

aspect of her who advanced a few steps to meet Caroline, took her for an instant into her arms, kissed her, and then let her go.

"Now sit down, and let me look at you comfortably."

She looked. Caroline smiled, but she could not hide either her embarrassment, or the traces of the tears she had just been copiously shedding. Both might have been detected by eyes of several degrees less acuteness than those keen but kindly ones of bluish grey which were now fixed upon her face. But the tongue was not so quick as the eyes.

"How is Mr. Hesketh?" was Miss Kendal's next utterance.

"Not well—he has been ailing for the last two or three weeks."

"Nothing serious, I hope?"

"At first it seemed only a cold; but it hangs about him very strangely. He is weak and languid—sometimes keeps his room for two or three days together. Dr. Barclay has attended him the last few days."

"The doctor! a tangible disorder, indeed," said Miss Kendal gravely.

"And you are nurse, I suppose?" she added, after a pause, looking at her again.

"Very little 'nursing' has been needed, nor, I trust, will be. I almost dread the word—it sounds like a real illness."

"Never mind what it sounds like, my dear; there are real things enough to dread, without taking words into the account. Besides, I've been ill once in my life, and I think respectfully of nurses and nursing."

"How have you been all this while? You look very well."

"I am as I look. How are you?"

The emphasis on the pronoun, slight as it was, caused Caroline to colour. She made the usual reply, that she was quite well.

"And what has been doing at Redwood? Anything happened? You must tell me all your news."

"We had a ball here on my last birthday."

"Come! a promising beginning. Go on."

"And—Vaughan brought a visitor—a friend of his from London. You must have heard my uncle speak of Mr. Farquhar. His father was his old college companion, and he himself is now Vaughan's intimate friend.

"Vaughan Hesketh has left college, I suppose?"

"O yes! He was travelling on the Continent for six months, and has since been studying in London for a barrister."

"Ah! is he at Redwood now?"

"He has just gone to London—this very afternoon."

"Ah!"

Miss Kendal did not glance at the flushed face, with its traces of tears; she stirred the fire in silence.