

gossiping lady, whose bright, inquisitive eyes, were always prying into everybody's affairs, and who, among her extensive circle of acquaintances, had ample opportunity of gratifying her love of knowing all that was passing in the little world around her. Notwithstanding this too universal failing, Mrs. Allison was by no means an unamiable person, and the remarks she made upon passing events were very seldom characterized by ill-nature.

During breakfast Mr. Allison made several enquiries concerning Captain Fitzgerald, and Charles, delighted with the subject, described the quiet routine of duties in which Fitzgerald employed his time, and in glowing terms painted the beauties of Ardmore and its surrounding scenery.

"Captain Fitzgerald has a daughter, I believe," at length remarked Mrs. Allison, "but I suppose she is still a mere child."

"Constance Fitzgerald is almost fifteen years of age," replied Charles, "and is already above the general height of her sex. Her quiet manner also gives her a character beyond her years."

"Her mother, Mrs. Fitzgerald, I have often heard, was a woman of extraordinary beauty," continued Mrs. Allison, "you remember, Mr. Allison, she arrived from abroad a few months after we were married. We expected to hear of her magnificent routes and balls, for foreigners are proverbially so fond of gaiety, and people were greatly surprised that a woman, so lovely and accomplished, could exist in such a remote spot as Ardmore, when she might have adorned the most elevated circles of society. After she buried herself in the country, we heard no more concerning her, except when Captain Fitzgerald corresponded with Mr. Allison, till we learned that she had returned to Italy, and that she had died there. Does the daughter, Mr. O'Donnell resemble the mother in her personal appearance?"

"Yes, madam," replied Charles; "Constance has always been considered remarkably like Mrs. Fitzgerald. She possesses the same rare style of beauty, and the same gentle and winning manner."

"Of course there must be an engagement between my youthful visitor and this beautiful girl," immediately suggested the ever-active mind of Mrs. Allison, as she thought of the improbability of one who possessed so many personal advantages as her young guest, and a lovely girl such as Constance Fitzgerald, being brought up together, without having formed a mutual affection. As this idea passed through the mind of Mrs. Allison, she very good-naturedly resolved to caution her fair young friends to keep a strict watch

over their hearts, when in the presence of the fascinating stranger.

"Catherine, my dear," said Mr. Allison, "Mr. O'Donnell is desirous of obtaining a temporary home, where he may enjoy quietness, in order to pursue his studies without interruption. Do you think that you could by any means find such a place of abode for him?"

"Without doubt, if I only set about it, I will soon succeed," replied Mrs. Allison; "but I must postpone my inquiries for a few days, for you are aware, that to-morrow evening we entertain a numerous party of our friends, to whom I hope our guest will allow me to introduce him. Till then, my time will be engaged, but afterwards I shall do all in my power to assist Mr. O'Donnell."

Mr. Allison now rose and took Charles with him, in order to show him the various objects of interest which the town contained, and conduct him through the many noble edifices and public institutions with which it abounded.

The next evening, the large and richly furnished suite of apartments of the wealthy lawyer were thrown open for the reception of the expected company. As the guests arrived, Charles was greatly amused by the brevity and graphic manner in which his witty hostess described in a few words, the character, qualifications and abilities they severally possessed. "You see yonder elderly lady, who is advancing up the room, so simply and becomingly dressed, leaning upon the arm of a lovely girl. That is Mrs. C— and her orphan niece, who, in a few weeks will become the bride of yonder handsome young man, who is hurrying after them with a scarf, which they have dropped. Yonder lack-a-daisical youth with the curling locks, who leans upon the end of the sofa, his eyes resting with up-turned gaze upon the ceiling, apparently unconscious of all that is passing in this subliminary scene, is a youthful poet, who indites love sonnets to an imaginary mistress under the name of Sylvia. Alas! poor boy! if he would but wield the pen, as my good husband wishes him, in copying briefs and summonses, it would be better for him. But as they say, genius will follow its own bent. That other youth at the opposite side of the room, with the finely chiselled features, the lofty brow, and eye bright with the fire of genius, whose becoming but carelessly adjusted attire bespeaks the small degree of attention self engrosses, is a youthful artist who takes his departure next week for Italy, in order to study the gems of art which that land yet retains. If there be truth in human prophecy, he will yet stand upon a proud eminence, which many sigh for, but which