

wealthy days, now shrank from her presence—her applications for assistance were disregarded by them all, and the sneer of the proud and the heartless met her at every turn. Ah! how gladly would she have returned to her native village—but there was none to extend to her the hand of welcome. How did she lament her folly in casting away the generous heart of Walworth. Too truly had his parting words been verified, "The anger of God had overtaken her." Walworth, from the moment of separation from Esther, became an altered man. Misanthropy was stamped upon his visage—society he shunned—with his book alone, did he hold converse, or quitting his couch at midnight, would ramble along the beach—solitary and sad.

Two years after this, in the fall of 1840, he was sojourning in the western part of the state of New York, with a kind family, to whom he was distantly related. They had heard of his melancholy, and kindly persuaded him to visit them, in the hope that a change of scene and associations would restore him to his former state of mind and body. No amusement or comfort was neglected by them that could contribute to his happiness. Among the families to whom he was introduced, was one by the name of Worthington, a name which he had often heard Esther mention, in their days of blessedness, but which now made no particular impression upon his mind, more than serving to call up anew her memory. One evening, he had been invited to a party at their hospitable mansion, and in the course of conversation, he chanced to mention the name of his native village. Mrs. Worthington, one of the most eloquent of the party, all at once became silent, while his kind friend took the first opportunity to change the tenor of the discourse, and withdraw him from the apartment. "My dear Walworth," said he, "perhaps you are not aware that the same cause which has so ruined your peace, has to a great degree, wounded that of this worthy family."

"How mean you?" he asked, astonished at the intelligence. "Esther Wilson is distantly related to them," answered his friend, "and is at this moment, subsisting on their bounty, and I know that any one, possessing a knowledge of her present situation, would be to them the cause of much unhappiness."

"Good heavens! can it be?" exclaimed Henry, "the young and beautiful Esther Wilson reduced to poverty? How—when—where did this occur?"

"But recently."

"And where is she?—injured, as I have been by her, I can yet forgive—pity—and relieve her?"

"Not so, my dear Walworth, her poverty is no crime in the eyes of the Worthingtons—but—come, let us return to the parlor."

Walworth saw by his look, that some great moral error had been committed by Esther, and for a moment felt paralyzed—when, suddenly recovering his presence of mind, "But what," he exclaimed, grasping his arm with the energy of desperation, "for heaven's sake tell me the truth—keep me not in suspense—better death than to live in the agony of doubt."

"Nay, my good Walworth, force me not to an avowal—suspect the worst, you will not be mistaken."

In one moment, he appeared to live his life over again—"his boyhood's home," father, mother, and above all, Esther Wilson stood before him. The scenes of his childhood, the pretty rose-lipped, blue-eyed girl, wandering with him, and in hand, among the woods and valleys—that young girl bursting into maidenhood—and the virgin coyness first betraying itself—then that deep and holy attachment, akin to the beauty of heaven—that night, too, when he received her virtuous betrothal—then her withering behaviour to him in the pride of her plentitude and fortune—all, all, came before him with the vividness of lightning—and now he saw her a blighted, withered flower—a creature dependent upon the charitable pittance of another—an outcast from society, a thing to be pointed at by the finger of scorn—a wanton! Oh! God, how heavy had been her punishment. But to the sequel of his story—that night, on his return home, he found that to sleep was impossible. Conjecture was busy with him—a thousand resolutions were formed, and as quickly broken. First, he thought to seek her out—forgive her, and offer her his hand; but, then did the scorn of the world rise before him—its serpent hiss sounded in his ear, and his heart failed him. Then did he resolve to carry her back to her native village, and to afford her a shelter; but he knew that the busy voice of slander would follow her there. What, then, was to be done? but this—To protect her as far as the rules of propriety would permit,—and with his little means to aid her future days, and assuage her sorrows.

With the dawn, he stood beside the couch of his relative. He imparted to him his resolution and implored him to afford him a clue to her residence. This he would not do. The