

"Very well," muttered Mr. Hesketh, going back to his papers; "settle it your own way." He shrugged his shoulders, with a half-smile, nevertheless, curving his mouth, and a not displeased gleam lighting his eyes.

Vaughan strode out at the door into the corridor, in sublime silence. Caroline followed. He took down his cap from the peg where it hung, beside her own hat and garden tippet. Having pulled his cap well over his eyes, he put his hands in his pockets, and proceeded to whistle while slowly walking round the billiard-table which occupied the centre of the hall. At the door, however, he suffered himself to be arrested by the third repetition of Caroline's deprecating cry, "O Vaughan!"

"Well, what is it? I'm going out. I told you so."

"I know. Don't you want me to come with you."

"Certainly not; you are otherwise occupied, I understood."

"You are cross; that's not right, It was not my fault that your uncle spoke to you."

"Do you think I mind his having spoken?"

"I know you do," she said quietly; "but you ought not to be angry with me because of that."

"Who said I was angry?"

"You are cross, sullen. I don't like you when you look as you do now. You may go out by yourself, if you choose it."

Her candour, her fearlessness, had something attractive in it to him, it would seem; for even while she spoke the look to which she objected disappeared from his face. A smile wavered across his features, the coldness of his glance melted into something more familiar, and very pleasant.

"O, come along; do come, Caroline; we'll have a famous afternoon. Here, I'll reach you your hat."

He reached it, put it on for her, and awkwardly tried to tie the strings, laughing down at her fresh, spirited face, now all glowing with glee.

They went out. It was early spring, and the sun was shining. The air seemed tingling with new and exquisite life. Caroline's step quickened to a run that was almost a dance; her upturned face looked as though it actually gathered in some of the sunshine. Presently her clear voice broke forth in a fragment of some French *chanson*—one of the few indications which yet remained of the child's early foreign experiences.

"Never mind that 'Ange de la prairie,'" cried Vaughan, impatiently; "if you must sing, sing 'Malbrook,' or 'Le cordon bleu'—something like tunes they are."

Caroline obeyed—her companion whistling an accompaniment with