

There she sat, quiet and unmolested, for half-an-hour, till the tears were well dried, and the trouble subsided. She began to wonder if the expected arrival had taken place. She consulted her watch; it was late, time for her to begin to dress. She looked at the beautiful dress, Mr. Hesketh's birth-day gift to her, which lay already spread out on the sofa. She was too much of a girl not to take pleasure, even then, in regarding the delicate white lace of the robe, the tasteful fashion in which it was made, and the completeness of all the appointments, from the embroidered satin shoes to the exquisite fan snowy feathers and mother-of-pearl. Also, it gave her comfort, regarding all these as visible signs of the thoughtful love and indulgent kindness that *one*, at least, had for her.

She was musing thus, standing draped in a long, white dressing-gown, with her beautiful hair tossed about her shoulders, when a quick foot-step along the corridor made her heart leap. And then came an eager knocking at the door.

"Let me see you for a minute, Carry. Mayn't I come in?"

She went to the door and opened it. She had an idea of looking very cool and indifferent, and certainly her figure grew erect in an involuntary stateliness, as she stood facing him. But the first glance at the familiar face upset every thing. He looked so eager, so earnest, and his eyes lit up as they met hers with such an expression of pleasure, and surprise, and admiration. He took both her hands and kissed her.

"Carry, you have grown!"

"I have had time to grow since you saw me," she said, with the least bit of reproachfulness in her tone, and the quivering, smiling glance, that went with it. But look, and tone, and gesture, were all loving; there was not the smallest attempt at dignified reticence. Caroline had not talent for little or great hypocrisies; as she felt, she looked. All the pride and indignation had gone out from her; she was simply and solely happy, now that he was before her, holding her hands, and looking down on her with the old look, the dearest and pleasantest to her in the world.

He released one hand, to draw from his pocket a morocco case of ominous appearance.

"What do you think it is? What should you like best?"

"I shall like anything."

"But I don't want you to be so easily pleased. I ransacked half the shops in London, before I found what contented *me* for your birth-day present."

"Dear Vaughan! How kind—how good of you!"

He opened the case, and drew therefrom a bracelet of pearls. He