

gratified as often as she chose. "Caroline would be delighted to lend her pony, I know. And there are such charming excursions possible, even in this weather.

To all this Miss Kendal only briefly responded. She had addressed herself most sedulously to her work, and tugged away at a knot in the cotton, while her companion talked.

He summed up his argument by a recapitulation of the "charming excursions" in the neighbourhood; the fine points of view—for really the views were, some of them, perfectly magnificent.

"It strikes me," said Miss Kendal, to this, looking up at him with a grim smile, "that my visitor is likely to prefer a view of the country from carriage cushions, while this bleak season lasts. You have probably not yet discerned that she is a luxuriously-reared lady, and has no idea of subjecting herself to hardship, atmospheric or otherwise."

At this point she rose from her seat, and expended a good deal of energy on stirring the fire. Vaughan felt it was an opportunity not to be lost of retiring with a good grace. He took his hat, and advanced towards her to take leave, saying, as he did so, with much apparent indifference: "I only judged from her own words. I beg pardon, if I have been hasty or officious in the matter. And now, when may I tell Caroline that she will see you?"

"Quite uncertain—as soon as I can. You will have a tempestuous walk back," said Miss Kendal, almost complacently, for the rain was driving violently across the hills, and came dashing against the window panes. Surly as she was, she felt compelled to suggest that he should stay till the fierceness of the storm abated. But no; he thanked her, he did not care about the rain. And he finished the sentence to himself, as he strode out of the gate, "Rather be drenched with rain, or bruised with hail, than remain to be scarified by the sharp edges of such a woman as that!"

And so he bent his head to the blast, and went on his way, with a storm in his heart wilder, perhaps, and more dangerous, than that which raged without.

Miss Kendal stood at her window, and watched his exit from her domain. Her hands were clasped tightly together, her lips compressed themselves emphatically, her eyes shone with their keenest and most piercing light. Two words escaped her, almost passionately uttered, before she was aware—"My Caroline!"

And then another interval of restless thought. From it she turned with alacrity, when Blanche re-entered the room, flushed, and rather dishevelled.