

## Never Despair.

As they were alighting from the carriage at the door of Mrs. Murray's house, a man, haggard and travel-stained, pressed forward and arrested their steps. It was John Williams, who had been the tool used to gain the evidence which had led to Mr. Aubrey's condemnation.

"Is he condemned?" he asked eagerly. "He must not die. I will save him, or die too."

"How can you save him?" exclaimed Frederic. "The warrant for his execution is to be sent down to the village to-morrow evening."

"Oh, that it could be delayed!" sighed Williams. "They say the Queen cannot live many days. My daughter is servant to one of the royal physicians, and she has overheard that even a few hours may end her Majesty's life.—I will do it!"

"Do what?" said Frederic, in astonishment.

"Save your father's life, or die!" he said in an excited whisper, and without waiting to explain he walked quickly away.

It was a lovely autumn morning, warm and bright. Although late in August, yet nature still looked gay and blooming, but the blue skies and the brightness seemed only to mock the many mourning hearts in Mr. Aubrey's parish.

Groups were standing about in the principal street; some talking earnestly, others scarce able to forbear weeping, for the clergyman they had so long known and loved, as a kindly neighbour, if not as their spiritual pastor, was to pass through the village that day on his way to the jail, previous to his execution on the following morning.

In the afternoon the tidings spread from lip to lip that he was approaching, and shortly a strong body of officials, well armed and mounted clattered along the village street, having as their prisoner Mr. Aubrey, who was pinioned, and strongly secured to the horse on which he rode. As the people thronged around, his pale face flushed, and he bowed his head in answer to their sympathy and greetings, but the way was quickly cleared, and he was hurried on towards his destination.

As he passed the entrance to his once happy home, now so deserted and sorrowful, his firmness gave way. But it was only for a moment; and with a calm and peaceful resignation he entered his gloomy cell, there to await his death upon the morrow.

Mrs. Aubrey and her son had already returned home, and that night the last parting was to take place. Frederic had told his mother of his interview with Williams, and of that unhappy man's resolve to save his father or die with him, but they could not hope. They felt that they had no grounds for doing so. Together the weeping family knelt and prayed for endurance and resignation, and then more calmly waited for the hour when the sad farewell must be said.

After leaving Frederic, Williams had set out on foot for his home. Weary and miserable he reached his cottage late in the evening. After a few hours' rest he set himself with energy to the scheme he had devised. His object was to intercept the village courier, who brought the post-bags, and get possession of Mr. Aubrey's death warrant, hoping that if he could do this the unhappy Queen might die before another could be obtained, and