

gested that they should depart, and took her hand to lead her from the cell, a scream of loud and bitter agony burst from the wretched maniac. "Agnes!—Agnes!" he cried, and his wailing was as the lamentation of a lost spirit. Anguish overpowered her, and she was borne insensible from the cell, in her father's arms.

Seven long and dreary years passed, and the mind of Henry was still bewildered; still was he an inmate of the melancholy asylum, and no hope was entertained of his recovery. But the heart of Agnes knew no change—for him she still shed the secret tear, and offered up the secret prayer.

But her father's fortunes were altered.—He had been induced to enter into a speculation with one who deceived him, and in it the industry of years was swallowed up and lost. He was obliged to leave his farm, and he now resided in a small cottage in its neighbourhood. Still, there were many who sought the hand of the fair Rose of Till-side; but she chose rather to brood over the remembrance of poor, ruined Henry, than to listen to their addresses. But amongst them was a young gentleman named Walker, whose condition was far above hers, and, who for two years had vainly sought a place in her affections. In the day of her father's distress, he had been his friend, and he yet sought to place him again in a state of independence. The health of Mr. Percy, also, began to decline; the infirmities of age were growing upon him; and the little he had been able to save from the wreck of his capital, was wasting rapidly away. He became melancholy with the thought that he should die a pauper, or leave his wife and his daughter in want; and, in the presence of Agnes, he often spoke of Mr. Walker—of the excellence of his character—of his wealth—of what he had done for him, in the midst of his misfortunes—of what he still desired to do—and of his affection for her. She listened to her father's words in sorrow and in silence, and, on her pillow by night, she wept because of them. To her the remembrance of Henry Cranstoun was dearer than the temptations of wealth, and her heart clung to him with a constancy which neither time, misery, nor hopelessness could shake. She was grateful to her father's friend for the kindness he had shewn him, and for the generosity of the proposals he had made—yet she found that she could not love him, that her bosom had room for none but Henry.

Poverty, however, entered her parent's dwelling, and her father seemed drooping for lack of nourishment, which his increasing feebleness required. Her mother, too, sat silent and melancholy, occasionally raising her eyes to her daughter's face, with a look that implored her to save her father. The old man had been ordered wine daily; but their penury was now such that they could not purchase it, and the plainest food had become scanty on their table.

Such was their situation, and they were sitting sorrowful together, when Mr. Walker entered the room. He approached Agnes respectfully, he took her hand.

"Dear Agnes," he began, "can one with a kind heart look with indifference on the wants and the sufferings of a father and a mother? It is in your power to make them happy, to restore them to prosperity. For two years I have sought your hand, without meeting one look of encouragement, or one word of hope. Yet believe me, Agnes, I admire the constancy which induces you to cherish a hopeless passion and reject me. I do not for my sake, yet for the sake of your poor father, for that of your fond mother, yea, for your own sake, dearest, permit me to call you mine. I do not ask your love now; give me but your esteem, and I will study to deserve your affection. Dear friends, please for me," he added, addressing her parents.

Her father laid his hand upon hers—"Dear Agnes," said he, "your father is now a poor man—he is very poor. I fear the hand of death is already upon me; and when I am gone, who will provide for your poor mother—who will protect thee, my child? It is the only wish of my heart to see you provided for, and your father would die in peace. And oh, my Agnes, as your father's dying request, permit me to bestow your hand upon this generous youth."

"Save us my sweet one!" cried her mother, and she flung her arms around her daughter's neck.

"It is done!" exclaimed Agnes, bursting into tears, and she stretched out her hand to Mr. Walker.

A few weeks afterwards, and the village bells rang a merry peal, children scattered flowers, and there was joy on every face save upon the face of the fair bride, who went as a sacrifice to the altar. She heard not the words of the clergyman as he read the ceremony. She trembled, she would have fallen to the ground, but that the bride's-maid supported her.