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JAMES GRANT

THE HIGHLANDERS OF GLEN ORA

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER I.

THE FOSTER-BROTHERS.

Table of Contents

It was after sunset in the month of April three years ago.

The hills of the Western Highlands were still tipped with a golden gleam, but the deep and savage hollows of Glen Ora were gloomy and full of dark shadows. Still crowned with the snow of last winter, above it towered Ben Ora, beneath whose mighty scalp the giant peaks of the north and west were dwindled down to little hills; for among those stupendous mountains the eye becomes so accustomed to their colossal proportions, that all just ideas of size and distance are lost. At its base spread one of those vast tracts of brown or purple heath so common in the Scottish Highlands, overspread by a wilderness of stones, and torn by ghastly ravines from which the mist of downward torrents rose. The sides of these were tufted by those black whin bushes, the introduction of which tradition ascribes to the hunting Stuarts, as a cover for their game.

On the western shoulder of Ben Ora, a ridge of riven and naked rocks, resembling the skeleton of a mountain range, stood a herd of deer, with all their proud antlers visible against the clear bright flush of the sunset sky.

Two men were observing them from the rugged bank of one of the watercourses, in which they were half hidden. One carried a fishing-rod, and the other a gun.

He with the rod was a tall, stout, and well-made lad of some twenty years, with dark-blue eyes, curly brown hair, and a sunburnt visage; he wore a grey shooting-jacket and kilt, a sporran, of badger-skin, and a heather-coloured bonnet. His companion was a few years older, larger in form, brawny, thickset, and strong as a Highland bull, and his knees, where shown by his tattered kilt and well-worn hose, of no colour known in nature, were almost as hairy as those of the same animal. He wore the usual coarse blue jacket and bonnet of a Highland peasant.

His hair, beard, and whiskers, which grew all matted in a curly mass, were black, almost to that deep tint which seems blue when touched by the light; his eyes were dark, restless, keen, and sparkling; his nose somewhat short and saucy, but his face, which was browned to the hue of mahogany by exposure to the weather, was thoughtful, stern, anxious, and at times even haggard in expression. Save his gun and skene-dhu, he had no weapon, though his aspect and bearing were rough and wild as those of any Celtic bandit we have read of in romance; but then his figure was a model of manly beauty, symmetry, and grace.

The first personage with the red was Allan Mac Innon, MYSELF, and the dark and handsome man was my foster-brother—-my *co-dhalta*—Black Mac Ian—usually named by us Callum Dhu, and on this eventful evening we were observing a party of five English tourists or visitors, who were somewhat rashly (as they were without a guide) urging their shaggy shelties up the side of Ben Ora, to obtain a view of the scenery by moonlight.

This party consisted of two fair and laughing English girls, wearing broad brown straw hats; and three gentlemen clad in those peculiar coats and tartan caps, without which no Sassenach deems himself eligible to pass the Highland frontier.

'Callum,' said I, 'shall I net warn them to beware?'

'It would ill become your father's son to run after *their* tails, like a keeper or gilly,' said he, grasping my arm angrily, as we spoke in Gaelic, to give the original of which would fidget my friend the printer.

'Callum, they are not more than half-a-mile off now.'

'Oh, what a pity it is, that the half-mile was not a thousand, ay, or ten thousand! The fires that may be extinguished this summer on many a hearth in Glen Ora would burn all the brighter perhaps in winter.'

'Not in the least, Callum; for if we had not one truculent tyrant over us,' said I, 'we would be certain to have another.'

'Aich ay; for the Mac Innons of Glen Ora are doomed men! and—'

'See, see,' I exclaimed, 'they have almost reached the Craig-na-tuirc, and if they attempt to descend after nightfall, something terrible will happen.'

