

innumerable little charming *agremens* of her toilet, put out of countenance Caroline's plain and plainly-fashioned merino dress, with its simple collar, and skirt innocent of flounces.

But nothing could alter the true, sweet, frank nature which, alike independent of physical ailment as of external and adventitious aids, shone from her face, and was eloquent in her voice and manner. Her honest admiration of Madame de Vigny was sufficiently evident, and the lady, spoiled beauty though she was, could hardly be insensible to its pleasant flattery. Besides, all the better and more real sympathies of her own nature were at once attracted to Caroline. So they "made friends," as the children say, at once; while Vaughan bit his lip in silence, as he looked on, and Miss Kendal waited contentedly for a future opportunity of private conference with her favourite.

Caroline herself was the first to make it. Leaving her new acquaintance examining a volume of music at the pianoforte, she came to Miss Kendal, and leaned over her chair.

"My uncle heard you were here. He begged you would not go away without seeing him."

"I will go at once, my dear."

Vaughan, engaged in watching Madame de Vigny, and in listening to the faint sotto voice in which she was singing to herself as she looked over the music—Vaughan heard nothing of this brief snatch of dialogue. He was rather surprised to see Miss Kendal leave her chair, and, leaning on Caroline caressingly, walk down the long room to the door, deep in low-voiced talk. Then Miss Kendal disappeared, and Caroline came back to the pianoforte, and to the fair student, who still bent over her book, and hummed her little tunes to herself, in the same dainty sotto voice as before.

They resumed their talk. Vaughan leaned back on his sofa, watched them, but interfered not. Once or twice, Caroline, out of the fulness of her heart, smiled at him a bright smile of exultation. It was a new pleasure that she was enjoying, and after so long a season of much loneliness and anxiety, it came with refreshing zest. But Vaughan could not command himself to answer her smile; he sat, dull and apparently impassive, only speaking when appealed to, as he was sometimes, though rarely, by Madame de Vigny.

But the musical discussion was at an end. Blanche moved from the piano to the window. Would Miss Maturin venture out on the terrace? It looked so pleasant, and she wanted to make acquaintance with the Redwood gardens, of which she had heard so much from Mr. Hesketh.