

'I have no doubts!' He tried to turn away. Oh, God! how could I be mistaken! He strove, with averted face, to unclasp my hand from his arm, while I heaped word on word. I know not what I said. I only felt—I felt the very act of handing the lines to him had been a wrong. At last he turned towards me. In his look there was something strange: a deadly pallor had chased that heightened color. He held me from him at arms' length, firmly, but not unkindly. A tear stole slowly down his cheek, as he gazed fixedly into my face; then stooping forward, he slightly touched my brow, and left the room hastily. All this passed before the astonished servants, and the equally astonished Mrs. Morton, in a mere minute's space. I flew after him. He was in his room, his head between his hands. I cannot say I ever well knew precisely what passed between us—what were the explanations, or what the reasonings. I retain but the result. It was agreed I should break the subject to Mrs. Morton, whose sense of propriety would save me the ungenerous task which that letter I felt imposed. Although Mr. Manners had urgently resisted, I insisted upon his accompanying her to the next post town.

"I returned to the breakfast table. Sending away the servants, I gave Mrs. Morton the letter. Never was innocence better counterfeited—never was deception more complete. We mingled our tears together; and determined, since the necessity of separation existed, this day, our last together, at least should be devoted to pleasure, as she was to depart early on the morrow. I bade my adieus that night. My husband was to take our eldest boy, and return the next day; so we should be separated one night only. He left me as proposed. His parting was as affectionate as usual; indeed, I thought more so. He seemed relieved of a weight. A servant tapped at the door. He brought our son, to say good bye, and to tell us Mrs. Morton waited. I kissed my child, and shook my husband by the hand. He said, playfully, I should not wear the willow long. But since that hour we have never met!"

At this point of her tale, Mrs. B., (or, as I must henceforth call her, Mrs. Manners,) was so completely overpowered by its recital, that I begged she would adjourn the sequel to a calmer moment. Fortunately, too, I remembered that a friend at New York had written me respecting a consumptive patient, who was to visit our neighborhood, in whose behalf he was so much interested, as to bespeak not only the most earnest medical attention from me, but likewise the little stewardcy of providing accommodations. I, being a bachelor, had to seek without; and as a day or two only would intervene, the execution of that commission, I pleaded to Mrs. Manners, as an additional reason for delay, although her earnest melancholy, and severe mental suffering, was the true one.