'Let it happen: if it is their fate, can we avert it?' said Callum, with a dark scowl in his eyes which sparkled in the last flush of the west; 'what matter is it to you, Allan Mac Innon? Has not this man—this Horace Everingham, Baronet, and so forth, who bought the fair patrimony your father's brother wasted in all manner of riotous living—told you coldly, when begging a six months' mercy for your sick mother, and for the two-and-thirty poor families in the glen,

that he intrusted all such petty affairs to his factor, (that mangy Lowland cur, Ephraim Snaggs, with his Bible phrases and pious quotations,) and what said *he*? That the new proprietor had resolved to turn the glen into a deer forest—-a hunting field—and that whether the rents were forthcoming or not, the people must go! That Canada was a fine place for such as they, and that hampers of foreign game would soon replace them. The curse of heaven be on his foreign game, say I! When the Queen wants men to recruit the ranks of the Black Watch, of the Gordon Highlanders, and the Ross-shire Buffs, will she borrow the contents of the Lowlander's hamper? Let these moonlight visitors go over the rocks if they will—let Loch Ora receive their bodies and the devil their souls, for what matters it to you, Mac Innon, or to me?'

'True, true,' said I, bitterly, 'but there are two ladies with them—Laura, the daughter of Sir Horace, and her friend.'

'They, at least, are kind to the poor people, and gave many a pound to the women of Glentuirc, when they were expatriated last year; yet evil comes over every stranger who crosses Ben Ora.'

'A spirit is said to haunt it,' said I.

'Would to heaven a spirit haunted the glen, and kept out all but those whose right comes not from paper or from parchment—but from the hand of God!'

'But the women, Callum?'

'*Co-dhalta*, be not a soft-hearted fool,' was the pettish response; 'who cared for *our* women, when the sheriff, Mac Fee, with his police and soldiers, came here and tore down the huts, and fired through the thatch to force the people

out? Who cared for old bedridden Aileen Mac Donuil, whose four sons died with eight hundred of our Cameronians in India, and who was shot through the body, and died miserably on the wet hill side three days after? And so, forth were they all driven to the shore by the baton and bayonet—the old and the young, the strong man and the infant, the aged, the frail, and the women almost in labour—to be crammed on board the great ship, the *Duchess*, and taken to America, like slaves from Africa, and why? Because the land that gave corn and potatoes to the people was wanted to fatten the grouse and red deer, and thus were they driven forth from their fathers' holdings, their fathers' homes and graves; so Allan, believe me, your sympathy for the strangers who are now on the hill, is all moonshine in the water. Ha! ha! something always happens to those who go up Ben Ora after nightfall. You remember the story of Alaster Grant, the Captain Dhu, or Black Alexander from Urquhart? He was a frightfully immoral character, savage and fierce, and was said to have done dreadful things in the Indian wars, fighting, plundering, and sparing neither man, woman, nor child. Well, this dissolute soldier was shooting with some of his wild companions from Fort William, about a year after Waterloo. They spent a night on Ben Ora, and all that night the lightning played about its scalp. Next morning a shepherd—old Alisdair Mac Gouran—found their hut torn to pieces; the whole party, to all appearance, strangled, their gun-barrels twisted like corkscrews, and the Black Captain's body torn limb from limb, and strewed all around; but whether by a thunderbolt or the devil, no man knew, though many averred it must have been the latter. Six

months ago, I watched an Englishman or a Lowlander, (which, I neither know nor care,) go up the Craig-na-tuirc, and he never more came down; but three months after, his bones, or little more, were found at the mouth of the Uisc Dhu, with his travelling knapsack and sketch-book close by; for six long miles the Lammas floods had swept them from the spot where he must have perished. Two others went up in October, and in ascending the mountain were singing merrily; but the snow came down that night, and hid the path; the cold was bitter, and the deer were driven down to the clachan in the glen. Next day we found the strangers stiff enough, and piled a cairn to mark the spot. I warned another traveller, a Scotsman too, from the Braes of Angus, against ascending the Ben alone! He, too, went up laughing, and came down no more. A week or two after I was standing on the brow of the Craig-na-tuirc, and saw a gathering of the ravens in the corrie below. I heard their exulting croak, and the flap of their dusky wings; and there, in the moss of the wet ravine, we found the traveller's body wedged up to the neck, and his bare skull divested of eyes, nose, and hair, picked white and clean by these birds of evil omen. Then we all know the story of the keeper that was gored by the white stag, on the night your father died.'

