

young man, a sense of gratitude forbade me from giving the least encouragement to his passion. I withdrew myself more from his society, and seldom frequented Mr. Ashford's house, and when James called, which he did daily at the cottage, to enquire after my Father's health, I was rarely visible.

"It was then, and not till then, that I knew the real state of my mind, and the impression which young Ashford had made on my heart. These acts of self-denial, robbed my cheek of its bloom, and my bosom of peace; and I was no longer the gay lively Amy Morris; but a melancholy hopeless creature; cherishing feelings which I was ashamed to reveal.

"Emma remarked the great change that had taken place in my manners and appearance, and Mr. Ashford called on my Father himself, to learn the cause of my estrangement.

"They were shut up some time together. During this long conference, I felt a restless and insatiable desire, to know the meaning of Mr. Ashford's visit. At length, the door opened, and he appeared, his benevolent face irradiated by a smile of inward satisfaction.

"He called me to him, but a new and unusual degree of timidity, kept me from obeying the summons. He took my hand, and kissing my cheek, said,"

"How now little trembler, have you learnt to fear me?"

"He led me into the other room. My Father was sitting in his high-backed arm-chair, his head resting on his clasped hands, and supported by his stick; and standing beside him with a face sparkling with animation and joy, I beheld James Ashford; his manly upright figure, forming a striking contrast with the feebleness and decrepitude of age. My Father raised his sightless eyes as I approached; but when I encountered the

gaze of young Ashford, I drew back. He sprang eagerly forward to meet me, and Mr. Ashford smiling at my confusion, joined our hands and bade us be happy in each other's love! Seeing me about to speak, he interrupted me: "We will take no refusal Amy. Your worthy Father and I have settled the business, and disposed of you as we think for the best—so the only alternative left you, is to be a good and dutiful child, and anticipate our wishes."

"Kind and excellent Mr. Ashford, 'I sanctioned out,' you have indeed anticipated mine."

James looked his thanks as he led me to my Father's feet. The dear old man blessed us with streaming eyes, and in spite of his age and infirmities, declared that moment to be the happiest in his life. From that blissful hour, I considered James Ashford as my future husband, and we loved each other with a tenderness and confidence which can only be felt once—the heart cannot conceive any thing like it a second time. We took sweet counsel daily together, and enjoyed that communion of spirit which can only exist between kindred minds.

"Every preparation was made for our approaching marriage, and Mr. Ashford had agreed to resign his farm to his Son, that we might begin the world under fair auspices.

"The current of our happiness had hitherto run so smoothly, that it appeared destined to experience no alloy, but the storm was even then gathering which overbrowed our highly raised expectations, and converted our smiling paradise into a howling wilderness.

"A large Bank in which Mr. Ashford's property was vested, unexpectedly failed; and he was from this calamity reduced from comparative affluence, to the most cruel poverty! The bills which he had incurred from the various