

immediate application, he would be accepted. If he was, John declared his intention of at once seeing Peter and asking his consent to their engagement. In the meantime the Bridge of Brogar was to be their tryst, when tryst was possible. Peter's summer dwelling lay not far from it, and it was Margaret's habit to watch for his boat and walk up from the beach to the house with him. She would always walk over first to Brogar, and if John could meet her there that would be well; if not, she would understand that it was out of the way of duty, and be content.

John fortunately secured the mate's place. Before he could tell Margaret this she heard her father speak well of him to the captain. "There is nae better sailor, nor better lad, for that matter," said Peter. "I like none that he wad hang roun' my bonnie Marg'et; but then, a cat may look at a king without it being high treason, I wot."

A week afterwards Peter thought differently. When John told him honestly how matters stood between him and Margaret he was more angry than when Sandy Beg swore away his whole Dutch cargo. He would listen to neither love nor reason, and positively forbid him to hold any further intercourse with his daughter. John had expected this, and was not greatly discouraged. He had Margaret's promise. Youth is hopeful, and they could wait; for it never entered their minds absolutely to disobey the old man.

Meantime there was a kind of peace-making between Ragon and John. The good Dominie Sinclair had met them both one day on the beach, and insisted on their forgiving and shaking hands. Neither of them were sorry to do so. Men who have shared the dangers of the deep-sea fishing and of the stormy Northern Ocean together cannot look upon each other as mere parts of a bargain. There was, too, a wild valour and a wonderful power in emergencies belonging to Ragon that had always dazzled John's more cautious nature. In some respects, he thought Ragon Torr the greatest sailor that left Stromness harbour, and Ragon was willing enough to admit that John "was a fine fellow," and to give his hand at the dominie's direction.

Alas! the good man's peace-making was of short duration. As soon as Peter told the young Norse sailor of John's offer for Margaret's hand, Ragon's passive good-will turned to active dislike and bitter jealousy. For, though he had taken little trouble to please Margaret, he had come to look upon her as his future wife. He knew that Peter wished it so, and he now imagined that it was also the only thing on earth he cared for.

Thus, though John was getting good wages, he was not happy. It was rarely he got a word with Margaret, and Peter and Ragon were only too ready to speak. It became daily more and more difficult to avoid an open quarrel with them, and, indeed, on several occasions sharp, cruel words, that hurt like wounds, had passed between them on the public streets and quays.

Thus Stromness, that used to be so pleasant to him, was chang-