

red beams of the newly risen sun flashed full upon his pale and emaciated face.

"It is enough my child, I feel the warmth of his beams, but I shall never behold them in this world again."

"He folded his hands together and bowed himself upon the bed, while his pale lips moved for some time, apparently in earnest prayer. He could not behold my tears, and I hid my grief from him, for I perceived that it would increase the weight of his calamity. He slowly recovered, and his helplessness rendered him an object of tenfold interest, and strengthened the tender tie which bound him to my heart. He could no longer labour for his own support; and, roused by the imperious call of duty, I worked hard to procure for him the necessities of life. My exertions far exceeded my strength, and I should have sunk under the complicated fatigues of mind and body, when it pleased the Almighty being, who had called me to endure these trials, to raise me up a friend, at the period when I most doubted the all-sufficiency of his protecting arm.

"Mr. Jones, our old neighbour, left his farm on the common, and a Mr. Ashford hired it of Squire Hurdlestone. He was a native of one of the midland counties. His family consisted of one son, and a daughter about my own age. I offered my services to the new comers, and assisted them to arrange and unpack their furniture. I could not wholly forget, whilst talking to Miss Ashford, that I had been a farmer's daughter myself, and though reduced by misfortunes, which could neither be foreseen nor avoided, to my present condition, I still enjoyed the benefits arising from a respectable education. My manners ill accorded with the meanness of my apparel. Mr. Ashford remarked this, and made himself acquainted with our history, and from that time I became a frequent visitor at his house; and my poor father wanted no comfort which his bounty could supply. The generous interest which this benevolent man took in our welfare was acknowledged by us with gratitude, which was more deeply felt than expressed in words.

"Emma and James Ashford were my constant companions, and a day seldom passed without some friendly intercourse between us. My father was as often led to his favourite seat, beneath the old maple tree in the garden, by the young Ashfords as he was by me; and James seemed to feel a peculiar pleasure in reading to his aged and sightless friend, when he returned at evening or noon from the labours of the field. The attention which was paid to me by this clever and amiable young man, did not escape my father's notice; and he mentioned the circumstance to me, with all the fond and excusable pride of a parent, contemplating the future happiness of a beloved and only child. The discovery gave me great pain; for though on analyzing my feelings, I found them equally inclined

to favour his suit, a sense of gratitude to the father, forbade me to encourage the addresses of the son. I avoided his society, went less frequently to Mr. Ashford's, and always contrived to be absent when James called at the cottage, which was daily, to enquire after my father's health. It was then, and not till then, that I became acquainted with the real state of my heart, and the impression which young Ashford's attentions had made upon it. These acts of self denial robbed my cheek of its bloom, and my bosom of peace. I was no longer the gay, happy Amy Morris, but a melancholy, hopeless creature, cherishing a passion, which I considered myself bound in duty to conceal. Emma remarked the great change which had taken place in my manners and appearance, and Mr. Ashford called at the cottage one morning to learn of my father the cause of my estrangement. They were shut up for some time together, and during their conference I felt a restless desire to know the meaning of Mr. Ashford's long visit. At length the door opened, and he came out to me. I was in the garden pretending to fasten up a branch of one of the rose-trees, which the wind had loosened from the wall; but, in reality, it was only an excuse to conceal my anxiety. Mr. Ashford called me to him, his benevolent face was irradiated by a smile of inward satisfaction. An unusual degree of timidity kept me aloof. He took my hand, and kissing my cheek, said:

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

My eyes were full of tears, I could make no reply; and I suffered him to lead me passively into the house. My dear father was sitting in his high-backed arm chair, his head bent upon the clasped hands that rested on the top of his stick; and standing beside him, with a face sparkling with joyful animation, I beheld James Ashford; his manly upright figure, and healthy complexion, forming a striking contrast to the white locks, and feeble drooping attitude of age. My father raised his sightless eyes as I approached; but when I encountered the glance of my delighted lover, I coloured deeply, and drew involuntarily back. He sprang forward to meet me, and whispered in my ear:—
'Amy, you can make me so happy.'

"My hand trembled in his; a thick mist floated before my eyes, as Mr. Ashford, stepping forward, joined our hands and bade us be happy in each other's love. Seeing me about to speak, he playfully 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. The only alternative now left to you, is to be a good and dutiful child, and anticipate our wishes.'

"Dear, generous Mr. Ashford,' I faltered out at last; 'you have indeed, anticipated mine.'