

"We shall escape you," said Falkland. "We are just upon the crags, and when these are passed, we have but the river, and all will be over."

The crags were now their most immediate danger, for slippery as they always were with the sea-weed, the surf was by this time dashing up amongst them, so that no horse could make sure of its footing; and here Kennedy fell again, and again it was so long before he could be replaced in his seat, that Falkland on looking round to the next point, which it was necessary to gain, in order to reach the village, saw that the whole extent of the little bay was one sheet of foam. Still it was not deep except in the bed of the stream, and their horses were untired; so that if Kennedy could but keep his seat, all might yet be well.

It was in vain, however, that Falkland rode close beside his friend, and stretched out his arm to keep him steady. He appeared to have become more and more confused with each repeated fall, while the unequal nature of the ground rendered it impossible for their horses to find safe footing, or to keep pace with each other. Falkland himself was but just able to think, and to wish that they had taken the route above the cliffs. He even stopped, and looked for a moment towards the land, to see if there was no place where it was possible to ascend, but in vain; and the next moment they plunged into the stony bed of the stream, and found themselves in deep water.

Kennedy had now fallen forward on his horse. The animal grew terrified, and rushing desperately amongst the rocks and the foaming current, it shook itself loose from its rider, and then plunged forward, and left him to struggle for his life.

Falkland had now but one object—to place the wretched man behind him, and trust to his own animal for sustaining both. For this purpose he stretched out his arm and caught the hand of his friend at the moment when he was rolling down the stream. He even succeeded so far as to lift him upon his horse, but all his strength was unequal to keep him there. He had become utterly helpless, and it now seemed as if, in attempting to save him, both must perish. Still, however, Falkland resumed the attempt. He even succeeded again, and was only defeated by Kennedy falling this time with his hand clenching the coat of his friend, with a wild and desperate hold, which it was impossible to shake off.

"My mother!" cried Falkland, as if the fierce waves could hear him. "My poor mother! She will never survive this night if I am lost. It is yet in my power to save her from a broken heart."

With that he tore off the fragment of his dress, which that doomed and drowning man still held by, and with one plunge of his horse, escaped out of the bed of the swollen torrent.

In the mean time, the lights were one after another extinguished in Mrs. Falkland's cottage; but the mother slept not, though she had retired at midnight to her own chamber. She slept not, for her nights were now but too frequently occupied in thinking to what the habits of her son would lead. She slept not, for memory was busy with his childhood, with the time when, as a sickly and fretful infant, he had demanded all her tenderness, and all her care. She thought of the sleepless hours, when she used to rock him on her bosom; how her time, her peace, her health, had been sacrificed, without a murmur, for his sake; and now, when she looked for her reward, when her own feeble strength required that rest she could not find, he could not—he would not—deny himself a single hour of senseless mirth, to calm the anxiety that was wasting her life away.

The window of Mrs. Falkland's chamber looked upon the garden, that of Grace Dalton towards the yard, where it was impossible that a horse should enter, without her hearing it. What, then, was her surprise to hear the well-known signal of her cousin, without any previous notice of his coming! With a stealthy step, she trod as usual past the door of her aunt's chamber, and descended to the hall, where, drawing aside the bolt of the outer door, she stood expecting that her cousin would enter.

"I want to speak with you, Grace," said he in a voice so little like his own, that she started back. "Come away from the door, for no one must hear us talking. Come farther still, and be very, very quiet, while I tell you a sad story."

"Go on," said Grace, trembling all over. "I am quiet. Has anything happened?"

"Come out farther still," said her cousin; "and now be sure you do not exclaim, or make the least noise." He then whispered close to her ear, "Kennedy is lost!"

A shriek so loud that it seemed to ring through the vault of heaven, was the answer of poor Grace.

"There, now!" said he, grasping her arm, and speaking more

angrily to her than he had ever done before. "You have done the very thing against which I warned you. I would rather have given you a thousand pounds than you should have uttered that scream."

Lights were now glancing in all the windows of the cottage, and before many minutes had passed, Falkland was compelled to describe to the whole assembled household, every particular of the sad catastrophe. Even then, so great was the sensation it naturally excited, that scarcely could the presence of his living form convince them of his own safety. It was not difficult to read in his pale and haggard countenance the terrible conflict he had sustained, and while one brought him cordials, and another chafed his cold hands, Grace Dalton, who had wont to be the first to render all these offices of kindness, was the only one to stand aloof, as it altogether stupified by what had passed.

"Why do you stand there, child?" said Mrs. Falkland in her anxiety for her son. "Go up stairs, Grace, and bring dry clothes for your cousin."

The poor girl went up stairs as she had been told, but what it was to fetch, she could not by any possibility remember. Her delay was the cause of much chiding, which seemed to produce no effect upon her senses. As regarded all present things, they were quite gone, until Falkland called her to him, and whispered to her with a shudder on his lips, "Take that coat, Grace, and hide it, so that I may never see it more. The part that is torn away is where he held me with his dying grasp."

Grace Dalton took the coat as she had been requested, and no one knew how she disposed of it, for it was never seen again.

"And now," said Falkland, when his strength had been in some measure restored, "I have a hard duty to perform. I must go to old Kennedy, and tell him what has happened."

With this intention, he rose up, and even went as far as the door, when, turning back again he sank down into a chair, exclaiming, "I cannot meet that old man! My heart fails me when I think that Ralph was the only relation he had in the world—the only being he ever seemed to love. Will none of you go with me?"

"I will go with you," said Grace.

"You child!" was the general exclamation. But finding that, although little could be hoped from her assistance, she was in reality more willing than any of the party, it was at last agreed that she should accompany her cousin, though not without many earnest charges from him, that she would neither shriek, nor faint, nor trouble him with any of her childish imprudence.

"No, dear George," said she with such trembling meekness, that he could but cease to chide her—"I will be very, very quiet. You shall never have to find fault with me in this way again."

"Come then," said Falkland. "For once I will lean on your arm, instead of you on mine; and, if you like, Grace, I will tell you as we go, all the particulars of this melancholy story, in order that when any one asks for them, you may be able to tell it yourself, and thus spare me the pain. Would you like to hear it?"

"Yes; only I am afraid I shall not be able to repeat it."

"Nonsense! You should nerve yourself to these duties. It is difficult to you, think what it must be to me, who have still his death-grasp on my person; his last moan in my ear; his—  
What ails you, Grace? You are cold, child. The morning air is too sharp for you. Here, take this shawl, for they have given me more than I can bear; and you have no bonnet. What a foolish girl you are!"

Grace made no reply; but her teeth absolutely chattered; while the ghastliness of her countenance gave her cousin fresh cause to think that the gray dawn of morning, now spreading over earth and sea, was too cold in its autumnal chill for the delicate frame of his companion, and he drew her closer to his side, and held her hand in his, with a brotherly tenderness, for her bodily comfort, which he had been less ready to feel for that of her mind.

"There," said Falkland, for he had already commenced his story, "it was just in the direction of that stunted tree, half-way between the first point and the river, that Kennedy first fell from his horse. Look, Grace. Why, you are actually turning towards the land. Have you forgotten in which direction lies the sea?"

"I am looking," said Grace. "At least, I will look if I can, but the wind blows so fiercely." And she shaded her eyes with her hand, while her cousin went on with his story.

Long before he had concluded the melancholy detail, which to a less interested auditor would have been sufficiently distressing, they found themselves before the humble home of Kennedy's father.

(To be Continued.)