

fond mother, as she watched the delighted expression which stole over the bronzed sun-burnt face of Fitzgerald; as he bent forward and kissed the slumbering child.

After having contemplated his child with gratified emotion, and after having again kissed the rosy cheek which was half hid by clustering curls, Fitzgerald was about to retire, but Constance detaining him, with a mysterious smile, led him into an adjoining apartment, and drawing the bed-curtains aside, threw the rays of the lamp upon another childish face.

"Charles O'Donnell!" exclaimed Fitzgerald, as he regarded his wife with a look of mingled gratitude and love. "Dear Constance! you have anticipated my every wish. I see that the orphan boy already enjoys a mother's love. How very like his father he is," contemplating the sleeping boy with a look of sadness. "The same lofty forehead, the proudly curved lip, the open expression which even in sleep his young face wears! May thy life be longer than his, and happier, poor boy!" he continued, as he fondly pressed his lips to the cheek of his adopted son.

"You will leave us no more, dear Edward," exclaimed Constance, as they repaired to the supper-room, and she gazed in his face with her dark lustrous eyes, in which a tear trembled at the apprehension of another such separation. "You know not how unhappy I am when you are absent. If for one moment my heart felt light, and in my gaiety I touched my guitar to the songs of my native land which you loved so well, the thought that while I was thus happy and careless, you might be dying in a strange land, without a hand to smooth your pillow, has struck my heart, and reproaching myself for my momentary forgetfulness, my gay song has ended in tears. Edward, you know not how sad I have been!"

"Be sad no longer then, Constance," replied Fitzgerald. "I will not again leave you or Ardmore, towards which, in my wanderings, I have cast many a lingering look. Next to you, dear Constance, my tenantry demand my solicitude. I fear that in my absence they have been harshly treated. But I trust there is time enough in store for us to do all this. I must remain at home and do all in my power to atone for bringing you away from your own sunny land, and planting you in this ruder soil."

"Do not speak of that, Edward," replied Constance. "Italy, though the land of my birth, possesses now no charms for me. I am happy, perfectly happy. My world is now here."

CHAPTER III.

Away from the dwellings of care-worn men,
The waters are sparkling in wood and glen,
Away from the chamber and dusky hearth,
The young leaves are dancing in breezy mirth,
Their light stems thrill to the wild-wood strains,
And youth is abroad in my green domains.

HEMANS.

WHAT happiness now shed its light upon the inmates of Ardmore! Captain Fitzgerald's health was completely re-established, and his wife's fears on that account were allayed. All was sunshine since he had returned, and that heartfelt cheerfulness, which virtue and contentment impart, pervaded the domestic circle of this happy home. But it was not to his own family alone that Fitzgerald limited the kindness of a generous heart. The condition of his numerous tenantry, since his return, had been greatly improved, and although his residence had been but brief, his name was already breathed in accents of the deepest gratitude and respect. Providence had bestowed wealth upon him, and he did not abuse her gift. Riches, like genius, can either be converted to the most noble or the basest purposes, and either is a powerful agent in whatever manner it may be employed. A school-house was beginning to rear its walls in the neighbouring village, and everything upon the estate began to wear an appearance of improvement. The small gardens which had formerly run to waste, and through neglect had become perfect wildernesses, were being brought into a state of cultivation. Houses, which through indolence were falling into ruin, were repaired, and an air of plenty and comfort was diffused around.

The house of Ardmore, itself, was an ancient structure. The main building had originally been lofty and correct in its proportions, but each succeeding lord had added to or diminished from its dimensions, as munificence or caprice dictated till it now stood as faithful a record of the dispositions of the successive proprietors as the dim portraits which adorned the hall, represented their outward appearance. Before the house, and stretching down to the banks of a small lake, over which glided two stately swans, was a lawn smooth as velvet, over which a few venerable trees cast their dark shadows. In the distance, gently sloping hills relieved the landscape from tameness, and thus presented that variety which is so charming to the eye. To complete the scene, a merry little group are emerging from the wood behind the house, laughing and talking with the careless glee of childhood, Constance mounted on a diminutive pony, and receiving from Charles