economy of his fortalice. As they sat over a frugal meal of oat porridge, the poached fish, and a smoky high-flavoured mutton ham whose history the Count was happy not to know, his host's conversation was either upon Paris, where he had spent some months of sad expatriation, yawning at its gaiety (it seemed) and longing for the woods of