

few attain. That elderly gentleman to whom he has just now bowed, and who in his dress rises so superior to all the rules of fashion to which we moderns yield such implicit obedience, is one of the most learned, eccentric men of the day. I hope you will have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with him, and of listening to his conversation, which possesses the power of making you forget the oddities of the man in the presence of the genius. But here comes Mrs. Murray and her four daughters," directing his attention to a middle-aged lady who was making her way up the room, surrounded by a bevy of fair girls. "The eldest is considered a beauty, the second is a great flirt, the third is universally beloved for her many amiable qualities,—but the fourth, my favorite, so appropriately named Rose, must be your partner in the next dance. But, beware, Mr. O'Donnell, of the witchery of as lovely a face as ever eye rested upon, and a mind as faultless as the face." So saying, Mrs. Allison introduced Charles, and with his fair partner, he took his place in the dance.

At a late hour the company took their departure, and Charles sought his couch, not to dream of the music and the festive scene in which he had so lately mingled. No; he was again at Ardmore, again he beheld Constance as he had last seen her, leaning against the casement, in the same dejected attitude so typical of her grief; and as he stretched out his arms towards her to bid her farewell, he awoke; and the sun was shining brightly through the windows, and bidding him dream no more.

CHAPTER IX.

"Where hath not woman stood,
Strong in affection's might? a reed, upborne
By an o'ermastering current?"—HEMANS.

ONE day Mrs. Allison returned from her daily round of visiting, and took her seat at the dinner table with a countenance expressive of an unusual degree of satisfaction. "I have made quite a number of calls to-day, Mr. O'Donnell," she began: "and after many enquiries, I have at length succeeded in finding an abode for you, which I hope will prove agreeable, and which certainly combines the two requisites you desire, quietness and retirement. The lady who directed me to the house, also gave me the history of Mrs. Douglas, your future hostess, which I am certain will interest you greatly in her favor.

"Brought up in the midst of affluence, and her society greatly courted on account of her superior mental qualities as well as her personal at-

tractions, she was married at an early age to Mr. Douglas, who was junior partner in one of the most extensive mercantile houses in this city. Her parents were not altogether satisfied with the marriage of their daughter, as they had cherished higher dreams of ambition regarding her settlement in life, and thought that she should have graced a nobler mansion than that which Mr. Douglas could offer. But their home was found large enough to contain that which cannot find even a corner in many a princely house, namely domestic happiness.

"Mrs. Douglas, perfectly happy in the affections of her husband, relinquished the gay world in which she had once shone the brightest star, and without a regret, gave up the idol of fashion for the domestic duties which her new circumstances demanded. Mr. Douglas was not undeserving of the sacrifice made for him. He possessed those qualities calculated to ensure happiness to himself and his wife. For a time fortune smiled upon the pair, and bestowed upon them all that their hearts desired. But the partner of Mr. Douglas was a man who embarked in hazardous speculations, who regarded with contempt those patient spirits around him who could spend a long life in unwearied industry, in order to accumulate wealth, which he, by the exercise of his talent, could collect as if by magic. Unfortunately, a brilliant opportunity presented itself of realizing, without apparent hazard, immense riches. He embarked in the speculation, which proved ruinous to all engaged in it, and he, with the rest, became bankrupts. Mrs. Douglas, with that fortitude which woman displays in misfortune, now became the comfort and support of her husband, and bade him look forward to happier days in store for them. But anxiety, and the knowledge of the privations which his wife must endure in their now reduced circumstances, preyed upon a mind too sensitive to battle with the world. His health rapidly declined, and notwithstanding all that affection could suggest, or human skill could devise, he sank into an early grave, leaving a wife and child without the slightest means of support.

"For some time, overwhelmed with grief at her bereavement, Mrs. Douglas was incapable of forming any plan for the future. Her parents had both died since she had married, and the portion which they had left her, had gone in the universal wreck. She had nothing but her own exertions to depend upon, and the helpless face of her child did not appeal in vain. Those accomplishments in which she had excelled during the earlier portion of her life, and which at that time had only been a source of amusement, now