

"*Et me voici !*" she concluded ; " to keep up the histrionic fiction—*Après tant des souffrances, &c.* You know how it goes on."

" And you are established at Beacon's Cottage with all your family ?"

" Not quite all. It reminds me of the story of Dr.—, ' As I and eleven of my daughters were crossing Piccadilly.' No, my dear, I and seven of my household (four children and three servants) are arrived. The remaining one—whom I have not seen for twelve years—comes in a day or two."

" Who is that ?"

" A neice of Lady Camilla's who used to live with her. She is a grown lady—a widow. Madame de Vigny is her name, for she married a French gentleman."

" A widow ! Then she is an old lady !"

" By no means ; quite young. She married early."

" But how is it she is to live with you ?"

" She is not a pupil, as you will imagine, but many years ago I was her governess, and an old liking subsists between us, though we havenot met since she was a child."

" Then she is to be a visitor ?"

" Yes ; whenever she feels inclined to rusticate."

" Well," pursued Caroline, after a brief pause of consideration, " now for the others—the real pupils."

" O, they are nice little things. The poor mother ! It half broke her heart to part with them."

" Why did she, then ?"

" Well, I conclude it would have wholly broken it to part with her husband ; and she had to choose between the two. It was a very painful business. However, the separation won't be for long."

" And Madame de Vigny will be of the family sometimes ?"

" Sometimes ; yes, she will be of ' my family,' as you call it. I like the term, it has an imposing sound," remarked Miss Kendal. " I hope Blanche will be a pleasant companion for you, Caroline ; and for me also."

Caroline mused, and then smiled to herself, recognizing the half-jealous tone of her own thoughts respecting Miss Kendal's " pleasant companion." For it was Caroline's not uncommon characteristic that, loving very few, she could ill brook any interference with her monopoly of those few. It was no wonder, for as yet she had been little tried in that hardest exercise of unselfishness, which enables some women not only to endure, but be content, to see their best beloved finding happiness away from them, and independent of them.

Miss Kendal was likewise thoughtful. It startled both when the