

were chosen for their significance, were always fastened with a tasteful ribbon, and the beautifully tinted and minute shells were fancifully arranged on little beds of moss, or in a delicate basket, to which was often appended an expressive French motto, that brought a vivid colour to Ida's lovely cheek, and a covert smile to her lip, which showed that her heart recognised the hand from whence came her fair and fairy-like gifts.

"And often in our walks we met De Courcy, (that was his name,) for he always seemed to cross the path which Ida chose; and at church, duly as the Sabbath came, although a Catholic, we found him occupying his seat, when reverently following our stately preceptress, we walked in slow and long procession up the whole length of the broad aisle to the square capacious pew beside the pulpit,—and there, right opposite to Ida, sat the young Frenchman, feasting his eyes during the tedious homilies of the village pastor, on the beauty of his idol, and expressing, by eloquent glances, whose meaning could not be misinterpreted, the fervour of those emotions which she had awakened in his soul. With woman's ready instinct, she read the language of his eyes, and her young heart melted with answering tenderness, and her large soft eyes became lustrous with the light of that passion which her silent lover had kindled in her heart, and the consciousness of which made her shrink at the name of Randolph, and tremble, as with dark forebodings of some coming ill. De Courcy was not slow in perceiving the impression he had made upon the young girl's innocent heart, and his voiceless gifts of love were soon exchanged for perfumed billets-doux, breathing the most impassioned words of love,—and these Ida read with secret delight,—but she left them unanswered, save by the heightened tenderness which beamed from her eyes, and the increased softness of her manner. Drawing courage from these omens, he boldly accosted her one day, when she entered the porch of the academy alone,—and, notwithstanding her fear of a surprise from her companions, would not suffer her to leave him, till he had told his love, and wrung from her an avowal of affection in return. After this they met often; every day, indeed, they contrived to see each other, and life became to them a garden of enchantment, amid whose sunny bowers they revelled in delight, forgetting that evil lurked beyond the walls of their paradise; yet were they cautious in their love and in their meetings, though had they been still less so, they would safely have escaped suspicion—for our preceptor was a book-worm; and too happy, when his hours of duty were ended, to take further cognizance of his pupils, he left them to employ their leisure as they chose, and

plunged, forgetful of all else, into the favourite studies that absorbed him. Mrs. D. also, a self-indulgent and reserved woman, took as little thought of those placed beneath her care, but, rejoicing to escape the bondage of a task she detested, she retired to the privacy of her own apartments the moment she was released from the thralldom of the school-room, and seldom made her appearance again till the bell of the succeeding morning summoned her to the scene of her labours.

"Thus the brief, bright months of summer rolled on till they drew to a close, and the short, hazy, delicious days of September arrived, and still the youthful lovers remained wrapped in a dream of bliss, that was undisturbed except when Ida received a letter from her guardian, in which there never failed to be some allusion to his son, made in a manner that was peculiarly annoying to De Courcy,—and once, when Frank himself, breaking away from college, went with a party of his classmates on a fishing excursion to Nahant, and kept them waiting an hour at the Lynn hotel, while he ran away to see his little Ida, whom he fondly loved, and whom he was in nowise averse to regard as his future wife, the young Frenchman's jealousy was deeply aroused, and he could only be pacified by Ida's solemn and reiterated assurance to be his alone, in spite of all the persuasion and authority which might be used, by Mr. Randolph, to induce her to become the wife of his son.

"Still it seemed as if this voluntary and earnest assurance did not satisfy De Courcy; he became depressed and moody, especially when any communication took place between Ida and her guardian, and the increased restlessness of his manner, and his unequal spirits, indicated the anxiety and doubt, as to the happy issue of his attachment, which constantly haunted him.

"Things were in this state, when, as Ida and myself loitered one evening among the rocks, which was our favourite stroll, we came suddenly upon De Courcy, as he stood at first concealed beneath a jutting crag, in close conference with the fortune-teller. She started and fled swiftly away when she saw us, while he, striving to hide his evident confusion by a laugh, immediately joined us, saying, as he did so:

"The weird woman caught me in this narrow glen, and persecuted me into showing her my hand, that she might read in its lines whether prosperous or adverse was to be the future voyage of my life."

"And what has been her prophecy?" asked Ida, in a low and tremulous voice—for she was deeply tinged with superstition, and looked upon the reputed witch with such awe, that she