'All this I know well enough,' said I, 'and hence my anxiety for the two ladies, who are now in the dusk, ascending that dangerous precipice.'

'Who pities our women—yet they are starving?'

'God pities them.'

'He alone!' responded Callum, lifting his tattered bonnet at the name; 'yet my poor mother died in my arms of sheer

hunger, and Snaggs, the factor, mocked me at her funeral, because I had a piper who played the march of Gil Chriosd before her coffin; but I heard him with scorn, for I knew that my mother—she who nursed you, Allan Mac Innon, had now that inheritance of which not even her Grace of Sutherland, or the great Lord of Breadalbane, can deprive the poor Highlander—a grave on the mountain side, and a home among the angels in heaven.'

The words of my foster-brother raised a momentary glow of indignation in my breast; and turning away from the mountain, we began to descend into the glen in the twilight, and I strove to think no more about the strangers or their fate, but in vain, for Laura Everingham, with all her pretty winning ways, was still before me, and her voice was in my ear.

We had met repeatedly in our mutual rides, rambles, and wanderings, and the impression she made upon me, when acting as her guide to the old ruined chapels, towers, and burial-places, the high cascades, and deep corries of the Ora, and other solemn scenes of nature, with which our district abounded, was lasting, pure, and deep. I was learning to love her, more dearly than I dared to tell, for poverty—crushing, grinding poverty—like a mountain weighed upon my heart and tongue; yet Laura knew my secret—at least I hoped so; pure devotion and true tenderness cannot remain long concealed; a woman soon discovers them by a mysterious intuition, and as Laura (knowing this) neither repulsed nor shunned me, was I not justified in believing myself not altogether indifferent to her?

Time will tell. 'Happy age,' says some Italian writer, 'when a look, the rustle of a garment—a flower—a mere nothing, suffice to make the youthful heart overflow with torrents of joy!'

The severity of Sir Horace, and the pride, petulance, and hostility of my mother, of whom more in good time, had partly estranged us of late; but Laura had repeatedly said,

'If I knew your mother, Allan, I am sure she would learn to love me.'

'I know not, Miss Everingham, how any one could help loving you!' was my reply, and I trembled at my own temerity.

One word more for Callum Dhu, and he and my reader must be acquainted for life.

His grandfather was that noble and heroic Mac Ian, who, after the defeat of Prince Charles, watched over him with matchless fidelity for weeks, concealing him in the mountains at the risk of his life, and robbing for his support while his own children were starving, and though he knew that 30,000*l.* were set upon the head of the royal fugitive. This poor man was afterwards, when in extreme old age, hanged at Inverness, for 'lifting' a sheep; but, though impelled by hunger to borrow subsistence from the folds of the wealthy, he had scrupulously avoided the possessions of the poor; and before death, took off his bonnet, to 'thank the blessed God that he had never betrayed his trust, never injured the poor, nor refused to share his crust with the stranger, the needy, or the fatherless.'

This poor sheepstealer died like a Christian and a hero, and had in youth been one of those Highland warriors whose

more than Spartan faith and truth a late pitiful historian has dared to stigmatize as mere ignorance of the value of gold. Under the same circumstances, we presume, this Scottish writer would have known to a penny the value set upon the head of his fugitive guest.

With his blood and spirit, Callum Dhu had inherited many of the wild ideas and primitive Celtic virtues of his ancestor, as the reader will see when they become better acquainted.

CHAPTER II.

THE FEUDAL LORDS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Table of Contents

Turning our steps homeward, after a day of wandering and fishing, we traversed the Braes of Glen Ora, a wild and desolate scene, such as Horatio Mac Culloch would love to paint, tufted by broom and whin; torn by savage watercourses, all yellow marl and gravel, swept by the foaming torrent, or jagged by ghastly rocks, silence on every hand, and a deep shadow over all, save where a golden gleam of light that shot between the black and distant peaks of the west, tipped the points of the purple heather with fire, and edged the scattered rocks with the last glow of the sun that had set.

