

"Peter! O Peter!" cried the wretched girl, clinging around him.

The party from the frigate approached them. Even their hearts were touched.

"From my soul I feel for you Paterson," said the lieutenant commanding them, "and I am sorry to see those old people and that lovely girl in distress, but you know I must do my duty, lad."

"O Sir! Sir!" cried his mother, wringing her hands and addressing the lieutenant, "if ye hae a drop o' compassion in your heart spare my poor bairn! O Sir! I implore ye as ye wad expect mercy here or hereafter, dinna tear him from the door o' the mother that bore him."

"Good woman," replied the officer, "your son must go with us, but I shall do all that I can to render his punishment as light as possible."

Ann uttered a shriek of horror.

"Punishment!" exclaimed Betty, grasping the arm of the lieutenant—"O Sir! what do ye mean by punishment? Surely, though your heart was harder than a nether millstone, ye couldna be sae cruel as to hurt my bairn for comin' to see his ain mother?"

"Sir," said Robin, "my son never intended to rin away frae your ship. He tauld me he was gaun to return immediately, I assure ye o' that. But Sir, if ye could only leave him, and if siller can do ony thing in the case, ye shall hae the savings o' thirty years, and a father's blessing into the bargain."

"O aye Sir!" cried his mother, "ye shall hae the last penny we hae in the world—ye shall hae the very stock off the farm if ye'll leave my bairn!"

The officer shook his head. The sailors attempted to pinion Peter's arms.

"Vast there, shipmates, vast," said Peter sorrowfully; "there's no need for that; had I intended to run for it you would not have found me here. Ann, love"—he added—his heart was too full for words—he groaned—he pressed his teeth upon his lip—he wrung her hand. He grasped the hands of his parents and of Mr. Graham—he burst into tears, and in bitterness exclaimed "farewell!" I will not describe the painful scene, nor paint the silent agony of the father, the heart rending lamentations of the bereaved mother, nor the tears and anguish of the miserable maiden who refused to be comforted.

Peter was taken to the boat and conveyed again to the frigate: his officers sat in judgment upon his offence, and Peter stood a cul-

prit before them: he begged to be heard in his defence, and his prayer was granted.

"I know, your honours," said Peter, "that I have been guilty of a breach of discipline; but I deny that I had any intention of running from the service. Who amongst you that has a heart to feel would not under the same circumstances have acted as I did? Who that has been torn from a father's hearth would not brave danger, or death itself, again to take a father by the hand, or to fling his arms around a mother's neck? Or who that has plighted his heart and his truth to one that is dearer than life, would not risk his life for her sake? Gentlemen, it becomes not man to punish an act which Heaven has not registered as a crime. You may flog, torture, and degrade me—I will not supplicate for mercy—but will degradation prompt me to serve my king more faithfully? I know you must do your duty, but I know also you will do it as British officers, as men who have hearts to feel."

During this address Peter had laid aside his wonted provincial accent. There was an evident leaning amongst the officers in his favour, and the punishment they awarded him was a few days confinement.

It was during the second war between Great Britain and the United States. The frigate was ordered to the coast of Newfoundland. She had cruised upon the station about three months, and during that time, as the seamen said, "not a lubber of the enemy had dared to shew his face—there was no life going at all," and they were becoming impatient for a friendly set-to with their brother Jonathan. It was Peter's watch at the mast head. "A sail! a Yankee!" shouted Peter. A sort of wild hurra burst from his comrades on the deck. An officer hastily ascended the rigging to ascertain the fact. "All's right," he cried, "a sixty gun ship at least."

"Clear the deck, my boys," cried the commander, "get the guns in order—active—be steady, and down upon her."

Within ten minutes all was in readiness for action. "Then down on the deck, my lads," cried the captain, "not a word amongst you; give them a British welcome."

The brave fellows silently knelt by the guns, glowing with impatience for the command to be given to open their fire upon the enemy. The Americans seemed nothing loath to meet them half-way. Like winged engines of death rushing to shower destruction on each other, the proud vessel came within gunshot. The American opened the first fire upon the frigate. Several shot had