

each secretly dreaded, and put off until the last moment, as if by mutual consent.

The hay was all cocked, they could no longer linger in the field; and as they strolled homeward, Gilbert had broken the ice, and spoken in such an abrupt and decided manner, that it had aroused in his companion a spirit of resistance; and confirmed her in the course which, after long and painful consideration, she had determined to adopt, not to accept the hand of her lover against the wishes of his father.

The young people leant for a few minutes on the stile, beneath the shade of a large ash tree—the only tree of any magnitude in the heathy lane before them. They would have made a good study for an artist, had an artist been at hand to sketch them and their surroundings.

The sun had sunk behind the common fronting them, which formed a steep ridge against the horizon; and seemed to sepa-