

tions to John. He must first see old Peter, Fae and withdraw himself from his service. He found him busy in loading a small vessel with smoked geese and kippered fish, and he was apparently in a very great passion. Before John could mention his own matters, Peter burst into a torrent of invectives against another of his sailors, who, he said, had given some information to the Excise which had cost him a whole cargo of Dutch specialties. The culprit was leaning against a hogshead, and was listening to Peter's intemperate words with a very evil smile.

"How much did ye sell yoursel' for, Sandy Beg? It took the son of a Hieland robber like you to tell tales of a honest man's cargo. It was an ill day when the Scots cam to Orkney, I trow."

"She'll hae petter right to say tat same 'fore lang time." And Sandy's face was dark with a subdued passion that Peter might have known to be dangerous, but which he continued to aggravate by contemptuous expressions regarding Scotchmen in general.

This John Sabay was in no mood to bear; he very soon took offence at Peter's sweeping abuse, and said he would relieve him at any rate of one Scot. "He didna care to sail again wi' such a crowd as Peter gathered round him."

It was a very unadvised speech. Ragon lifted it at once, and in the words that followed John unavoidably found himself associated with Sandy Beg, a man whose character was of the lowest order. And he had meant to be so temperate, and to part with both Peter and Ragon on the best terms possible. How weak are all our resolutions! John turned away from Peter's store conscious that he had given full sway to all the irritation and disappointment of his feelings, and that he had spoken as violently as either Peter, Ragon, or even the half-brutal Sandy Beg. Indeed, Sandy had said very little; but the malignant look with which he regarded Peter, John could never forget.

This was not his only annoyance. Paul Calder's boats were fully manned, and the others had already left for Brassey's Sound. The Sabays were not rich; a few weeks of idleness would make the long Orkney winter a dreary prospect. Christine and his mother sat from morning to night braiding straw into the once famous Orkney Tuscans, and he went to the peat-moss to cut a good stock of winter fuel; but his earnings in money were small and precarious, and he was so anxious that Christine's constant cheerfulness hurt him.

Sandy Beg had indeed said something of an offer he could make "if shentlemans wanted goot wages wi' ta chance of a lucky bit for themsel's; foive kuineas ta month an' ta affsets. Oigh! oigh!" But John had met the offer with such scorn and anger that Sandy had thought it worth while to bestow one of his most wicked looks upon him. The fact was, Sandy felt half grateful to John for his apparent partisanship, and John indignantly resented any disposition to put him in the same boat with a man so generally suspected and disliked.

"It might be a come down," he said, "for a gude sailor an'