

John gave him such a look as might well haunt a guilty soul through all eternity; and old Dame Alison, roused by a sense of intolerable wrong, cried out,

"Know this, there's a day coming that will show the black heart; but traitors' words ne'er yet hurt the honest cause."

"Peace, woman!" said an officer of the court, not unkindly.

"Weel, then, God speak for me! an' my thoughts are free; if I daurna say, I may think."

In defence Margaret Fae swore that she had been with John on Brogar Bridge until nearly time to meet her father, and that John then wore a black broadcloth suit and a high hat; furthermore, that she believed it utterly impossible for him to have gone home, changed his clothes, and then reached the scene of the murder at the time Hacon Flett and Ragon Torr swore to his appearance there.

But watches were very uncommon then; no one of the witnesses had any very distinct idea of the time; some of them varied as much as an hour in their estimate. It was also suggested by the prosecution that John probably had the other suit secreted near the seat of the murder. Certain it was that he had not been able either to produce it or to account for its mysterious disappearance.

The probability of Sandy Beg being the murderer was then advanced; but Sandy was known to have sailed in a whaling vessel before the murder, and no one had seen him in Stromness since his departure for Wick after his dismissal from Peter Fae's service.

No one? Yes, some one had seen him. That fatal night, as Ragon Torr was crossing the moor to Peter Fae's house—he having some news of a very particular vessel to give—he heard the cry of "Murder," and he heard Hacon Flett call out, "I know thee, John Sabay. Thou hast stabbed my master!" and he instantly put himself in the way of the flying man. Then he knew at once that it was Sandy Beg in John Sabay's clothes. The two men looked a moment in each other's face, and Sandy saw in Ragon's something that made him say,

"You'll pat Sandy safe ta-night, an' that will make you shure o' ta lass you're seeking for."

There was no time for parley; Ragon's evil nature was strongest, and he answered, "There is a cellar below my house, thou knows it weel."

Indeed, most of the houses in Stromness had underground passages, and places of concealment used for smuggling purposes, and Ragon's lonely house was a favourite rendezvous. The vessel whose arrival he had been going to inform Peter of was a craft not likely to come into Stromness with all her cargo.

Towards morning Ragon had managed to see Sandy and send him out to her with such a message as insured her rapid disappearance. Sandy had also with him a sum of money which he promised to use in transporting himself at once to India, where he had a cousin in the forty-second Highland regiment.