

when at length he made his appearance, he unfolded a tale which chilled the hearts of all who heard him. I was sitting alone in dear Belinda's room—she was with her father in his library, when suddenly Fanny entered, crying and sobbing most piteously.

"Oh, Mrs. Mary," said the kind hearted girl; "there is such dreadful news today, that I scarcely dare tell it you—poor dear Miss Belinda, it will break her heart."

"Alas, Fanny, what mean you," I exclaimed; "what has happened?"

"Jerome, the fisherman's boy, has just been here," continued Fanny; "and he says that early this morning, when his father was out with his nets towards the Heron's point, he heard the sound of fire arms, and the spot being very sequestered, he feared that something must be wrong, and hastened in the direction—when to his horror he found several gentlemen collected, and one extended on the ground, either wounded or killed, he knew not which. They desired him in angry tones to mind his own affairs and begone, which he obeyed, but he learnt afterwards the names of the gentlemen who had fought, which were Mr. Fortescue and Captain Blanchard."

I uttered a scream, and covered my face with my hands.

"All merciful Father," I exclaimed; "when are thy bitter chastisements to cease. Alas, my gentle child, and are thy fond hopes thus blasted forever—Fanny, tell me I implore you, did the boy hear which of the two was the sufferer?"

"No ma'am, he could not. Oh, if it is that beautiful Captain Blanchard, how dreadful it will be."

"It will be dreadful in either case," I almost groaned; "but until the truth is ascertained, I exhort you to keep the intelligence from your young lady, for the doubt and suspense would prove death to her. Go, Fanny, leave me I entreat, for I expect her every instant, and were she to find us thus together, she would certainly suspect some new misfortune."

Fanny retired weeping, while I remained in a state of suffering not to be expressed. Presently I heard Belinda's light step approaching—I trembled, as she unclosed the door—I looked fearfully in her face—a sweet smile played over it, which went to my heart.

"Why so sad, dearest Mrs. Mary," said the dear girl, throwing her arms round my neck; "you feel our misfortune far more than it deserves—I can assure you my father has become quite reconciled and composed, for uncle Sam has behaved with a generosity worthy of his kind and excellent heart; he will not hear of St. Margerets being sold, but has made such arrangements with my father, as to prevent the necessity. The chief evil now existing, is that Marion and myself are portionless, which is

of less consequence to her, as the Baron is rich. I trust mamma will admit us today—I have been ordering some nice fish from little Jerome, to tempt her with, for she has tasted nothing since yesterday."

"Is your father still at home, my child," I asked in a tremulous tone.

"Yes, and Lindsay is down stairs with him—he entered the house looking as dismal as if the earth had opened to engulf us all. I laughed at him, but instead of pausing to speak to me, he merely wrung my hand, and proceeded to the library, when I left him."

An hour after this, a message was sent to Belinda from Mr. Lindsay, requesting an interview. My knees actually smote together, as I felt persuaded he must have come to prepare her for the dreadful intelligence. He was very pale and considerably agitated on his entrance. I had no power to address him, but gazed on him with clasped hands. A sudden fear seemed to flit across the mind of Belinda, as she looked from one to the other.

"There is something more in this than the loss of worthless money," she cried in alarm; "what know you, that makes you thus cast such pitying glances upon me?"

"Belinda, my sister, be composed," replied Lindsay, pressing her hands in his, and gently placing her on the sofa, where he sat down by her side; "when God chastens his children, to bring them more nearly to himself, it is in wisdom and in love—yet he never leaves them comfortless. When all was dark in Egypt around the tyrant, and no sun, no moon was permitted to gladden the soil where oppression reigned, yet a light from Heaven shone over the Lord's people in the valley of Goshen, to raise their drooping spirits. It is even so with us—when sorrows overshadow us, and hope seems fled; a ray, faint perhaps, yet steadfast, pierces through the gloom, and assures us, that although cast down, we are not forsaken. God has been thus merciful to you this day—He has watched over one dear to you, even though he tempted his mercy and forbearance by breaking his laws."

Belinda uttered a piercing scream, and her head fell heavily on his shoulder. I flew towards her.

"Tell me that his life is not in danger, and I will bless you," she wildly cried; "Oh, Harvey, my own beloved, I knew it was of him."

"He is in no danger, he is well," returned the agitated Lindsay, supporting her; "but he is in heavy affliction—have you fortitude to hear all I am charged to tell you?"

"Yes, yes, dear Lindsay, in mercy speak on—oh, I feel very faint."

We chafed her temples, and I held her in my arms, while Lindsay delicately and feelingly recounted to her the interview he had held with Blan-