

a soft rustling, and being aware of, without seeing, a very snowy presence approaching them. Dainty and deliberately, Mistress Caroline descended, feeling for the minute fully conscious of her lace, and pearls, and gold-embroidered slippers. At the last stair she paused. Vaughan held out his hand, as if to lead her into the room by the door of which they were standing. But before passing in, an introduction was to take place.

"Caroline, let me introduce my friend, Mr. Farquhar," he said, with some *empressment*.

Caroline saw a brown, intelligent face, and a pair of dark eyes bent very earnestly on her, as they exchanged bows. She had only time further to remark, that the figure was somewhat undersized for a man, or, at least, it looked so to her, leaning on the arm of Vaughan, whose stature was of the tallest. Then they all went to Mr. Hesketh's study where the old gentleman awaited them.

"Well, Lina, the truant has found his way home at last, you see. Ah! Mr. Farquhar, we shall make you pay, by a long sojourn at Redwood, for the time you have kept this boy from us."

"Do you always punish sinners after that fashion, sir?" said the gentleman addressed; "because, if so, dishonesty is the best policy, and I shall give up being virtuous."

"I am glad the renunciation is in your power," said Mr. Hesketh, laughing; at which Vaughan and his friend exchanged a rapid glance, and both the young men smiled slightly. A very faint smile, but a very disagreeable one, Caroline thought, and she instantly decided, with the usual deliberate judgment of seventeen, that Mr. Farquhar was a most unpleasant character.

"George has heard a great deal about Redwood," said Vaughan, rather hastily; "he is all anxiety to make personal acquaintance with its attractions. Are n't you, old fellow?"

"I was," the old fellow replied, looking up from his coffee cup, with an instant's glance at Mr. Hesketh and Miss Maturin. Then he turned to the latter, with the bending air of deference, the softened voice, which a gentleman naturally and becomingly assumes when he speaks to a lady, "You have a beautiful country around you, I believe?"

"It is considered so," she replied, with embarrassed politeness.

She was too much of a child to be at all expert in that art of cold courtesy which drops sentences like icicles, as chilly, as smooth, and as pretty-seeming. For Caroline to be cold and repellent, was to be very much *not* at her ease. However, Mr. Farquhar seemed unrepelled. He proceeded:

"You must be very fond of such a pretty place?"

"Redwood? It is my home," with a flush of warmth.