

This was said by William Armstrong to his companion, one of his satellites obsequious to his high behests, as the whole crew of that doomed vessel at anchor in the mouth of the inlet, even the vessel itself, as well as all within it, being under his command.

"Fear ye not," the other replied; "but that, were she even more than the angel you have represented her to be, we'll have her here in that old witch's cottage yonder, and at your mercy, in less than two hours hence, or my name is not James Gorman."

On this compact being formed, the two *worthies* parted—the one for the boat, to row up with his crew towards Millam, where Bella Millway lived, as far at least as the ebbing tide would permit, which was not more than a mile or so, while the other pursued his onward course towards old Marty's hut.

We, of course, knew nothing of all this at the time, but my mind mis-gave me that there was something wrong, when, on reaching home, we found that Bella Millway was not there, but had just gone off with a strange and suspicious-looking man—no one knew whither.

"Something very dreadful had occurred," her fellow servant said, but what it was she could not tell, further than it was a matter of life and death, and that Bella was crying as bitterly as if her heart would break, when she told her, as she went away, that she would be back by daylight in the morning.

So far, my Aunt Phœbe's notes and memoranda,—but there is wanting here, one of those connecting links, she requested me to make, in order to show how it happened that William Armstrong's messenger reached the house before they did, and why they did not meet him on his return, with his unsuspecting victim in his power.

When first they saw him in the boat, they were, as the reader may naturally have supposed, as near the house as he was, and such indeed was the case, but when he left his boat, he was on one side of the little strip of water, left by the tide while they were on the other, so that to get round its extremest point, their path formed as it were the bow, the string of which was his, and thus, so much shorter was it, that he was back to the boat again, by the time they reached the house.

We had a long talk that night before we went to bed, about poor Bella's sad misfortune, as we all considered it, for we guessed at the truth, in looking at the whole transaction as a cunning device of her unworthy lover, to inveigle her aboard his brig, when she would be entirely at his mercy.

We doubted not, from her brother David's superior judgment in such matters, that the smuggling lugger, we had seen at anchor in the mouth of the inlet, was either under William Armstrong's command, or, that he was a high and influential personage on board of her, and could therefore, in either case, command her crew, or such portion of it, as he might require, for any adventurous enterprise, whether connected with his illicit trade or not, which he chose to undertake. These surmises and guesses, and they were nothing more, all turned out, as the sequel will show, to be correct, although attended, through the intervention of a merciful providence, with results very different from those that were anticipated.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MYSTERY.

"No Ronald, yet! though moonlight came
And sad were Moy's prophetic dreams,
As bending o'er the dying flame,
He fed the watchfire's quivering gleams."

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O! gentle huntsman, hast thou seen,
In deep Glenfinlas' moonlight glade,
A lovely maid in vest of green!

GLENFINLAS.

The next morning's dawn, which was to have brought the lost one back, and clear up all, only involved us in deeper mystery. The servants, it appeared, had persuaded her brother David to stay all night, so that he might be on the spot to take whatever steps should be thought expedient to rescue his sister from the ruffian's hands she had fallen into, in case she did not return herself, in the morning. But, he too was gone, and the shake-down they had made him by the kitchen fire, had not been used.

Time never seems to move so sluggishly along, as when we are in suspense—when the mind is quivering in the balance betwixt hope and fear. Hour after hour, slowly passed away, and the noontide came at length, but brought to us no tidings of poor Bella Millway.

We had sent messenger after messenger to the heights that overlook the sands and the bay, to ascertain if the two vessels were still where we had seen them the night before, but not one of them returned to tell us. At last, our whole stock of patience was fairly exhausted, and our anxiety overcame our fears, and we sallied forth to see for ourselves.

As we ascended the hill, the sun shone brightly on our path—the weather was mild and even