

cheek, and her hand shook as she gave him his second cup of tea. However, it proved to be no arrival, and Caroline went on talking, while the old gentleman sipped his tea, and listened in a very genial frame of mind. Nevertheless, he looked grave when he noticed by the sudden brightening of the western sky, that it was sunset.

"They must have missed the train," he said. "It is really inexcusable of Vaughan, to leave it so late, and on your birth-day, too." He muttered the last words displeasedly, as to himself. But his companion heard them.

"O, they will be here in time to dress, and nothing else signifies," said Caroline, carelessly. She rose from her seat and walked to the window. "Only see how the day has relented, now it is going away," she cried; "it is the clearest, softest evening. I think I will run out on the terrace for half-an-hour before dressing."

"Do so, my dear. I fancy you look tired with being in-doors all day; and I want my little Lina to look blooming this evening."

"You are very good to your little Lina, always," cried she, with sudden earnestness. "You *think* about her so much. I wish I deserved——"

But even while Mr. Hesketh looked round, surprised and touched by the tone and manner with which she spoke, she slipped from the room. And presently he saw her, wrapped in a mantle, and with a hood about her head, walking rapidly to and fro on the terrace. There she was finishing in full the abrupt sentence she had commenced in the room.

"Yes, I wish I deserved what I have, and I wish I had more of that which I *do* deserve. Why is it, I wonder, that these kind of things are so unequal? I behaved absolutely ill to Miss Kendal, yet she loved me; I slighted her, but she was careful and thoughtful over me. And my uncle, how tender and kind he is to me. Why don't I love him better than anything in the world, I wonder? I owe him most; he loves me more than any one-else loves me——"

At this point a burst of tears—grieved, pained, proud tears—came, and would have their way. It was a remarkable instance of the utter vanity and impotence of circumstance over happiness. Caroline, on her birth-day, within two hours of the long-looked-for bliss of her first ball, leaned against the large silver birch at the end of the terrace walk, and indulged in a hearty fit of crying. In the midst of it, the outer bell sounded again; she fancied she heard carriage wheels, and she fled into the house, through side corridors and up the back stair-case, and shut herself in her own little dressing room.