Here and there, throughout this desolate tract, on which the shadows of night were descending, were blacker spots, that marked where, in the preceding year, the houses of nearly fifty crofters had been levelled or burned. No tongue was required to tell us the terrible story of legal wrong, and worse than feudal tyranny inflicted on the unresisting poor. The blackened rafters were lying on every hand among the long grass, and thrown far asunder; the humble walls were half levelled and overgrown by weeds, like the hearths around which generations had sat, and told or sung of the past memories of the Gael and the kindly chiefs of other times, in the long nights of winter, when Ben Ora was

mantled by snow, and the frozen cascade hung over the rocks, white as the beard of Ossian. Here a currant-bush, or there an apple-tree, still marked amid the weeds and heather where the garden of the peasant had been. Elsewhere the glen was yet dotted by little patches of corn and potatoes, all growing wild; but where were those who had sown and planted them?

Driven from their native land to make way for sheep, or grouse, or deer, and packed in ships, like slaves for the Cuban market, the old people of the glen, the women and children, were pining on the banks of the Susquehanna; while the young and able were forced by starvation, or lured by false promises, into the ranks of the Sutherland Highlanders, and were now away to fight the Russians in the East. Thus it is that the game-laws, centralization, wilful neglect, and maladministration, reduce the people of the glens to misery, starvation, and inability to pay the exorbitant rents demanded for their little farms; then their dwellings are demolished, and themselves expelled, that one vast game preserve may be made of the land which has given to the British service nearly ninety of its finest battalions of infantry.

"Clanchattan is broken, the Seaforth bends low,
The sun of Clan Ronald is sinking in labour,
Glencoe and Clan Donoquhy, what are they now?
And where is bold Keppoch, the Lord of Lochaber?
All gone with the House they supported, laid low!
While the Dogs of the South their bold life-blood were lapping,

Trod down by a fierce and a merciless foe;
The brave are all gone, with the Stuarts of Appin!"

'My God!' exclaimed Callum, with deep emotion, as he looked around him, with a fierce and saddened eye, 'who now could think this place had given three hundred swordsmen to Glenfinnon?'

'And sent two hundred with my father to Egypt?' added I.

'Better had he and they stayed at home; for the Mac Innons might yet have brooked the land their fathers sprang from.'

Callum Dhu felt, as he spoke, like a true Celt—believing that our ancestors sprang from the soil; *i.e.* were the old and original race, without predecessors.

My father, the youngest of the two sons of Alaster Mac Innon, of Glen Ora, was an officer of the 42nd Highlanders, who served under Abercromby in Egypt and Wellington in Spain. His elder brother belonged, unfortunately, to the Scots Fusilier Guards, and amid the dissipation of a London life, 'in rivalling the follies of his equals in birth and superiors in fortune,' soon wasted his small but ancient patrimony, which, though it could once bring 600 swordsmen to the king's host, in more modern times did not produce more than 600*l.* yearly rent.

Glen Ora was not entailed, thus its broad acres of heather and whinstone-rock, mountain and torrent, slipped from under the hands of my gay uncle like a moving panorama; he died early, and the estate passed away to strangers. The old tower was demolished, and a hunting-seat built on its site, by a noble duke, whose family had

enriched their pockets, if not their blood, by intermarriage with the tribe of Levi. Then began the war of extermination and expatriation in the north; and while the authoress of "Uncle Tom" was feasted and slavery reviled in the coteries of the Duchess in London, fire, sword, and eviction were enforced by Mr. Snaggs, her factor, in Glen Ora. Thus had things continued until the preceding year, when the estate was purchased by Sir Horace Everingham, of Elton Hall, Yorkshire.

