

"Exactly; there you are!" repeated his friend, looking at him meaningly.

Vaughan met his eye, and laughed, in some confusion.

"Of course," he went on, "you must not take what I say *au pied de la lettre*. Unluckily, I am troubled with a conscience," he sighed, while pensively switching his horse's neck, "and that stands confoundedly in the way on many occasions."

"How so?"

"In this very case, for instance. There was preferment in the family—my uncle wished it—it would have been, in a worldly sense, an excellent thing. But——"

"Did my uncle ever wish you to be a clergyman?" asked Caroline, innocently. "I thought——"

"O, it was before your time," said Vaughan, hastily; "you were not likely to hear of it. In fact, I have carefully avoided the subject with my uncle ever since. It is a sore point."

"But why didn't you do as he wished," persisted she, "if it would have pleased him so much?"

"My dear Carry," he answered, loftily, but affectionately, "I would do much to please my uncle, but a man must satisfy his own sense of right before everything."

She looked rather puzzled.

"You cannot understand? It is not to be expected that you should," he said, looking down at her with an indulgent air. "Life has many things in it that you would find incomprehensible at present."

"At present, and always, let us trust," said Mr. Farquhar, earnestly. "The tree of knowledge was always fatal to the daughters of Eve. Avoid it, Miss Maturin; don't stand under its shade, far less eat of its fruits."

But Caroline did not approve of the doctrine. She always felt tenaciously inclined when people asserted superior knowledge, seeming to shut her out from discussion as a child, or an *ignorante*, whether the subject were polemical, ethical, or a mere simple matter of social experience.

"On the contrary," she declared to Mr. Farquhar, "I shall take every opportunity of enlarging my information. I despise ignorance. If I could, I would like to know thoroughly all the good and evil in the world, and take my choice."

Though he smiled at her energy, his eye kindled into a sympathetic fire with that which flashed over all her young face.

"You are ambitious," he said.

"Are not you? Does not everybody that *we* should count worthy, aspire? I think to be easily contented is a very mean virtue,"