

"Not at all, Lina. Her wishes are not yours; her views, aims, and plan of life, differ widely, too widely, from my good, conscientious girl's. You recognize life's duties; she only looks for its pleasures. Poor Blanche! She may yet learn a truer contentment, though, possibly, at much cost. But who is your other example? Who is the knight sans peur et sans reproche, whose estate you would condescend to take upon yourself?"

"I did not say that," remonstrated Caroline, with a slight blush; "I only said I could imagine, that if—— At least, I meant——"

"I know what you meant, you cautious little person. I only want the name. Suppose I guess it."

"I was thinking of Mr. Farquhar," she said, quickly, but with a certain degree of dignified reticence beginning to be evident. "His life seems very much what a good life should be, either of man or woman. I think he must be happy."

"Do you?" her companion asked, drily and doubtfully.

"Indeed I do," she went on, with some warmth. "Active, useful, the doer of good deeds, and the sayer of noble things, if he is not content, who should be? He wields his self-acquired power wisely, his influence is always exerted for the right. Yes, I think he ought to be thoroughly happy."

"So do I. But men are perverse animals, my dear, and seldom are precisely what you would expect them to be. Mr. Farquhar does not strike me as thoroughly happy, though I believe him to be thoroughly good. Some private care, perhaps, of which we know nothing, subdues the bright colours we only see. It is often so."

"Yes," said Caroline, absently. "Ah! there are the tops of the pines on Crooksforth Hill!" she presently cried, eagerly peering from her window. And they both became silent as they drew near home.

It was a solemn, though not a sad, coming home. Every turn in the road, every tree, every pathway, teemed with associations, some irretrievably and unmixedly bitter, others sweet and touching. Caroline's imagination was too powerful a part of her nature, and her sensitiveness too intense, for her to pass with impunity through any such ordeal. She had tasted consolation from the true Source. The cruel wounds of the past had been healed, and she had risen above all pain, all suffering, to a serenity very sweet and satisfying. But, although her life had grown anew—although it was no crushed spirit, no weary heart, that she brought back with her to her old home—she still felt the shock and had to bear the penalty. Nevertheless the pain came openly and wholesomely, and was borne bravely and well. It was neither fretfully struggled against,