

"This is a poor place for ladies like you," she said; "but I wish you would remain awhile."

I felt almost tempted to accept her offer, for I knew that her experience in the tides must be far more correct than ours could be; but Belinda urged me so strongly to lose no more time, that I yielded my desire to hers, and placing our little offering on the table, and receiving the widow's benediction, we retreated in haste, while she continued gazing after us as long as we were in sight. For some time we pursued our flight with rapidity, when I was obliged to pause for breath.

"Belinda, my dear girl, hasten on," I said, panting; "you are young and agile, and will soon round the point; but if I die for it, I cannot run another step."

"And do you think I would leave you, dear Mrs. Mary," replied Belinda; "Heaven forbid, that I should be so selfish, so ungrateful—lean on me, and I will help you."

In the meantime the bounding waters came nearer and nearer, roaring and dashing their spray over the sands. We looked at each other fearfully—the cliff was by no means high, but so perpendicular that to ascend it was impossible, though in many parts there were rugged stepping stones and branches of stunted shrubs growing out from its rude sides. At this moment we heard voices above us, and on looking up, we beheld Harvey Blanchard and Captain Harrington walking leisurely along the heights; we immediately called to them.

"Bless my heart," exclaimed uncle Sam, leaning over the cliff; "if there isn't my niece Bell, and the old maiden lady, showing signals of distress."

"Good God, and the tide rushing in," cried Blanchard, who, without an instant's hesitation, began scrambling down by the fragile supports afforded him in the way, followed by Captain Harrington. Belinda screamed as she watched their perilous descent, which was happily achieved in safety. Blanchard waiting not to utter one word, raised Belinda in his arms and dashed forward with rapidity, while Captain Harrington in like manner assisted me. Every wave that now approached us, wetted us with its spray.

"Oh, Harvey, why have you thus endangered your own life," almost shrieked Belinda, as her arms wildly clasped his neck; "for mercy's sake leave me and fly."

"Compose yourself, my beloved," replied the agitated young man; "we may yet be in time, and if not, we will die even thus together."

"Oh no, no, no—most dreadful—most awful."

"Has death then such terrors for Belinda?"

"I think only of you; if you were but safe, I should die in peace."

He pressed her affectionately, but I saw that his strength began to fail under his fair burden, and he

was obliged to lean against the cliff for support—it was a fearful moment for us all.

"I remember there used to be a cave near this spot," said Captain Harrington, who, from having braved constant dangers, was perfectly calm and composed. He commenced a strict search, and at length discovered the aperture, which was ingeniously concealed by a collection of stones and loose fragments.

"Now, God be praised, we are safe," he exclaimed; "Blanchard, can you carry the child so far; if not, give her to me."

But Blanchard would not relinquish his interesting charge, whose sweet pale face rested on his shoulder. With tottering steps he ascended the stairs, if such they might be termed, and gained the interior of the cavern. Here he deposited her in safety on a block of stone, and then turned to assist us. When again Belinda beheld me by her side, she fell upon my bosom and wept floods of tears, while we both returned thanks, in broken accents, to the giver of all good, for our miraculous preservation from a frightful death.

"Bless my heart, I never had such a chase before," said uncle Sam, panting, and applying his handkerchief to his face; "Mrs. Mary, my dear, you are no feather, I can assure you; and really for a sage maiden like you to bring us into such a scrape, there is no excuse. Aye, I never knew it otherwise in my life, wherever mischief is in the wind, a woman has been sure to raise it—her insatiable curiosity turned us out of Paradise, and methinks she has given us many a sour apple since then to chew for our sorrow. Bell, what are you whimpering for, you silly girl, that won't mend matters, since here you must remain till the tide ebbs again."

Blanchard now examined the cave more minutely, as he was anxious to find a more sheltered nook for Belinda. In his search he discovered a deep recess, whither we adjourned, while uncle Sam continued to scold, half in jest, half in earnest. Our situation was certainly by no means promising—yet we had too much cause for gratitude to repine. Blanchard placed himself by Belinda, and strove to soothe her agitation.

"No harin can reach you here," he said; "if you have only patience to bear with the present discomfort—but I fear you are cold," he continued, taking her hand; "shall I try and collect materials for kindling a fire?"

"Oh, no, no, leave me not, I beseech you," she replied, clinging to him; "I am only happy when I know you are safe."

Most tenderly did his deep and eloquent blue eyes rest upon her as she uttered this, for in such a moment her feelings could not be controlled—she beheld in him her preserver, and every fault for the time being was forgotten.