

"Ah—yes. I like expecting Vaughan," she replied, promptly. It makes the weeks before quite rosy, and the two or three days before the day, O so bright!"

"Indeed. But you and Vaughan agree marvelously well. You suit one another."

"Yes; that is just it," Caroline said, complacently. "O, isn't that rose exquisite?" in a sudden little enthusiastic parenthesis. "Yes, I do like Vaughan—I like him. I like his face, and his way of walking and moving, and his behaviour to people, and his talking and his fun, and his cleverness, and everything about him. I think he is just what a man ought to be; don't you?"

"He is a fine lad; and when once he is well settled into manhood, I make no doubt of his being everything one can wish."

"Isn't he now, then!"

This direct question, and still more the simple, wondering gaze which accompanied it, somewhat embarrassed Mr. Hesketh.

"My dear," he hesitated, "very few young men of his age, indeed, I may say none, are without their faults and follies. Youth is not the season of perfection; no one would wish it—no one should expect it."

"But Vaughan," she persisted—"Vaughan is better and not worse than most young men, isn't he? What has he done wrong? Has he displeased you?"

"My dear child, don't be alarmed," said Mr. Hesketh, fairly amused out of his perplexity, "nothing is wrong—nothing is wrong. We shall have him with us in another week," he went on, in a new tone; "and then the piano will have a hard life of it; and the billiard-table and the horses will know also that Mr. Vaughan Hesketh is at Redwood."

But Caroline mused, and did not reply. She placed the crimson roses together, the pink roses together, the white roses together; then combined the three bunches in one glorious and glowing mass. Finally she suffered them to fall, scattered in disorder on her lap again.

"I must practise before he comes," she observed; "my billiard playing has been shamefully neglected, he will say. But it is so long since I had any one to play with."

"He taught you to play, didn't he? An accomplished preceptor, too," muttered Mr. Hesketh, with a dry smile, to himself.

"Yes, indeed, he is very clever at all those kinds of things," said Caroline, colouring; "there is no harm in that, is there?"

"Surely not, my dear, other pursuits not being neglected at the same time. And in return for his lessons you taught him French?"

"Yes. He got on capitally; he speaks French as well as I do."