My father had died on service with his regiment in Jamaica, when the yellow flag waved on Up-park Camp, and the Highland bonnets lay as thick in the yard of the pest-stricken barracks as ever they have been on the battle-field; and my mother, a Stuart, of Appin, brought me home to Glen Ora, where, with the pension of a captain's widow, she endeavoured to eke out a subsistence among our own people, and occupied as a farm, at a small rental, the thatched mansion, which in better times was the jointure-house of our family.

But a ukase had gone forth! The whole country was doomed to become a deer-forest, desolate and wild as when the first Fergus and his bare-kneed Scots landed on its shores, which perhaps no foot had trod since the waters of the Flood had left them.

The men of Glentuirc, a sept of our race, had already been swept away, and now those of Glen Ora were to follow.

As a necessary preliminary the rents had been doubled and trebled, until we were incapable of satisfying the rapacity of this alien lord, whose feudal charters gave him a more than imperial power over us. A blight had fallen on our

little corn-patches; several of our sheep had been smothered in the snow, and other troubles and difficulties fell thick and fast upon us. In vain Ephraim Snaggs, the factor, was prayed for mercy; but to seek it from that astute writer to the signet and grim elder of the kirk, was 'to take a bone from a tiger.'

The olden times were gone! For ages unnumbered the Highland landlord deemed that wealth consisted in the number of families, and troops of chubby children who lived upon his lands; farms were divided and subdivided in the fertile glens, until 'every rood of land maintained its man;' and on every lot and rood was a tenant—a hardy soldier, a tiller of the soil, and the father of a sturdy and a faithful race. The laird valued his property not by the rent-roll, but by the number of brave and leal-hearted swordsmen whose homes were made thereon. This was the patriarchal system, old as the world before the Flood; for feudality, with its barbarism, its imaginary rights and slavish tenures, its monkish parchments and legal villany, was unknown in the Highlands until a comparatively recent period; and then, noble was the struggle made against it by the Wallace of the Celtic tribes, John of Moidart, who expelled and slew his nephew Ronald Galda, for accepting from James V. a feudal charter of the lands which belonged to the tribe of which he, Ronald, was the chief. In this spirit, the Highland peasant has a hereditary right to his hut—a right derived from God—but kings have given our feudal lords, even in the nineteenth century, a power over the land on which the hut is built; and at their behest whole villages are demolished, and the people swept away with a heartless barbarity

sufficient to call down the lasting vengeance of heaven on the ignoble dukes and canting marquises of the northern and western Highlands!

But to resume:—

After traversing this Serbonian waste for a mile or two, we reached a little cot built under the brow of a rock; large blocks of whinstone, with a few courses of turf above them, bedded in clay, formed the walls; the roof, which was composed of divot, fern, and straw, all firmly tied by ropes of heather, was covered by moss of the richest emerald green. It was a humble dwelling, with a little window of one pane, on each side of a rude door composed of three planks nailed on bars; yet Callum Dhu, who had lived here alone since his mother's death, never closed it at meal-time, without coming forth to the road, in the hospitable old Celtic spirit, to see if a stranger or wayfarer were in sight.

Here we parted, as I resisted all his kind invitations to enter, though the poor fellow had but little to offer me; nor would I permit him to escort me home, as he was weary after a long day of wandering. Callum Mac Ian, the descendant of our hereditary henchman, now supported himself by killing foxes, weasels, and wild cats; for which, as these vermin were very destructive, (especially the former among the sheep,) he received a small sum from each cot-farmer in Glen Ora. This contribution, with a little patch of potatoes, cultivated by himself, enabled him to live; but as Callum occasionally took a shot at other quadrupeds which were not considered vermin, he was continually in scrapes and broils with the keepers of the duke, the marquis, the laird, and other adjoining potentates, whose ancestors, by

force or fraud, had partitioned the land of the Mac Innons, as the powers of Europe did Poland.

'My love to dear Minnie,' said he, touching his bonnet in the dark, as I left him; 'I would she were here with me, for the cottage is dreary since my poor mother went to the place of sleep on the hill; but *achial*, Mac Innon! this is not a time in Glen Ora for marrying or giving in marriage.'

