

performance on the piano. Belinda suffered herself to be led to silence to the instrument, which stood at the opposite side of the apartment, and seating herself, inquired what she should play. "Anything, anything," was the answer.

Carelessly turning over the leaves of a music book, she was attracted by the title of a song that met her eye, "Oh steer my bark to Erin's Isle," and, prompted by what she had heard of the history of the young Irishman, she sung and played, with great sweetness and effect, the simple melody. The song finished, it was warmly applauded by all but the one for whose gratification it was intended. Captain Elton was standing in a recess near the piano, and when Belinda rose from it, she encountered a second time his glance, far more flattering than all the unmeaning applause; for, though expressive of deep emotion, it also told of appreciation and gratitude. The evening wore on pleasantly, varied by the amusements, which, in fashionable life, cause the hours to fly with rapidity; but Captain Elton still kept aloof from Belinda, apparently afraid to come within her circle; and actually departed from the assembly without exchanging more than a courteous adieu, while Belinda retired to her couch, at the breaking up of the party, with a sensation of weariness, which is ever the accompaniment of the pleasures of the world; pleasures, which, though unsatisfying, are yet eagerly pursued.

## SCENE II.

### THE CONVERSATION.

FERCELY howls the December blast, rudely sweeps the falling snow, — man and beast alike cower from the tempest, as it goes on its path raving and raging, piercing devices, whistling past casements, and rejoicing if shattered panes allow of a free entrance. Alas! for the poor on such a night as this! Heaven regard those who, all unregarded by man, dwell in dark, noisome cellars, or dilapidated attics, — those who crowd around a hearth, where smoulder a handful of coals, which emit no light, and but little warmth, the farthing candle but serving to reveal the unplastered