

"James looked his thanks, as he led me to my father: The dear old man blessed us with tears in his eyes; and in spite of his poverty and many infirmities, he 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, Arnold, with a tenderness and confidence which can only be felt once. The heart cannot receive such a faithful and lasting impression a second time. We took sweet counsel together, and enjoyed that communion of spirit which can only exist between kindred minds." Arnold sighed deeply as Amy continued.

"Every preparation was made for our approaching marriage. Mr. Ashford 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 almost impossible that we should experience an alloy. But the storm was even then at hand, which burst suddenly upon us, and overthrew all our highly raised expectations. A large county bank, in which Mr. Ashford's property was principally vested, unexpectedly failed; and reduced this worthy man from a state in which though humble, he enjoyed all the comforts of life, to one of comparative poverty. The bills which he had contracted with various tradesmen, in the village, when he took and stocked the farm, were still unpaid, and nearly half a year's rent was due to his landlord. This the squire generously forgave, and with his usual benevolence, enclosed with his letter, a draft on his banker for twenty pounds to supply Mr. Ashford's immediate wants. After the crops in the ground, and the stock upon the farm, were sold, and the creditors faithfully discharged, Mr. Ashford and his family were cast penniless upon the world.

"Alas, this was no time for marrying or being given in marriage; and whenever James and I met, it was only to talk over our blighted hopes, and form fresh plans for the future. Whilst Mr. Ashford's affairs were at this desperate crisis, a brother, who had settled some years before in Upper Canada, wrote to him, inviting him to come out with his family, and he would put them into a good grant of land, and render them all the assistance he could. This offer was too advantageous to be refused, and the Ashfords, grateful to Providence for this interposition in their favour, prepared to bid adieu to their native land. I contemplated the departure of my friends, with feelings of regret which almost amounted to despair. James, on the contrary, was full of hope; and urged me continually to fulfil my engagement, and accompany them across the Atlantic. My heart for one selfish moment yielded to his solicitations; but when I turned to my father, my dear, infirm, blind, old father, I instantly abandoned the unworthy thought. Could I leave him in his old age to the care of strangers, or suffer

him to terminate his virtuous life in a work-house? But he, only alive to my happiness, in the most pathetic manner urged me to accept young Ashford's offer, assuring me that even in the work-house, he should die contented in the thought that his child was the happy wife of the man she loved, and beyond the reach of poverty's heart-withering gripe. James, at length, yielded to my reasoning, and pressing me to his generous heart, told me to keep up my spirits and to be good and cheerful; and as soon as they were comfortably settled in Canada, he would return and take me out as his wife.

"The day of their final departure came too soon, for those who apprehended that the friends whom they then saw, they should behold no more. The Ashfords were to take the coach for London, at the end of this lane. I accompanied them hither. My father tottered to the garden gate, and held up his hands as long as we could distinguish his venerable figure in token of farewell. Mr. Ashford was calm; he even chided me gently for my want of confidence in the wise dispensations of an over-ruling Providence. James was silent, but his silence was more eloquent than words. Emma had left us some days before, and was waiting in town, at the house of a friend, the arrival of her father and brother, so that my heart was spared at that moment, an additional pang.

"Yes, Arnold," continued Amy, with increasing agitation, "it was on this very spot—beneath the shadow of this very tree that we parted. When we arrived in front of the church, the coach was not yet in sight. It was a fine evening in June. The sun had sunk beneath a canopy of crimson and golden clouds; and the low, gothic windows of the church, were illuminated with the reflection of the splendid light. The gorgeous sunset seemed to mock the darkness of my mind. Mr. Ashford sat down on the step of the stile beneath this beautiful ash tree. He was cheerful, and tried to render our separation less painful, by the liveliness of his conversation. But his tenderness failed to produce the desired effect. My heart was bursting, and the tears flowed incessantly from my eyes. Mr. Ashford took off his hat and looked from my pale and agitated face, up to the glaring heavens, as if to implore the father of lights to comfort and restore peace to his afflicted child. The breeze lifted his grey hair from his temples, and the most beautiful and resigned expression pervaded his countenance. He did not speak, but his thoughts were easily read; his face, like a mirror, reflected the objects which were passing through his mind. At length he drew me towards him, and said: "My child, we must part—perhaps for ever. This is the last time we may be permitted to admire this glorious scene together."

I sunk weeping into his arms, he folded me to his heart, and our tears were mingled in deep and si-