

done amiss by erring mortals, will judge it kindly and mercifully, and I shall yet be united, I know I shall, and that for evermore, with William Armstrong, my betrothed :

"Where pain and parting are no more,

In that sweet world of love."

We saw at once the cause of all her grief.—William Armstrong, her betrothed, was dead.

But how came he, thus prematurely, to his end ? was a question which involved in still deeper mystery, the occurrences of the last three days, and we were all consequently the more eagerly anxious to hear it fully answered.

But this was a task which Bella, from her want of knowledge, on some material points, could not satisfactorily perform.

He had been shot, she knew, but how or why, she could not tell. The ball had penetrated the stomach (by which, as we afterwards learnt, she meant the abdomen,) and lodged there : "and all the time since then," she went on to say, "till this very afternoon, when he was mercifully released from pain, he suffered dreadfully, and O ! how thankful I was and still am, that I was so providentially there, to tend and soothe him in his dying moments."

"I say providentially there" she added, "because I was sent for, for a far other purpose." Here she passed lightly over the deception that had been practised upon her.

We did not like to question her further on so painful a subject, besides we did not like to detain her longer from her intended journey to her father's, to get him to see about the funeral.

However much we might sympathise with poor Bella in her distress, we could hardly regret the cause of it. To be released from an engagement, which could not well have resulted in any thing, but misery and ruin, could scarcely be regarded as a misfortune.

As to William Armstrong's penitence it would be uncharitable and might be unjust to say it was not sincere ; but little reliance I fear is to be placed, under any circumstances, upon a death-bed repentance ; we are not however to prescribe limits to this saving grace to the returning sinner. Nay, we have the authority of Holy Writ for a very different doctrine. "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out," but poor Bella was satisfied and believed that he was saved, and had we known better it would have been worse than cruel to have undeceived her,—it would have deprived her of her only remaining solace through all her after life, and broken her heart.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PASSING BELL.

HEAR the tolling of the bells,
Iron bells !

What a world of solemn thought, their monody compels !

In the silence of the night,
How we shiver with affright, at the melancholy menace of their tone !

For every sound that floats,
From the rust within their throats,
Is a groan !

EDWARD POE.

ALTHOUGH young David Millway, after the most minute enquiries, and the strictest search, could find no clue to guide him to William Armstrong's hiding place, yet, as far along that coast, as the sound of the solemn death-bell could reach, there was hardly a man, who heard it, that could not have told at once whose soul had passed away.

They well knew where he was, and what had happened to him ; but as he was a smuggler, their sympathies were with him, because they themselves were little better, and they would not tell ; but it was no longer necessary to keep the secret, now that the great bell, in the lone church tower that overlooks the sea, had announced his death.

The misfortune that befel him, and brought him to his end, was now openly and freely talked about, by everybody ; and at length it reached the ears of the Coroner. That officer, as in duty bound, summoned a jury, and an inquest was held, forthwith, upon the body.

Old Matty Deadenham was the principal, if not the only witness that was examined, or that could throw any material light upon the matter, and she knew little more than what he himself had told her.

It appeared from old Matty's evidence, and from other sources of information, that the deceased, after giving James Gorman his final instructions about inveigling Bella Millway from her home, had straightway ascended the hill ; and that on reaching its highest point, or a point at any rate, high enough to command a view of the little sheltered bay beyond it, he saw in the fitful glances of the moon, as she hurried through the broken clouds, the spars and rigging of the cutter ; and then ran to the rude flag-staff on the extreme point of the headland, for the purpose of hoisting a lantern, which he had got from old Matty, as a signal, to his comrades in the lugger, that danger was near.

The officer in command of the cutter had been