

will be swallowed up in agony—uncertainty in despair!"

"I will bide my sentence like a man, whatever it may be, and will never disgrace my last moments with confessions that would prove me weak and cowardly."

"You will be given small time, man of blood! Quick as the flash of lightning precedes the bursting of the thunder, so sudden and unexpected will be your death."

"I thank you, Rachel, for these glorious tidings. I always dreaded a long, lingering death. Have you any more parting words of comfort?"

"Yes," said the woman, rising up slowly in her bed, and grasping convulsively his arm. "As you would have God mitigate your future punishment, harm not you innocent girl who loves you."

"May I perish to all eternity if one hair of her head receives injury from me," said Tasker, vehemently. The old woman relaxed her hold, fell back upon her pillow, and expired. The captain hastily threw part of the old sail over her ghastly face, and turned to Mildred, who, almost as pale as the dead, was leaning against the open door.

"You have heard what this old woman said concerning me, Mildred Rosier. If you wish to be guided by her dying advice, I will give up the blessed chain you have given me upon your heart, and we will part upon this melancholy spot for ever."

"I know not what to think," returned Mildred. "However painful to our feelings the sacrifice must be, it would be for the best."

"Calmly and dispassionately, Mildred—is this your real determination?"

There was a long, long pause. Mildred several times tried to speak, but the words, which would have divided her for ever from the man she loved, died away upon her lips. He saw his advantage. His fine dark eyes were upon her, and they read the locked up secret of her heart. "Mildred," he said, "before we separate for ever, it is but fair that you should know somewhat of the history of the unfortunate you have dared to love. Yes! here in the presence of my accuser, listen to the tale of woe and crime."

With all the pathos which passion gives to the speaker whose wrongs are the subject of his oratory, did Captain Tasker relate to his auditor, already too deeply prejudiced in his favour, the mournful history of his life and sufferings. Ah! well did he know the impression that such a tale was likely to make upon an ardent and sensitive mind. If Mildred had loved him before, her love was now blended with pity, and every tender sympathy of her nature was forcibly awakened in his behalf. She was the last tie that held him

to the world. If that tie was broken and she deserted him, what would be the result? In all probability, his everlasting destruction. No! Come what would, she never would renounce him. She would stand by him, would love him to the last; and listening only to the impulses of passion, she gave a solemn promise to that effect.

Why did she start and gaze so fearfully towards the shrouded figure of the dead? Was the coverlid really removed, and did she actually see the witch frown upon her? This was but delusion, but it possessed for her a terrible reality. Steps sounded at the door. She turned to warn her lover of the circumstance, but he had disappeared, and Mr. Strong, and a poor woman from the village, arrived, to render what assistance they could to the dying woman.

"She is gone to her long account," said Mildred; "and it is melancholy to add, that she died without hope."

"Alas! for the sinner of a hundred years," returned the minister, slowly lifting up the sail, and gazing long and mournfully upon the face of the dead. "What an humbling lesson to human pride is here! The remains of what was once beautiful, can still be traced in the fine features which composed this countenance. But, oh! the hideous lines which sin has stamped upon this face, to mar and despoil the clay of the image it first received from the hand of its Creator! Yes, Mildred Rosier! well may your tears fall down. This wretched, lost being, was once as fair, as young, as respectably born as you are. She cast off the control of parents. She followed the lawless dictates of passion, and would receive no counsel, but that which proceeded from an ill-regulated mind; and what, my child, has been the result! A life of obloquy and want, and a death of misery and despair! Take a solemn warning from this poor creature's fate, nor let your steps be found in the path of the destroyer."

Mildred felt her conscience reproach her. She knew that she had broken the solemn promise she had given to Mr. Strong; that she would hold no further communication with the smuggler without his consent, and she turned away without answering a word. The good minister concluded that the terrible scene she had witnessed had been too much for her nerves; and he hastened to her side.

"You are ill, Miss Rosier. This is no place for you. Let me see you safe home."

"Please, sir," said the poor woman who had accompanied him, "I hope you don't mean to leave me alone with the witch."

"Why, Mrs. Skelton," (for it was old Joel's wife,) "what harm can she do you now?"

"Ah! Sir, she was an awfully wicked woman,