

sident tone in which her child spoke of the future, and she also looked forward with bright hope.

The health of Mrs. Fitzgerald had for some time past been gradually becoming enfeebled, but the change was so imperceptible as hardly to be observed by those around her. She herself, did not complain, for she felt no actual illness. A sensation of weakness and lassitude was all she experienced, but when her apprehensions were aroused by this, her spirits were so gay, her cheek so bright with that hue which imitates the roseate tinge of health, she laughed at the supposition of danger. But of late a sudden change for the worse had taken place, and she drooped and languished like a fair exotic, whose life can be recalled only by its native, genial clime.

Her medical attendants had ordered her immediate departure for Italy, and trusted to the air which she had breathed in infancy to recall the life which was becoming chill and cold within her breast.

This opinion was no sooner expressed than Captain Fitzgerald, with all the haste which newly awakened apprehension suggests, began his preparations for conveying his wife to Italy. Constance and Charles were to accompany them, for they would not consent to be separated from their mother, (for Charles had always bestowed upon her this endearing name,) when she was in sickness, perhaps in danger. And then, would it not be delightful to visit the land of their childish dreams, of which their mother, had told them so many tales to beguile the long winter evenings. The land of orange groves, of banditti, ethereal skies, of poetry and romance! The indulgent father consented, and soon the whole family were on their way to that salubrious clime, to which, when all other hope is lost, the victims of disease turn for renewed life.

They soon arrived at their destined port, and immediately proceeded to a village in the neighbourhood of Florence, the birth-place of Mrs. Fitzgerald. But alas! like many others, she had come to that fair land only to find a grave. It was ascertained that consumption, that fell disease which coils itself with such a gentle, yet deadly grasp around the vitals, had made a far greater progress than had been anticipated. Life might be prolonged, but no hope of ultimate recovery could be indulged. And so it proved. For months she lingered, fading away gradually but surely, as the decline of a summer's day darkens into twilight. At length she died. She passed away from this earth, and mourning with a grief that refused to be comforted, dreading to return to a home in which every object must remind

them of their great loss, the unhappy survivors wandered about from land to land till time should kindly heal the wound which death had dealt, and bid them return to Ardmore.

CHAPTER V.

What pleasure, sir, find we in life, to lock it
From action and adventure?

CYMBELINE.

AFTER having wandered through many strange countries, and viewed the wonders of foreign lands, Fitzgerald and his family turned their steps homewards to Ardmore. The loss which he had suffered was still keen as ever in the breast of Fitzgerald, and nothing could win him from the grief with which he still mourned the dead. Constance, with that elasticity of mind which happily belongs to youth, had regained her former cheerfulness, and she entered with interest and pleasure upon the duties which now devolved upon her as the youthful mistress of Ardmore.

To Charles, however, it was no easy task to resume the quiet uneventful tenor of his life in which it had formerly passed away. He found it impossible to enter again upon those occupations which had formerly yielded him so much gratification. During the lengthened period which he had spent abroad, intercourse with the world, from which he had hitherto lived so secluded, had wrought a great change upon his sentiments. Naturally observant and gifted with a quick perception, he had, while abroad, studied the various characters with which he had been brought in contact, and he had narrowly observed the motives which directed each in his pursuits. He saw that in that great theatre, the world, none were idle, and that each had an object in view which all his bodily and mental powers were directed to attain. In Holland, he had left the merchant absorbed in the pursuit of wealth. In the German University, he had seen the student consuming the bright years of his youth in poring over ponderous volumes which contained, after all, only the germ of the boundless knowledge he so eagerly sought. In Switzerland, he had beheld the hardy mountaineer peril life and limb in the pursuit of the fleet chamois; and in Italy, he had seen the young artist, with flushed cheek and triumphant eye, surveying the rude and hasty sketch—the design of a painting which might yet confer upon him a proud name that would cause him to forget the dreary years of poverty and misery which had darkened his early life.

But Charles had now left that busy world, the scene of human passion and turmoil, and again