

"Get up," said the Laird. "Make believe for once ye're some sort of a man; and listen here."

Simon rose.

"You can take your choice," continued the Laird. "Either you follow in your father's footsteps," said he, "to gaol——"

"Why for should I go to gaol?" whined Simon.

"Because you're a danger to the peace," said the Laird.

"Whose peace?" asked Simon.

"Mine," said the Laird. "Or," he went on, "I will get you admission to a Home of Rest, I know, for such as you. And if you'll be advised by me," added the Laird, "you'll take the Home."

Simon looked at him.

"What's a Home?" he asked suspiciously.

"Home is sweet Home," said the Laird. "And there's no place like it—that's all I can tell ye."

"How long will I bide there?" asked Simon cunningly.

"Till you're better," said the Laird.

"What of?" said Simon.

"Of being worse," said the Laird.

Simon shook his head.

"I'll bide with minnie," said Simon, "an it please yer Honour."

"You'll take your choice," said the Laird, briefly. "Gaol or Home."

Simon burst into tears.

"I'll take Home," he said. "Though it's not much of a Home when you wear a chain all the time."

Robin, who had been listening at the door, trotted off to the kitchen, sat down there and bowed with laughter.

"The Laird's the cannie laddie!" he cried, and wiped the tears of merriment away. "He has put Simon Ogg away fine. We need fear no more for our man."

"Where away?" asked the Woman.

"Abroad," gasped Robin, "in Barbary."