

in which O'Donnel frequently indulged, she yet felt deeply, and would have given worlds to have been permitted to share this sorrow which preyed upon his mind, and pained his spirit.

At times, when she reflected upon their hasty marriage, into which Charles had been so precipitately hurried, and which gratitude alone towards her father might have urged him to enter into, the withering thought would enter her mind that O'Donnel regretted his hasty union. And might not his affections have been bestowed upon another, whom he had met in that distant city, to whom he had, perhaps, plighted his faith, and then broken it by wedding her; for wherefore should he else, at times, wear that sad, despairing look? Why should his eyes, when he thought she observed him not, rest upon her face with an expression of tender pity? The altered tone which his letters had breathed for some time before he was summoned to attend the death-bed of her father, now struck her as being confirmatory of these torturing fears. As these doubts alternately agitated the bosom of Constance, she felt miserable; and so pure, so self-denying, was her love towards her husband, that she would gladly have laid down her life to free him from a union which she feared was hateful to him. * But, again, no sooner did she enter the presence of her husband than these doubts were dispelled, by the heart-felt affection which his manner evinced—by the warm welcome with which he always greeted her approach. Her presence seemed like sunshine to his soul, and chased from it the dark shadows which, in her absence, had stolen over it. The deep, unvarying affection with which O'Donnel always treated her—the tenderness of his manner towards her—bespoke not merely that regard which springs from gratitude.

"He loves me!" she would fervently exclaim; "and if he has a sorrow which he strives to conceal from me, why should I pry into it? Why should I seek to fathom the deepest recesses of his heart? Enough, that I feel conscious that I possess his affections. Charles *must* love me; for his open, undisguised nature would scorn to feign a love he could not feel; and the words of affection would die upon his lips, if they proceeded not from his heart. I will grieve no longer, nor doubt his love."

But still, Constance did grieve, and did doubt; and though she sought to conceal the ravages that sorrow was silently working upon her, they yet were evident upon her declining health and spirits. Often, at eve, when her husband thought that she was employed with household cares, she would leave that portion of the house which was tenanted, and roam through the now silent

apartments which she used to frequent in the happy days of childhood. When twilight descended, with its sombre shade and deepening gloom, Constance would enter the chamber in which her father had breathed his last sigh—in which she and O'Donnel had been so hastily wedded. There she would pour forth those feelings which, even in the presence of her husband, she concealed.

The conduct, which in Charles was a sad mystery to Constance, will not appear strange to the reader, who has accompanied him during his absence from Ardmore, and has witnessed the events which occurred to him then. Was it surprising that agony and deep remorse should strike his heart, as he reflected how he had deceived the confiding love of Constance, the paternal affection of Fitzgerald? how he had taken upon himself a solemn vow to love her alone, the merry companion of his boyhood, the guide of his maturer years, while, in the eyes of God and man, he was already the husband of another?

It were impossible to review the stormy feelings which had agitated the mind of O'Donnel since that night, when, forgetful of his early love, he had rashly bound himself, by the indissoluble tie of marriage, to another—when he had prevailed upon that fair girl, who had placed such implicit reliance upon his faith, to become his wife, without the sanction of that mother whom she had never till then deceived—whose love for him had caused her to transgress even filial duty. Yes; well might the brow of O'Donnel become dark as night, and his heart become almost stilled in its palpitations, as he thought of all this. After his precipitate marriage with Ellen Douglas; when he had hastily left her, to obey the summons which had called him to Ardmore, he had during his journey been tortured by the bitter pangs of remorse. Not that his love towards Ellen Douglas was absolutely waxing cold; but he reflected upon his faithlessness towards Constance Fitzgerald. Although no vow had been uttered—although no faith had been pledged—he yet felt that she knew of the affection he had entertained towards her, and that she returned it. And thus he had ruined the peace of mind of those to whom he owed every thing—who had gladdened the days of his boyhood with a father's and a sister's love—who had nourished in their bosoms the serpent which was to sting them.

The more deeply Charles had reflected upon his rashness, the more strikingly the image of Constance, ever gentle and kind to him, rose to his view; and for a time he forgot even Ellen Douglas, as his troubled mind dwelt upon the virtues of her who possessed his earliest love.