**AMBULANCE OR FENCE**
"'Twas a dangerous cliff, as they freely confessed; Though to walk near its crest was so pleasant;
But over its terrible edge there had slipped, A duke and full many a peasant;
So the people said something would have to be done, But their projects did not at all tally.
Some said, `Put a fence `round the edge of the cliff.', Some, `An ambulance down in the valley.'
But the cry for the ambulance carried the day, For it spread through the neighboring city;
A fence may be useful or not, it is true; But each heart became brimful of pity
For those who slipped over the dangerous cliff, And the dwellers in highway and alley
Gave pounds or gave pence, not to put up a fence, But an ambulance down in the valley.
`For the cliff is all right, if you're careful,' they said, And if folks even slip and are dropping,
It isn't the slipping that hurts them so much, As the shock down below when they're stopping.'
So day after day as these mishaps occurred, Quick forth would the rescuers sally,
To pick up the victims who fell off the cliff, With their ambulance down in the valley.
Then an old sage remarked, `It's a marvel to me, That people give far more attention
To repairing results than to stopping the cause, When they'd much better aim at prevention.
Let us stop at its source all this mischief,' cried he, Come, neighbors and friends, let us rally;
If the cliff we will fence, we might almost dispense With the ambulance down in the valley.'
Better guide well the young than reclaim them when old, For the voice of true wisdom is calling;
`To rescue the fallen is good, but 'tis best, To prevent other people from falling.'
Better close up the source of temptation and crime, Than deliver from dungeon or galley;
Better put a strong fence round the top of the cliff, Than an ambulance down in the valley"