

I now felt that, save for the gleam of the sun on the glistening chlorite,—seen not a moment too soon,—I would probably have been substituted as the victim for poor Mackay, and that he, warned by my fate, would, in all likelihood, have escaped. And though I knew it might be asked, Why the interposition of a Providence to save *you*, when he was left to perish? I *did* feel that I did not owe my escape merely to my acquaintance with chlorite and its properties. For the full development of the moral instincts of our nature, one may lead a life by much too quiet and too secure: a sprinkling in one's lot of sudden perils and hair-breadth escapes is, I am convinced, more wholesome, if positive superstition be avoided, than a total absence of danger. For my own part, though I have, I trust, ever believed in the doctrine of a particular Providence, it has been always some narrow escape that has given me my best evidences of the vitality and strength of the belief within. It has been ever the touch of danger that has rendered it strongly emotional. A few years after this time, when stooping forward to examine an opening fissure in a rock front, at which I was engaged in quarrying, a stone, detached from above by a sudden gust of wind, brushed so closely past my head as to beat down the projecting front of my bonnet, and then dented into a deep hollow the sward at my feet. There was nothing that was not perfectly natural in the occurrence; but the gush of acknowledgment that burst spontaneously from my heart would have set at nought the scepticism which would have held that there was no Providence in it. On another occasion, I paused for some time when examining a cave of the old-coast line, directly under its low-browed roof of Old Red conglomerate, as little aware of the presence of danger as if I had been standing under the dome of St. Paul's; but when I next passed the way, the roof had fallen, and a mass, huge enough to have given me at once death and burial, cumbered the spot which I had occupied. On yet another occasion, I clambered a few yards down a precipice, to examine some crab-apple trees, which, springing from a turret-like projection of the rock, far from gardens or nurseries, had every