

of all, weapons were mostly to forge. For Argyle had made a clean sweep of all that his hungry clan could lift.

Yet for all that Colkitto's presumption was not to be tolerated. The chiefs of Athole and Strathay would see an upstart Macdonald in cinders before demeaning themselves to serve under him. Young Will Murray of Tullibardine, who had a sword to his hand long before he got a beard to his face, was for the decisive measure of chopping off the aggressor's head.

"We consider and temporise too much," he cried passionately. "Oh, for the right of him we are waiting for! He was to be with us before the corn was in the ear, and now it is yellow for the sickle."

"The Macdonald speaks of a letter from the Marquis," said a returned messenger.

"Let him exhibit it then," retorted Murray hotly. "Let him send it to us. It will serve him better than all the impudent speeches and proclamations he could make between this and doomsday."

"I made bold to tell him as much," responded the messenger, a cadet of the great house of Robertson.

"And what said he?" asked his chief, the Tutor of Struan.

"His answer was that inasmuch as the Marquis's message was for him alone he would not have his honour smirched by having his word doubted."

"His word!" repeated Murray scornfully. "When did the word of a Macdonald of the Isles become enough for Athole, Struan, and Strathay, to say nothing of Mearn and Angus? By my