

mer residence of an opulent family. The grounds were laid out originally with much taste; but it had passed into the hands of various owners. They had cut down the trees that they might not obstruct the view of the road, and suffered the buildings to go to decay, because it cost money to repair them. There was an air of desolate grandeur about the house, that inspired sensations wholly unlike the trim square houses of the village. It was too far from the road, and too large to be tenanted. Besides, the farm was run out. In short, it was unpopular, and nobody would live on it. It was said that it might be "bought for a song," but it was so out of repair and so comfortable, that nobody appeared to purchase it. It had gone through the "pitiless pelting" of a severe winter uninhabited, and nothing could be more dreary than it looked, half buried in snow; but when spring came on, and the grass grew green, and the wild roses blossomed, and the creepers hung clustering about the doors and windows; it was a place that might have tempted any lover of solitude and nature.

In a small country village, however, there are few who come under this class. All have a practical love of nature, but not many a sentimental one; and it was with a degree of contempt that it was discovered, in the month of June, that the house was actually uninhabited. Much speculation was excited, and the place that had stood in desolate neglect became at once an object of curiosity and interest.

I had had some thoughts of purchasing the place, and tried to persuade myself that it would be a good way of investing a small sum, when I learned that a Mr. Forrester had been before-hand with me, and had taken possession of the house. I felt a degree of disappointment that the previously irresolute state of my mind by no means authorised. Soon after this occurrence, I quitted the village, and removed to a different part of the country.

Ten years passed away, and I made no effort to renew my intercourse with my old friend the clergyman. In consequence of indisposition, I found it actually necessary last year to journey. My recollections immediately turned to the village where I had before found health, and I once more directed my course towards it.

It was on Sunday morning that I entered the town of H—, about ten miles from the village. I knew too well the primitive habits of my friend the clergyman to break in upon his Sabbath morning, and I determined to remain where I was till the next day.

It is a church-going place. When I saw couple after couple pass the window of the tavern at which I had stationed myself in mere idleness, I began to feel an inclination to go to the church too.

I entered the nearest one, and when the minister arose, found to my surprise that it was my old friend. He did not appear to have altered since I last saw him; his voice was equally powerful, his person rather fuller. I recognized in his prayers and sermon the same expressions he had used ten years ago—and why not? They were drawn from his book of knowledge. There was still the same simplicity and the same fervour that had first interested me; and when the services were over, and I shook hands with him, it seemed even to me, who am not given to illusion, that we had parted but yesterday. I tried to make out by his appearance whether he was married, but I was baffled—the outer man had undergone no change. He told me that he should return home after the evening service, and invited me to take a seat in his chaise with him. I readily accepted the invitation. When he called for me, he said, "Don't forget your portmanteau, for I must keep you at my house a few days."

As we jogged along, for his horse never departed from his Sunday pace even on week days, I asked him what had become of the Foresters. "Do they still retain the farm that ought to have been mine?" said I. A colour, like the

mellow tint of a russetine apple that had been perfectly preserved through the winter, rose in his cheek as he replied, "Part of my family are there; if you like I will give you an account of them." I assented; but when I found he was settling himself as if for a long story, my heart died within me. I knew his minuteness on every subject, and to have added or diminished an iota would have been to him palpable fraud and injustice. By degrees, however, I became interested in his narrative.

"Soon after you left me, I became intimate with Mr. Forester. He was a sensible, intelligent man, and his wife was a very worthy woman. They had two children, who were full of health and gaiety. Mr. Forester entered upon farming with great zeal, and the place soon wore a different aspect. The venerable trees that had been cut down, could not be restored, but repairs were made, the stone walls rebuilt, and all indicated that the new tenant was a man of order and good habits. He had been accustomed to farming, but he was assiduous in finding out the best and most approved methods of ploughing, planting and managing his land. Nothing could be more successful than his industry. The third year his crops were abundant, and his wife began to talk of her dairy, and exhibit her butter and cheese in the country style. The inhabitants of the village found they managed their affairs so well, that they were content to let them go on without interfering. Mrs. Forester accommodated herself to the habits and customs of those around her with wonderful facility, and was a general favourite.

"Instead of passing the house, as you and I used to do in our walk, I now every evening turned up the avenue, and spent half an hour with them. The children called me uncle, and ran to meet me; their mother, too, would follow them with a step almost as light. She played upon the guitar, and though I was not acquainted with the instrument, and thought it feeble compared to the bass-viol, yet I loved to hear it chiming with her sweet voice.

"When I looked at this happy family, I felt new sympathies springing in my heart, and began to be almost dissatisfied with my solitary home. I sometimes thought Mr. Forester was not as tranquil and contented as his wife; but he had lived in the world, and it was natural that he should feel the want of that society to which he had been accustomed.

"It was on the third year of their residence in the village, that I was invited to visit them with more form than usual. Mrs. Forester said, that she and the children were going to celebrate the fifth anniversary of her marriage. She had many of the fanciful contrivances of her sex to give interest to the daily routine of life. She had placed her table under an arbour, covered with honey-suckles and sweet-briar, and loaded it with fruit and the abundance of her good housewifery. The grass that had been newly mown, was distributed round us in heaps. At a little distance from the arbour, and behind it, stood the large barn, with the huge folding doors open at each end. Through this we had a view of the house, and beyond it the country round, with its fields waving with grain, its peaceful streams, its green valleys, its distant hills; and what in my opinion added greatly to the beauty of the prospect, the spire of my own church, rising from a grove of trees. I must not forget to mention the Merrimack that was in front of us, moving on in the majesty of its deep blue waters, and bearing on its bosom the various craft of inland navigation. It was a glorious scene, and we all felt it such. 'Here at least,' said I, 'we may worship God in the temple of his own beauty!' I looked at Mrs. Forester. Women have quick sensibilities. I saw the tears were coursing each other down her cheeks; but they were like the rain-drops of summer, and her smiles returned more gaily. The children had taken many a trip from the house to the arbour, with their baskets and aprons loaded with cakes and fruits. We all gathered round the table. Mrs. Forester was as gay as her children. She played upon