

—and the visits of the squire were wormwood to his spirit. If they did not make him jealous they rendered him impatient ; impetuous, miserable.

He was wandering alone upon the shore, at the hour which Hogg calls, "between the gloamin' and the mirk," in one of these impatient, impetuous, and unhappy moods, when he resolved not to live in a state of torture and anxiety until Whitsunday, but to have the sacred knot tied at once : having so determined, Peter turned towards Graham's cottage : he had not proceeded far when he observed a figure gliding before him on the footpath, leading from the village to the cottage. Darkness was gathering fast, but he at once recognised the form before him to be that of his own Ann. She was not a hundred yards before him, and he hastened forward to overtake her ; but, as the proverb has it, there is much between the cup and the lip.—A part of the footpath ran through a young plantation and this plantation Ann Graham was just entering, when observed by Peter : he had also entered the wood, when his progress was arrested for a moment by the sudden sound of voices. It was Ann's voice, and it reached his ear in tones of anger and reproach ; and these were tones so new to him as proceeding from one whom he regarded as all gentleness and love, that he stood involuntarily still. The words he could not distinguish ; but after halting for an instant, he pushed softly but hastily forward, and heard the voice of the young laird reply—

"A rose-bud in a fury, by the goddesses ! Nay, frown not, fairest," continued he, throwing his arm around her, and adding—

"What pity that so delicate a form
Should be devoted to the rude embrace
Of some indecent clown !"

Peter heard this, and muttered an oath or an ejaculation which we will not write.

"Sir," said Ann, indignantly, and struggling as she spoke, "if you have the fortune of a gentleman, have, at least, the decency of a man." "Nay, sweetest ; but you, having the beauty of an angel, have the heart of a woman." And he attempted to kiss her cheek.

"Laird Horslie !" shouted Peter, as if an earthquake had burst at the heels of the squire—"hands off ! I say, hands off !"

Now, Peter did not exactly suit the action to the word ; for while he yet exclaimed—"hands off !" he, with both hands, clutched the laird by the collar, and hurling him across

the path, caused him to roll like a ball against the foot of a tree.

"Fellow !" exclaimed Horslie, furiously, rising on his knees, and rubbing his sores—

"Fellow !" interrupted Peter—"confound ye, sir, dinna fellow me, or there'll be fellin' in the way. You can keep yer farm, and be hanged to ye : and let me tell ye, sir, if ye were ten thousand lairds, if ye dared to lay yer ill-faur'd lips on a sweet-heart o' mine, I wad twist yer neck about like a turnip-shaw ! Come awa, Annie, love," added he, tenderly, "and be thankfu' I cam in the way."

Before they entered the house, he had obtained her consent to their immediate union ; but the acquiescence of the old skipper was still wanting ; and when Peter made known his wishes to him ;

"Belay !" cried the old boy ; "not so fast, Master Peter ; a craft such as my girl, is worth a longer run, lad. Time enough to take her in tow, when you've a harbour to moor her in, Master Peter. There may be other cutters upon the coast, too, that will give you a race for her, and that have got what I call *shot* in their lockers. So you can take in a reef, my lad ; and if you don't like it, why, helm about, that's all."

"Captain Graham," said Peter, proudly and earnestly, "I both understand and feel your remarks ; and but for Ann's sake, I would resent them also. But, sir, you are a father ; an affectionate one ; dinna be a deluded one. By a side-wind, ye hae flung my poverty in my teeth ; but, sir, if I hae poverty, and Laird Horslie riches, I hae loved yer dochter as a man ; he seeks to destroy her like a villian."

"'Vast, Peter, 'vast !" cried the old man ; "mind I am Ann's father ; tell me what you mean ?"

"I mean, sir, that ye hae been hoodwinked," added the other ; "that ye hae been flung aff yer guard, and led to the precipice o' the deep dark sea o' destruction an' disgrace—that a villian has hovered round yer house like a hawk round a wood pigeon's nest, waiting an opportunity to destroy her peace for ever ! Sir, to use a phrase of yer ain, wad ye behold yer dochter driven a ruined wreck upon the world's bleak shore, the discarded property o' the lord o' the manor ? If ye doubt me as to the rascal's intentions, ask Ann."

"Sdeath, Peter, man !" cried the old tar, "do ye say that the fellow has tried to make a marine of me ? that a lubber has got the weatherglass of Bill Graham ? Call in Ann."

Ann entered the room where her father