

## A Cautionary Verse

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Editor's Note: This poem was given to me, many years ago, by a good friend named Bob Donselman. He attributed the poem to The Athena Press. That's all that I know of the author or of the source.

T'was 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 on the edge of the cliff."  
Some: "An ambulance down in the valley."

But the cry for the ambulance carried the day,  
And it spread through the neighboring city.  
A fence may be useful or not, it is true,  
But each heart was brim full of pity

For those who slipped over that dangerous edge,  
And dwellers on main street and alley  
Gave pound and 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 ever slip or are dropping,  
It isn't the slipping that hurts them so much  
As the shock down below when they're stopping."

Then an old sage remarked, " 'Tis 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."

"Why, the man's a fanatic," the other rejoined,  
"Dispense with our ambulance? Never!  
He'd destroy all our charities too if he could,  
But no, we'll protect them forever."

"Aren't we picking folks up just as fast as they fall?  
And shall this man dictate to us, shall he?  
Why should people of sense stop to put up a fence  
While the ambulance works in the valley?"