

It was indeed impossible to behold this young man without interest—his great personal endowments, his winning manners, his voice, and the easy grace of his whole deportment, rendered him at all times an object of attraction; but now the total forgetfulness of self which he had displayed, the solicitude he evinced, not only for Belinda, but even for me, a stranger, during our tedious sojourn in this cold and comfortless abode, could not fail to find its way to woman's grateful heart—and from this night I remembered him more fervently in my prayers.

At length the period for our release drew near—Captain Harrington had been constantly watching for the last hour at the mouth of the cavern, and now came to announce to us the glad intelligence that in a short space we might venture to proceed in safety. We were preparing to leave our recess, when the sound of rude voices met our ears—Captain Blanchard held us back and laid his finger on his lip.

To the utter dismay of Belinda and myself, five or six desperate looking men entered the cave, one of them bearing a lantern; they expressed surprise and anger at the aperture being disturbed, and he who held the light, raised it to examine the interior. Happily for us, we were completely concealed by a huge cragg which divided the nook, where we stood from the outer excavation; their language was dreadful in the extreme, and they were all armed with cutlasses and pistols. At this moment, so terrific had the waves of the sea been flowing over us, we would have hailed them with gratitude. I looked fearfully on Captain Blanchard, and never shall I forget the expression I beheld in his fine countenance—it was actually awful in its stern determination—one arm clasped the fainting Belinda to his bosom, while in his other hand he grasped his drawn sword. I dreaded, from all I had heard of his impetuosity, that he would have rushed forward, and I laid my hand on his arm, as if my slight hold could have had power to stay him; but I had no need to fear; for Belinda's sake a hair would have then bound him. I turned from him to Captain Harrington, who stood with a large cudgel upraised, his eyes and cheeks distended, exactly in that position I have seen one painted, who has been watching the appearance of some unlucky rat from its hole—ludicrous as he certainly looked, to have smiled was indeed impossible.

The men, apparently satisfied that the cave was unoccupied, now walked to the further end, and to our astonishment, unclosed a door which had been concealed by a large stone.

"We must make haste my lads," said one, in a coarse harsh voice; "the vessel will be round in less than an hour, and if we don't make sharp work of it, we may have the coast guard upon us."

"Aye, aye, we are prepared for them if they do

come," exclaimed another, with a most horrid oath; "I think we did for that youngster last week."

Oh, how my knees smote together as his words reached me. They all now entered the inner cavern, and closed the door.

"Now," said Captain Blanchard, in a whisper; "we must be quick and most wary—Harrington, guard the ladies, and for God's sake let no one speak."

He gave Belinda into her uncle's arms as he spoke—when she found that he was leaving her, she would have screamed, but he pressed his hand firmly over her mouth, while his dark frown awed her into silence and obedience. He then stood before the door which closed upon the ruffians, with his sword held across it, while Captain Harrington carried out Belinda, who had fainted, and conveyed her in safety down the rugged declivity; I followed as well as my trembling limbs would enable me, and when we found ourselves again on the sands, we looked up for our noble companion—he stood at the entrance waving his hand for us to proceed. How dreadful was the idea of his being sacrificed in our defence, but to have paused, would only have added to the danger, and we hurried forward with our insensible charge. Night had closed in, but fortunately a bright moon guided us on our way, and by the time we cleared the point, Captain Blanchard had descended from his perilous post, and hastened to rejoin us. How my heart rose in thanksgiving, when I beheld him in safety—I would have spoken, but words were denied me, and I was grateful for the tears which relieved my oppressed heart. The air had revived Belinda, who now looked wildly round her, calling on the name of Harvey. He sprang to her side.

"You are then safe—they have not murdered you?" she shrieked in a tone of terror, when she beheld him. "Oh, if you leave me again I shall die."

"Belinda, dearest, do not thus alarm yourself," replied Blanchard, taking her outstretched hand as she hung over her uncle's shoulder as helpless as an infant. "All is well now, and in a few more moments you will reach your own home."

"For mercy's sake, who and what are those desperate men?" I inquired, while with feeble steps I endeavoured to keep pace with the rapid strides of my companions. Captain Blanchard offered me his arm, as he replied:

"They are smugglers. Their haunt has been long suspected, and it is extremely fortunate they have been discovered. I have no doubt, that is their craft which we now see laying off yonder," and he pointed in the direction as he spoke, when I clearly discovered the hull of a small vessel.

On entering the gate of the shrubbery, we perceived lights moving within the house. We had all been suffering too much ourselves to reflect on