

"As true as death, Miss Margaret;" and when he gave her his great brawny hand on it, she knew her affairs in that direction were safe.

Next morning the shop was opened as usual, and Georgie Sweyn stood in Peter Fae's place. The arrangement had been finally made so rapidly that it had taken all Stromness by surprise. But no one said anything against it; many believed it to be wisely done, and those who did not, hardly cared to express dissatisfaction with a man whose personal prowess and ready hand were so well known.

The same day Christine received a very sisterly letter from Margaret, begging her to come and talk matters over with her. There were such obvious reasons why Margaret could not go to Christine, that the latter readily complied with the request; and such was the influence that this calm, cool, earnest girl had over the elder woman, that she not only prevailed upon her to accept money to fee the lawyer in John's defence, but also whatever was necessary for their comfort during the approaching winter. Thus Christine and Margaret mutually strengthened each other, and both cottage and prison were always the better for every meeting.

But soon the summer passed away, and the storms and snows of winter swept over the lonely island. There would be no court until December to try John, and his imprisonment in Kirkwall jail grew every day more dreary. But no storms kept Christine long away from him. Over almost impassable roads and mosses she made her way on the little ponies of the country, which had to perform a constant steeple-chase over the bogs and chasms.

All things may be borne when they are sure; and every one who loved John was glad when at last he could have a fair hearing. Nothing however was in his favour. The bailies and the murdered man's servants, even the dominie and his daughter could tell but one tale. "Peter Fae had declared with his last breath that John Sabay had stabbed him. The prosecution also brought forward strong evidence to show that very bitter words had passed, a few days before the murder, between the prisoner and the murdered man.

In the sifting of this evidence other points were brought out, still more convincing. Hacon Flett said that he was walking to Stromness by the beach to meet her sweetheart, when he heard the cry of murder, and in the gloaming light saw John Sabay distinctly ruhning across the moor. When asked how he knew certainly that it was John, he said that he knew him by his peculiar dress, its bright buttons, and the glimmer of gold braid on his cap. He said also, in a very decided manner, that John Sabay passed Ragon Torr so closely that he supposed they had spoken.

Then Ragon being put upon his oath, and asked solemnly to declare who was the man that had thus passed him, tremblingly answered,

*"John Sabay!"*