

"Nay, my child," said Mrs. Rosier; "if it has been the means of arousing you to a sense of your danger, and finally leads to your conversion, I shall bless God for his mercy, in conducting you thither. Mr. Strong's prayers were most beautiful and effective."

"They were," returned Mildred; "they made me feel that I was a sinner. I meant to hate that man, with his red hair and coarse features; but I was forced to like him against my own inclination. I think that he is a good man and a sincere Christian. But that Mr. Death——"

"Seemed a pious, excellent person," rejoined Mrs. Rosier. Mildred thought quite the reverse, and she boldly declared him to be a cutting hypocrite. Her mother was shocked at her decision; but Mildred maintained her opinion, turning him all the while into the most pointed ridicule, and ended by saying, that Death in any shape was so repugnant to our feelings that Mrs. Rosier must not wonder at the dislike she felt in coming so nearly in contact with him—that he was the Life in Death described in Mr. Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*—and that she hoped that she might never meet him again.

Old Abigail thought her young mistress very clever and very witty; but Mrs. Rosier shook her head, and said that she was too satirical, and that whilst we had faults of our own, we should not be too severe upon others. And so the breakfast passed on; and, strange to say, neither the mother nor daughter made a remark upon the extraordinary termination of the meeting, although it was uppermost in the thoughts of both. Mrs. Rosier did not think it prudent to discuss the matter, or to waken too deep an interest in Mildred's breast for the unfortunate lovers, whose history she had heard from Florence Darnham; and Mildred was so much affected by what she had witnessed that she could not trust her voice to speak about it. When the tea-things were removed, she asked permission to take a run on the beach, and call on her way home upon old Gardiner.

She readily obtained her mother's permission, and glad to get into the open air, she bounded away, and springing down the flight of steep steps that led directly to the beach, soon lost in the tumultuous dash of the billows the dull and oppressive weight which had hung upon her spirits.

The wind was high, blowing a perfect gale, dead upon the shore, and the tide was coming in with unusual violence. The clashing of the foaming waves, as they rolled up every moment further upon the narrow beach, was music to the troubled mind of the young student of nature. She gloried in the beauty and the majesty of the scene, nor apprehended the least danger could possibly lurk in her path. The lofty range of

steep cliffs gradually became lower, until they terminated: for about a mile in a dead flat—a salt marsh, which was full of broad ditches and slime pits, and at this period was partially covered with snow.

The increasing width of the beach appeared to give Mildred new zest and spirit for her walk. The wind blew her bonnet back upon her shoulders, and scattered her long fair tresses over her face, calling the brightest of nature's roses into her glowing cheeks; and could she have seen herself at that moment, she would have blushed with delight at her own charms. There was health and freedom in the rude gush of fresh air, that seemed to bear her onward upon its rustling wing; and with feelings almost allied to extacy she paused in her rapid motion to enjoy at one glance the wide tumultuous eternity of waters rolling in majesty at her feet.

What has blanched her cheek—a moment before so brilliant and glowing? Why is her hand raised with a gesture of terror, and why does she cast such a hurried and despairing glance around her? While she has been only alive to the feelings of enjoyment, the sea, like a treacherous friend, has been gaining an unfair advantage over her. Wave after wave has rolled in upon her path, and the narrow beach she had so shortly quitted is covered with angry billows, racing and leaping up against the cliffs they would fain undermine in their fury. All hope of retreat in that quarter is at an end, and with a faint cry she turns to look ahead. The sea has already taken possession of the beach, and is driving her every moment farther and farther towards the dangerous marsh, and she well knew that not many minutes could elapse before the spot on which she stood would be covered by the waters, which would rapidly spread themselves over the surface of the ground.

"Great God! what am I to do! what will become of me! My mother!—my dear mother!" were exclamations which burst spontaneously from her lips; and then the unspoken thought—the bitter, heart-crushing conviction, that came with sickening force upon her mind—"To die so young, away from all near and dear to me! My fate to remain a mystery!—a ghastly uncertainty!—a hopeless anticipation!—a hopeless despair! Alas! alas! what shall I do! Father in heaven! have mercy upon thy poor lost child! Saviour of the world! lift me above these choking waters and place my feet upon the rock that is higher than I!"

The winds raved on—the waves lifted up their hoarse voices in angry murmurs: this was the sole reply to her unspoken address. The love of life was strong in her young breast; the fear of