

and Peter sat. "Ann, love," said the old man, "I know you are a true girl; you know Squire Horslie, and you know he comes here for you; now, tell me at once, dear—I say, tell me what you think of him?"

"I think," replied she, bursting into tears; "I know he is a villain!"

"You know it," returned he; "blow me, have I harboured a shark! What! the salt water in my girl's eyes, too! If I thought he had whispered a word in your ear, but the thing that was honourable—hang me! I would warm the puppy's back with a round dozen with my own hand."

"You have to thank Peter," said she sobbing, "for rescuing me to-night from his unmanly rudeness."

"What! saved you from his rudeness!—you didn't tell me that, Peter; well, well, my lad, you have saved an old sailor from being drifted on a rock. There's my hand; forgive me; get Ann's, and God bless you!"

Within three weeks all was in readiness for the wedding. At Foxlaw old Betty was, as she said, up to the elbows in preparation, and Robin was almost as happy as his son: for Ann was loved by every one. It was Monday evening, and the wedding was to take place next day. Peter was too much of a sportsman, not to have game upon the table at his marriage feast: he took his gun, and went among the fields: he had traversed over the fifty acres of Foxlaw in vain, when, in an adjoining field, the property of his rival, he perceived a full grown hare holding his circuitous gambols. It was a noble looking animal. The temptation was irresistible: he took aim; and the next moment bounded over the low hedge: he was a dead shot; and he had taken up the prize, and was holding it, surveying it before him, when Mr. Horslie and his gamekeeper sprang upon him, and ere he was aware, their hands were on his breast. Angry words passed, and words rose to blows. Peter threw the hare over his shoulders, and left the squire and his gamekeeper to console each other on the ground: he returned home; and nothing said of his second adventure with Laird Horslie.

The wedding day dawned; and, though the village had no bells to ring, there were not wanting demonstrations of rejoicing; and as the marriage party passed through its little street to the manse, children shouted, women waved ribbons, and smiled, and every fowling-piece and pistol in the place sent forth a joyful noise; yea, the village Vulcan him-

self, as they passed his smithy, stood with a rod of red hot iron in his hand, and having his stithies ranged before him like a battery, and charged with powder, saluted them with a rustic but hearty *feu d'joie*. There was not a countenance but seemed to bless him: Peter was the very picture of manly joy;—Ann of modesty and love. They were within five yards of the manse, where the minister waited to pronounce over them the charmed and holy words, when Squire Horslie's gamekeeper and two constables intercepted the party. "You are our prisoner," said one of the latter, producing his warrant, and laying his hand upon Peter. Peter's cheek grew pale; he stood silent and motionless, as if palsy had smitten his very soul. Ann uttered a short, sudden scream of despair, and fell senseless at the feet of the "best man." Her cry of agony recalled the bridegroom to instant consciousness; he started round—he raised her in his arms, he held her to his bosom. "Ann! my ain Ann!" he cried; "look up: oh; look up, dear! It is me, Ann! ther canna, they daurna harm me."

Confusion and dismay took possession of the whole party. "What is the meaning of this, sirs?" said Robin Paterson, his voice half choked with agitation; "what has my son done, that ye choose sic an untimous hour to bring a warrant against him?"

"He has done, old boy, what will give him employment for seven years," said the gamekeeper, insolently. "Constables, do your duty."

"Sirs," said Robin, as they again attempted to lay hands upon his son, "I am sure he has been guilty o' nae crime; leave us noo, an', whatever be his offence, I, his faither, will be answerable for his forthcoming, the last penny in my possession."

"And I will be bail to the same amount, master constables," said the old skipper; "for, blow me, d'ye see, if there an't black work at the bottom o' this, and somebody shall hear about it, that's all."

Consciousness had returned to the fair bride. She threw her arms around Peter's neck—"They shall not—no, they shall not take you from me!" she exclaimed.

"No, no, dear," returned he; "dinna put yourself about."

The minister had come out of the manse, and offered to join the old men as security for Peter's appearance on the following day.

"To the devil with your bail! you are no justices, master constable," replied the inc-