

faith, Lord Ogilvie and the gentlemen of the shires would relish that morsel of effrontery. I would to heaven we had three hundred stout fellows to guard yonder pass. It were well, methinks, to make the musket discourse to this fellow Colkitto, or he and his Irishry disport themselves in the pleasantries of Blair Castle. But hark!" he cried with a start. "It is already too late. Is not yon the sound of his chanter on the wind?"

"It is the Macdonald quick-step," replied an Athole piper, giving ear.

"And what is to be the Athole welcome?" demanded Murray. "Strike up, strike up. If we cannot give them dirks let them have music."

So when Alastair Macdonald with his company of Badenoch men arrived (having outmarched the weary, footsore Irish) he found the Athole pipers blowing as for a chief's wedding festival.

"This is handsome," says he, when salutations were exchanged, cordially enough on his side, coldly and grimly on the other. "I always heard the Athole pipers were pretty fellows."

"Why, you see it is not every day we have the honour of receiving Alastair Macdonald," returned the Tutor of Struan drily.

"And bearing the king's commission," said Colkitto, cocking his head proudly. Vanity was ever his fault, as of his whole clan, though none will deny it stood him well when blood had to be spilt.

"And that same is a great matter," said Struan, pulling his bonnet tighter over his brows as though