

metallic resonance that seemed to hold its own place even in the midst of numbers. He could see also Caroline's face bent slightly towards her companion, with evident interest in what he was saying. And Vaughan's amazement changed into dissatisfaction, which again increased to displeasure. Miss Windleton wondered what had made him suddenly so *distract*, and checked the easy flow of the sweet courtesy of which he had been so lavish a little while before. He was unaccountably discontented with the state of things which had seemed to please him enough until now. Bessy was a pretty little creature; but Caroline was twenty times more distinguished, more *spirituelle*, more interesting as a companion. Why had he been so foolish as to permit all this to fall to the share of any other than himself? What right had Farquhar to monopolize the attention of her who was at once hostess, the heroine of the night, and the most attractive girl in the room? Under the influence of all these moral and philosophical speculations, Vaughan's brow slightly contracted, and his voice also betrayed some disturbance. He pressed no more cracker bon-bons on his fair companion, forgot the very existence of the sentimental French motto which only a minute before they had been commenting on, and presently, nothing loth, he escorted her into the ball-room, and relinquished her with a smile of exquisite politeness, to an expectant partner there. Then he strode back into the supper-room, now rapidly thinning, and threw himself on a sofa near the table at which Mr. Farquhar and Miss Maturin were sitting. The former saw him at once.

"Vaughan," said he, Miss Maturin and myself are planning a delightful excursion for to-morrow: to go on horseback to the foot of some wonderful hill, which we are to climb, and see a marvellous prospect."

"Indeed! Is it a new arrival in the neighbourhood, Caroline, this wonderful hill? Our humble lions are not accustomed to rejoice in such adjectives."

His friend, with elevated eyebrows, was about to laugh outright at the ill-humoured tone in which he spoke; but Caroline eagerly interposed. Foolish child; she knew well the turn of the lip, the shade in the eye, and what those signs portended. Yet she did not know them well enough to disregard them, it seemed.

"Dear Vaughan!" she cried, "you remember Crooksforth, surely. My uncle told me you went up one day long ago. I have been waiting for your return to go there—it will be so pleasant!"

Well, he seemed to admit it would be pleasant. A smile dawned about his handsome mouth. It grew to full day when Mr. Hesketh called on Mr. Farquhar to come and see his much-prized Guido, which hung curtained in a recess of the room. Then Vaughan took his vacated seat, nearer to Caroline.