

came in, and she blithely rose and took her usual seat, where her face was half hidden behind the capacious proportions of the massive silver teacup. In that retirement, while the three gentlemen conversed over their dainty porcelain cups, Caroline doubtless had her own thoughts, and arranged them comfortably and "tidily," so that they should not get into the way for the next two or three hours.

And altogether the evening passed with more cheerfulness and less restraint than might have been expected. Its events may be briefly epitomized: Mr. Farquhar devoted himself to conversation with Mr. Hesketh, and to all appearance both gentlemen were soon deeply interested in a discussion on Chancery Reform; a dry subject, from which Vaughan escaped at the commencement, to follow Caroline to the piano, to lean over the back of her chair while she played, and to interrupt by ever-recurrent whisperings the sweet strains of Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi, thereby occasioning many varieties of harmony not contemplated by those composers. Light bursts of laughter occasionally rang upwards from this distant corner of the room, and then a momentary glance could hardly be resisted by either of its other occupants—a glance that took in a picture very charming in its way; white-robed, golden-haired Caroline, and Vaughan, handsome and chivalrous of bearing, speech, and look, watching her fingers as they played elfish tricks about the ivory keys, or trying to tempt her to look up at him for a moment—it was sure to be only for a moment—and then she would droop her head again, and extraordinary bursts of sound would ensue, as if—as indeed, was the case—she was wrathful with her own self-consciousness.

But at length the evening came to an end. Mr. Hesketh was the first to rise, and, after bidding a cordial good-night to his guest, left the room, leaning on Caroline's arm. When the door had closed behind them, Mr. Farquhar lighted his candle, and held out his hand to Vaughan.

"Say good-night for me to Miss Maturin. I have some letters to attend to to-night before I sleep."

"Are you really going at once? You look tired, my dear Farquhar —"

"My dear Vaughan!"

The other held his hand, and looked steadily into his face, with a long, searching look, that would not be denied. Vaughan met it, half wonderingly, yet unflinchingly.

"Are you reading my fortune?" at length he asked, laughing.

"I was trying to read *you*; but I cannot."

"Who should be able, if not yourself?" Vaughan replied; "you who have been to me friend, counsellor, and helper—you who know all my