Minnie was my mother's maid, and the object of my foster-brother's boyish attachment. They had long loved each other, and had solemnly plighted their troth by joining hands through the hole of the Clach-na-Greiné; but Snaggs was their evil genius; for with the daily dread of eviction and proscription hanging over him, how could Callum pay the illegally-levied marriage-tax of forty shillings, or bring a wife under the caber of his hut, or ask leave to add one foot in breadth to his little patch of potatoes and kail?

In a few minutes after, I stood at my mother's door.

CHAPTER III.

MR. EPHRAIM SNAGGS.

Table of Contents

Our residence, the old jointure-house, now shorn of its fair proportions, and diminished in aspect, since it was built for the widow of Lachlan Mohr Mac Innon, who led his clan to Worcester, was small, low in the roof, and heavily thatched with warm heather. The two principal rooms were wainscoted; the entrance was floored with hard-beaten clay, and above the door was a rudely-carved representation of the arms of Mac Innon, a boar's head erased, holding in its mouth the legbone of a deer, supported by a lion and, a leopard. This uncouth piece of heraldry, the pride of my mother's heart, was the *chef d'oeuvre* of some local sculptor. The aspect of the house was cheerless and indicative of the decay that had fallen upon us; the carpets were faded and worn; the furniture antique and rickety; there were corner cupboards, where old china, worm-eaten books, bottles of whisky, powder-flasks, bullet-moulds, deer-horns, fishing-gear, teapots, and coffee-cups, dogs' collars, an old dirk and skene, mingled pell-mell with innumerable other etcetera.

Far off on the mountain slope, the strong square tower of Lachlan Mohr (who was besieged therein by the Campbells after Inverlochy) was a landmark for two hundred years; but now it was removed to make way for a modern mansion, the windows of which, on this evening, were brilliantly lighted

up; and then, I doubted not, Sir Horace Everingham was sitting down to a sumptuous entertainment after his visit to Ben Ora, while I, the heir of all these hills and glens, had scarcely a crust to place before me.

I thought of all these things—the present and the past—with a bitterness renewed by the recent conversation with my foster-brother. I tossed aside my fishing-gear, basket, and bonnet, and with a sigh of weariness and dejection, entered the half-dilapidated mansion. As I had been abroad the whole day, I sought, with some anxiety, the apartment of my sick and aged mother. I heard the sound of voices proceeding from it; she was expostulating, and a stranger was threatening! I made a forward stride, when a hand was timidly laid on my arm; I turned, and met the anxious face of pretty Minnie Mac Omish.

'A chial! a chial!' she whispered, with tears in her soft hazel eyes; 'Snaggs, the factor, is with your mother, Allan, and I fear he brings bad news.'

'Can other come to us now, Minnie?' said I; 'but take my fish-basket—I have brought a good stipper from the Uisc Dhu and Loch Ora.'

I then entered the little dining-room where we usually had all our meals served up.

I see it yet in memory.

Like many apartments in old Highland houses, its ceiling was low, pannelled with fir, and painted in a dull white colour; the stone fireplace, heavily moulded, bore the motto of the Mac Innons, *Cuimhuich bas Alpin*, in raised letters, and the grate, a little brass-knobbed basket, at which, as my nurse affirmed, Prince Charles had once warmed his royal

feet, stood upon two blocks of stone. A few old prints of battles in black frames, an oil-portrait or two, an old ebony table, with a huge family-bible, an inverted punch-bowl cracked and riveted, chairs of a fashion that has long since disappeared from the Lowlands, made up the plenishing of this little chamber, which was alike my mother's dining-room and peculiar sanctum sanctorum—and the palladium of which, were the old gilt gorget and regimental claymore of my father, suspended above the chimney-piece. He had worn these during the campaigns with the Black Watch in Egypt and in Spain.

With gold spectacles on nose, my mother, a thin, pale woman of a dignified aspect, in an old-fashioned costume, with black silk *mittens* on her hands, was seated in her cushioned chair, affecting to work at some ornament or article of attire, which lay on a little tripod table. She seemed nervous and agitated; how could she be otherwise, when opposite sat he, who was the horror of the glens from Lochness to Loch Ora—Ephraim Snaggs, with his malevolent visage, perched on the top of a bamboo-cane, over the silver knob of which his hands were crossed.

