

if she would only move; which she accordingly did very slowly, poor darling, for she was a good deal bruised and shaken. I was on my feet in a second, and rather delighted with the novelty and excitement. Mamma and I had fallen out on the first landing, as it were, of the steep mountain side, not very far from the top. She desired me to tell her what I could see of the others; so I rushed about in great excitement and delight, reporting my observations. In a tall cotton-tree below us I caught a glimpse of the nurse and Jessie lodged like birds in the upper branches. I announced that nurse was lying quite still, holding Jessie's frock, but the poor little girl was kicking vigorously and crying to be taken down. Papa I could see on the road above, with his hat and coat off, and literally tearing his hair out with his hands—the only time in my life I have ever seen any one do this. There were bonnets, shawls, books, &c. strewn all about, and I was particularly delighted to perceive a very smart embroidered parasol belonging to Aunt Nelly lying near me. I must confess to being very naughty indeed about this parasol, and I will tell you how. Mamma asked me if the carriage or horses were to be seen, but though I fancied there was something dark in the bed of the river below us, it was impossible to tell what it might be, and, selfish, naughty little girl that I was, I felt very anxious to get away from her with my prize, the parasol, which I had always been strictly forbidden to touch. I suggested, therefore, calling Papa to help Jessie and nurse out of the cotton-tree, and so escaped with the parasol tucked under my arm. Poor Papa was very glad to see me unhurt, and to hear that Mamma was also safe, and on my pointing out the cliff under which she was still lying, he prepared to go to her assistance first. Joe had been already despatched to a place where a detachment of soldiers was quartered in those days, about three miles off, with an entreaty from Papa to the commanding officer to send a cart directly to our help, and also the surgeon. The sun was now fast setting, and I thought with sorrow that my precious parasol would soon be useless, as there would be no sun from which to shelter: but I determined to avail myself of the few moments left; so I opened it and strutted up and down the road. What a ridiculous little object I must have looked!—my frock, &c. torn to ribbons; my bonnet crushed quite flat, and now hanging down my back (the doctor said afterwards its thickness had saved my head from a frightful blow, as the straw was quite cut through in one place), and my thick shock head of

hair all blowing about my face: think of the contrast of this little beggar-girl's appearance to a very smart light-coloured parasol embroidered in bright silks! I can distinctly remember my surprise at finding that my successful piece of disobedience did not make me so happy as I expected it would; on the contrary, my conscience began to prick me horribly. I seemed to hear a voice telling me quite plainly how wicked it was to take advantage of my poor aunt's absence to do what she had forbidden; in short, I was so tormented by the clamour of these internal reproofs, that I hastily closed the parasol and put it carefully on one side, resolving to confess my naughtiness as soon as possible. I must tell you here that I went about with this burden on my mind for many days before any one would listen to my penitent acknowledgment, and then I was fully and freely forgiven, and *never* wished to touch the parasol again.

I have only fitful gleams of memory about what followed. I fancy I see dear Mamma sitting on some of the carriage cushions, and leaning against the rocks by the roadside. I see Jessie in Papa's arms, choking and coughing, and I heard afterwards that in her struggles she had fallen from the branch which caught her, headforemost into the hollow of the old cotton-tree, and had been nearly smothered by a fine powder, caused by decay, with which the vast trunk was filled. Here I am going to make a little digression to explain something to you. The cotton-tree of which I have spoken is quite different from the cotton-plant which furnishes us with all our calico and our pretty cotton frocks. *That* cotton is the snow-white contents of a small pod about as big as an egg. First there is a bright yellow flower on the shrub (for it never grows more than eight or nine feet high), then a pod succeeds quickly to the blossom, and when this bursts the little tree looks so pretty with these tufts of cotton on it, each with some seeds inside. It grows freely in Jamaica, but is not cultivated to any great extent. All the cotton we use comes from India and America, and some even from the South Sea Islands. Now the cotton-trees I have been telling you of as growing in the forests are as big as elms or beeches, and with very thick trunks. They also bear a pod full of cotton, but it is quite useless, though it is exquisitely soft and fine. In the first place, it is a light-brown colour, just like a mouse's back, and in the next place it is quite full of little seeds the size of apple pips. Sometimes the negroes collect this silky down to stuff a pillow, but it takes such an immense time to separate it from these little seeds