

he would hear but too soon. At first the poor father seemed paralyzed by the suddenness of the stroke, but in a short time his manly energy gathered itself together, and he turned back with the melancholy and disheartened searching party, to make yet another effort towards his daughter's recovery. No one spoke much after that; there were lines of stern sorrow already marked on Mr. Holford's face which kept all the rest of the anxious and mournful little band more silent even than before.

In the chilly light of dawn they now perceived tracks which had escaped them by the partial help of their lanterns, and following these they came at last to a spot where one of the footsteps, evidently the resolute, firm steps of a strong man, turned back again and went in the direction of Weston Farm.

"They left her here," whispered Denham to Ichabod, "as they did Ella and me in the beaver-meadow."

Ichabod nodded, and quietly but quickly they pursued the slurred, uncertain tracks left by the smaller and weaker feet which had also travelled this dreary path. They had not gone very far upon this fainter track when Ichabod, who was in the front of the party, suddenly stopped. Denham, who was immediately behind him, guessed with a sudden heavy thrill at his heart what it was that he had found; with a great effort he stepped forward to Ichabod's side, and then he also stood still. Thus, one by one they gathered round in a little circle, utterly