Bald-headed, hollow in the temples, with a prominent chin, and more of the serpent than the dove in his sinister grey eye, there sat Mr. Snaggs with his truculent smile, and an affectation of sympathy on his tongue.

'Beware, sir, of what you say,' my mother was exclaiming, 'for ours is an honoured line—an ancient house.'

'So I perceive,' said Snaggs, impertinently, as he fixed his eyes on a very palpable hole in the ceiling; 'ah, the old story—the old story, Mrs. Mac Innon! Bad times and no price for

sheep, eh? I would beg to remind you, my dear madam, that a certain pious writer says, "However unfortunate we may deem ourselves, yet let us remember there is an eye watching over us; it is a heavenly will, not a blind fate, that guides the world;" ah me—ah me!'

Fire and pride were flashing in my mother's dark grey eyes as I entered; then she burst into tears, and throwing down her work, exclaimed to me in Gaelic, and with all the spirit of the olden time—

'My son, God has sent you here in a lucky hour! I have come of a race that have smiled often in the face of death—why then, do I weep before this wretched worm?'

'What have you dared to say, Mr. Snaggs?' I asked, turning sharply to that personage; 'why do I find my mother in tears?'

'Because she is out of cash,' was the cool reply; 'a simple reason, my dear sir, and a plain one; but it is very little that *you* do to furnish her with any. I have called for the last time anent the arrears of rent due to Sir Horace Everingham—the new proprietor of this estate—arrears due before he acquired the lands, and I receive still the same unvaried excuses, about sheep with the rot, cattle with the murrain, or scraps of traditions and antediluvian nonsense, about the time when Loch Ora belonged to the Mac Innons—and about your great-grandfather who fought at Culloden, and was nearly hanged at Carlisle, as, I think, he deserved to be, for opposing the House of Hanover, and the Kirk as established by law. Now the law, of which I am an unworthy representative—*the law says*, young man, that when a tenant—but I need not quote the cases before the Lords of

Council and Session in 1792 or 1756 on this point, to *you*. If an instalment at least, of the aforesaid arrears—say about fifty pounds—is not paid to me—to *me*, sir,' he continued, laying a fat finger impressively into the palm of his left hand, 'then a notice of eviction shall be duly served upon you, with the rest of the lazy wretches in Glen Ora, who must all sail for Canada this summer, sure as my name is Ephraim Snaggs. Moreover, sir, I may inform you, that Sir Horace, by my recommendation—mine, sir—has some intentions of pulling down this absurd-looking old house, and erecting here a box for his friend, Captain Clavering, or for Mr. Snobleigh, of Snobleigh Park, I know not which; and if so, the law must be put in force against you, sir—the law of expulsion—you hear me!'

The reader may imagine the pride, wrath, and bitterness that swelled up within me, at this insolent speech, which had gradually approached the bullying point. I made a stride towards Snaggs, and my fingers twitched with an irresistible desire to grasp his throat.

My mother (poor old woman!) had long been in ill health. Mhari Mac Innon the 'wise woman' of our locality, and other aged people of the glen, alleged her illness was caused by her declining to drink of St. Colme's well, a famous medicinal spring in Glen Ora, where, for ages, the Mac Innons and adjacent tribes had been wont to quaff the water at midnight, as a sovereign remedy for all diseases; and thereafter drop in a coin, or tie a rag to the alders which overshadowed it, as an offering to the guardian spirit of the fountain. Pale, sad, and sickly, my mother sat in her high-backed chair, motionless and silent as if overwhelmed by

the approaching tide of ruin, in the form of debt which we had not a shilling to meet—and of avarice which we could not satisfy.

