

on the farther bank. The river brawled, but yet above its brawling sounded something to the north that had an echoing beat as if of metal.

As it came sounding closer, Ninian moved up beside the road, and stooped to get between him and the stars the figure of a man who trotted on a horse.

"*Sin thu*, Alan, it's thyself!" he thought, and cried the Bailie's name.

"Is't you that's there, Ninian?" said the rider, pulling up.

"That same! I put a welcome on ye. Man of my heart, but ye ride heavy! I heard ye a mile away."

Alan-Iain-Alain Og got off the horse and painfully stretched his legs; he rode with a short Kintyre stirrup.

His first words were of Æneas and Janet; when he heard that they were home he was much relieved. His own experience had no stirring incident; in that respect he found his journey very different from Ninian's. On the road, with the reins looped in his hands, he gave a brief account of what befell.

He had been from home on the forenoon when the news came from Loch Laggan, and Janet had three hours' start of him, with no clear notion left behind of how she meant to go. At the head of Loch Awe there was no one who had seen her pass, and he was in a quandary, but he reasoned that her goal would be Loch Laggan, and he rode up through Glen Orchy to the inn, where he stayed the night. She had not passed the inn; it was clear now she had gone down through Glen Dochart, but he kept on his way to the Black Mount, eastward by the Cruach to Loch Laidon, whence he turned to reach Loch Treig and up the Spean to Badenoch.

"How long did ye take to get to Loch Laggan?" Ninian asked.

"Three mortal days!" said the Bailie, groaning. "And my skin's not mended yet."

"Janet beat ye! She took only four to Inverness."

He had with him in wallets the key to every pass in