

stumbled and fell, when she was again in the hands of her enemies, who dragged her to the very edge of a deep and dizzy precipice, first tearing her from his bridle rein, to which, shrieking for mercy, she clung with such tenacity that they had to cut loose her hold, in doing which her hand was wounded. But, heedless of the pain, she raised it to her head to turn aside her auburn locks from off her eyes, as if to see the peril she was in, in doing which her pale and deathlike face was stained with streaks of blood; and this was turned on him with such a look of helplessness as words could not have spoken. On he rushed in headlong fury to her rescue, but they had done the deed; he saw her pushed from off the dizzy height—he saw her bloody hand held out for him to help—he felt the warm and purple drops upon his own, which he stretched out in vain to save her—he heard a loud exulting shout behind him, as if the voices of a thousand demons met his ear; but ere she reached the bottom to be dashed to pieces on the broken fragments of the fallen rock—for he saw her falling down, down, into that fearful abyss—he awoke, and lo, it was all a dream!

But before he could persuade himself that all this was not reality, the sun had thrown the shadow of his casement upon his chamber wall, and in a few minutes he was up and dressed and mounted and away; as if such haste could save his Alice from the fearful fate to which his feverish dream had led his waking thoughts to see her doomed. And never did master Harry Netherby's habit of early rising stand him in greater stead than on this eventful morning.

But his foot was hardly in the stirrup, when a smart and groom-like looking serving man, mounted on a good and well appointed horse, rode up to the door of the "Dun-Cow," and as he met our hero just starting on his homeward journey, looked at him rather earnestly; and before they had separated beyond a speaking distance, he stopped and turned to look again, when perceiving he was noticed, he asked, respectfully touching his hat and apologising for addressing a stranger, if he was the master of Hellbeck Hall?

"I am," was the short but prompt reply, astonished though he was at being thus recognised at every turn, in a place so far from home, and where he had never been before.

"Then, Sir, I've a letter for you," at the same moment handing him a small note, which master Harry took, and scanned with curious and scrutinising eye the superscription, which certainly shewed as plain as could be written that it was meant for him—"To Harry Netherby, Esquire, of Hellbeck Hall, to the care of the landlord of

the Dun-Cow, Orton," and on the corner was the following—"To be delivered immediately;" but the hand writing he could not remember ever having seen before; he then turned it in his hand as if to break the seal, within whose little circle some delicate flower had been depicted, and then partially defaced, yet still one leaf—one bud was left; but he was not a florist, and what it meant he could not tell.

"From whence?" he asked the messenger, who he now perceived was anxious to return: "from whence is this?"

"His contents, Sir, I doubt not," said the man, as again he touched his hat, "will tell you more than I can."

Master Harry bit his lip under this implied rebuke, and broke the seal; but ere he read the few words of ominous warning it contained, the man was gone, as if to avoid further questioning. The tenor of the note ran thus:—

"As master Harry Netherby values his life, let him return by Oddendale Head, for there is danger, if not death, in every nearer road."

"By Oddendale Head! how strange!" he said, "that this should be the route I meant to take. Danger and death!" he repeated after reading again and again the mysterious note; "danger and death never yet turned a Netherby from his path, and shall not now, for the very road I am warned against I will take, and woe betide the crafty wretch who dares to stop me. 'As I value my life,' forsooth! the writer little knows the trifling worth I set upon it. But who can the writer be? here no one knows me; and yet, were I to judge from what has transpired within the last twelve hours, I should not be a whit more certainly and readily identified in Knock or Dufton, at the foot of Dunfell. 'I will see,' he continued, as on he spurred to Oddendale Head; 'I will see poor Bridget Hebson, or whatever her name is now, and then for the 'death and danger' in the road to Hellbeck Hall!'"

Half an hour's ride over the heathery waste, brought him to the little green spot, where, according to the directions he had received, he found the nurse's dwelling, a little lone cottage on the Fell side, surrounded with a stone wall enclosing a patch of ground of about a quarter of an acre, composing her garden, which appeared to be carefully cultivated and interspersed with well-trimmed gooseberry bushes, and each side of the narrow walk between the wicket and the cottage was ornamented with a border of strawberries, whose long trailing shoots were kept from creeping over the paths by an interminable little edging of box, cut with such neatness and precision as to indicate one of the characteristics of the