

and grotesque stones, honey-suckles, sweet-brier, rose trees, and other parasitical plants and shrubs. There was a rustic seat around the interior; here they agreed to have tea. With light hearts and smiling faces, our party sat down to their delicious beverage, sweetened by the perfume of the aromatic shrubs, plants, and flowers that yet remained as if loth to fade away, and above all, by contentment—that inward balm, that sweetens the humble fare of the peasant, and often makes it more delicious than the sumptuous dishes of the peer.

Bessy strayed about the garden to pick the few flowers that were, like the last rose of summer, "left blooming alone." She then after presenting a bouquet to Kate, gave another to Frank and Willy.

"Thank you, Bessy," said Willy; "these flowers are like yourself, the emblem of innocence and purity."

"You're fond of flowers then, Willy," said Kate.

"Oh, yes, Kate; there is a dazzling joy about flowers that thrill through us like loving words; they speak to the heart of man. Look at a neat parterre when in bloom; how beautiful, how gorgeous they look. Are they not a type of all that is grand and fair? God has made them the purest language of nature—they speak to the soul. The Persian revels in their perfume, and woos his mistress in their language. He tells his tale of love in a rose-bud or pansy. Thus he speaks to her of his hopes and fears. They deck the marriage couch and the bridal feast; they crown the youthful bride, and twine her brow; they strew the warrior's path—a nation's mute but grateful tribute; they garland the lonely tomb, as a symbol of the decay of life; they festoon the altar, mingling their odor with the soft incense that ascends in grateful worship to the Most High—such are flowers."

"Yes, indeed," said Kate, "flowers are beautiful; they are nature's own painting; a skilful artist may paint them to some perfection, and heighten their gaudy colors, still, they want the fragrance, the perfume, the reality of nature. Can the pencil of a Rubens or an Angelo paint the rainbow, or take off the varying colors of the sky? As well might they attempt to give its true and natural life to a rose."

"Are you as fond of music as of flowers, Willy?" said Kate, after a moment's silence.

"I cannot say I am; still I love music very much; though I must say, I have not a very fine ear for it; still, I love its sweet sounds and soft influence over the senses; I always like the soft and melancholy; I believe it is more in accordance with my own temperament."

"As for me," said Kate, "I think I could not live without music; when I feel

heavy or lonely, or when anything displeases me, I play a few lively tunes, sing a few songs, and in a moment I forget that the world has either care or sorrow. I am, as Richard says, 'myself again.' But come, I think the genius of melancholy is stealing over us; get your flute, Willy, and Frank, your clarinet, and let us set up a perfect oratorio. Come now, I will sing with you."

The soft notes of the lute, the sweet, low, impassioned voice, the still silence around, gave it something of the air of those fabled bowers into which Sylvian nymphs decoy mortals. The evening was beginning to get chilly, and a low, fitful breeze was moaning among the trees.

"I think," said Frank, as he looked at little Bessy nestling under his coat, "the evening is chill; we had better go in."

"I think so, too," said Kate.

## CHAPTER XII

### SOME ACCOUNT OF MR. ELLIS—AN IRISH AGENT.

It must be recollected that we are writing of a state of things that existed before the famine years. We are, so far, painting the peasantry in their gay, light-hearted, holiday enjoyment. Even then there were cruel, heartless task-masters, like Mr. Ellis, who hardened the hearts of the landlords, and pointed with the finger of scorn at the poor straggling farmhouses and cabins of the tenantry, and then with an air of triumph pointed out his own comfortable house and offices, his well-tilled, well-sheltered fields, his trim hedges, his model farm, as much as to say, see what industry, skill, and perseverance can do. Who would be looking at such wretched hovels, such abject misery as we see around us, when he could delight his eyes with indications of taste and luxury? Who would tolerate such a lazy, indolent people to incur the soil?—people on whom precept and example are lost—people who will not be taught, but persist in their own barbarous, ignorant ways. He did not tell the landlord that he had a long lease of his holdings at a moderate rent, and therefore felt secure in his outlay; he did not tell the landlord that these poor tenants had neither lease nor protection; that they were living merely in a state of suffering; that if they built houses or improved the land, they should pay an increased rent; that by his artful contrivances, notices to quit, and the daily fear of eviction and the like, he has damped their energies, and made toil without a prospect of gain hopeless; and that he has made them bend their necks to the inservile state with apathy and indifference. The tenants must then naturally regard the landlord as a cold, unfeeling tyrant, incapable of pity or remorse, whose sole