

age of the parties was so singularly suitable, that he could not see what possible objection there could be to a nearer and solemn alliance between 'em. Still, as the future bride was at this time scarcely ten years old, the speculation may be pronounced premature. And, meanwhile, all seemed settling itself comfortably and harmoniously. Vaughan, the tall, lithe schoolboy, and Caroline, the bright-faced, fleet-footed, cricket-playing, marble-loving little girl, who was yet a thorough girl, in spite of her boyish predilections—these two were great friends. Old Mr. Hesketh was much gladdened thereat, and, like a wise man, asked for and hinted at no more for the present.

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"Come," said Vaughan, "put away that stupid book, and let us go out for a row on the lake."

Caroline was deep in the "Arabian Nights," and had ensconced herself in a corner of the sofa, in one of those queer and intensely-comfortable looking attitudes into which children seem to fall naturally under such circumstances. He spoke twice before she heard.

"I say, come along."

This, aided by a tap on her shoulder from the long switch he held in his hand, aroused the rapt little reader. She looked up; her large eyes all dazed and wondering, at this sudden summons back to real life.

"I'm going out on the lake. Come, I'll give you another rowing lesson."

"O—directly!" with a pathetic glance at the dear book, and a rapid turning over the leaves, to see how far it was to the end of Prince Ahmed's adventures.

Mr. Hesketh looked up from the secretaire at which he was writing; he peered at the boy and girl from over his spectacles. "Vaughan!" he called out rather sharply, "probably your cousin" (they called each other cousin, and the old man himself was "uncle" to Caroline, as well as to his veritable nephew)—"probably your cousin would prefer reading her book to going out on the lake. You would give a fellow-schoolboy the privilege of choice, I presume; you owe at least as much deference to a lady."

Vaughan coloured, bit his lips, and turned aside, swinging his switch with embarrassed vehemence.

As for the poor little "lady" in question, she sprang from her cosy corner, flung aside the engrossing volume, flushing up all the time till her face was like a red June rose, and her eyes shone through sudden dews; "I want to go, uncle. I asked Vaughan to teach me to row. I like it—of course I like to go with him. He would not have asked me, if he did not know that."