'Mr. Snaggs,' said I, 'you should have reserved your detestable communications for my ears alone, and thus spared my poor mother the humiliation of a moment so bitter as this. She is old, and her thoughts and ideas have come down to her from other times. She cannot see, nor believe, that any man has authority to turn her off the land of the Mac Innons—'

'Pooh, my dear sir,' said Snaggs, waving his hand, and rising; 'if you are about to begin your old-world nonsense and twaddle about Celtic right in the soil, I must leave you. The sheriff's warrants will tell another story next week, if fifty pounds at least—'

'Listen to me, Ephraim Snaggs,' said I, forcing him into a seat, and grasping his shoulder like a vice. 'I am here on the land that belonged to my forefathers—to Angus Mac Innon, who fought for King James at Culloden—'

'Ha-ha—stuff—there you go again!'

'There was a time,' I continued, fiercely, 'when had you, or such as you, spoken above your breath in Glen Ora, you had been flung into the loch with a hundred weight of stone at your neck. There was a time when the Mac Innons owned all the land we may see from Ben Ora; when we had Griban in Mull, the Isles of Tiree, of Pabay, and Scalpa, with Strathardle in Skye. Poor as we are now, we owned all that, but only in common—mark me, sir, *in common*, with the people of our name. Listen to me, Mr. Snaggs,' I continued, as the fierce sob of pride, so difficult to repress, rose to my

throat; 'I am the last of a long line, whose misfortune it has been to fight for the losing side. Our people marched to Worcester under Lachlan M'hor, and perished there in heaps; we were at Sheriffmuir, under the banner of the Marquis of Seaforth, for a marquis he was, by order of the king; we were "out" in the '45, under Angus Mac Innon, and of all the swordsmen he marched from yonder glen, which you are about to depopulate, not a man came back from Culloden—as God hears me—not one. Since then our people have gone forth in the Highland regiments to every part of the world. Some have left their bones on the heights of Abraham and in the isles of the Western Indies; some sleep under the shadow of the Pyramids and on the plains of the Peninsula. In India, Egypt, Africa, and Spain, wherever Britain wanted men to fight her battles, there have they been faithful and true, loyal and brave, standing foremost in the ranks of war, and giving place to none! All my own family have perished in the service of their country since this century began—I am the last of them, and as their reward, our roof is to be torn from us, and we are to be expelled from the home and the graves of our kindred—we, the descendants of the old aboriginal race, who first trod the land after God separated it from the waters, and why? because a miserable fifty pounds may not be forthcoming by a certain day! There was a time, Mr. Ephraim Snaggs, when the cry of *Bas Alpin* from yonder rock would easily have brought six hundred swordsmen to guard the roof you threaten; and he whom you beard—he, who from the first Mac Innon, has come through twenty generations in the right line.'

'Had you come through twenty generations in the *wrong* line I would have respected you quite as much, sir,' said Mr. Snaggs, with his bland professional sneer, as he rose again, and smoothed the nap of his hat, preparatory to retiring, as if wearied by the torrent of Gaelic I had poured upon him. 'All these fine arguments about broadswords and barbarism won't pay the rent or satisfy the just claims of Sir Horace, thus the law of landlord and tenant must take its course. You have no means of raising money, I suppose?'

'None!'

'No friends—eh?'

'None.'

'Nothing you can sell?'

'Nothing!'

'Then, take my advice, and quietly quit the glen altogether; there are plenty of counting-rooms, offices, and shops in the Lowlands, where such great sturdy fellows as you may easily make yearly, triple the rent of this old tumble-down place, with its patch of potatoes and corn. Quit your gun and fishing-rod—betake yourself to some honest and industrious occupation, instead of indulging in the very sophistry of vanity, and in wandering about these hills the livelong day, sighing over an imaginary past and an impossible future. No man has any right in the soil but such as the law gives him. Why, Mr. Allan, before I was half your age, I was one of the smartest writer's clerks in Glasgow, earning my threepence a page of a hundred and twenty-five words; but perhaps you would prefer a shopman's place—'

The shout with which Rob Roy greeted honest Bailie Jarvie's proposal to take his two sons as apprentices, was