

"Oh! very jolly little woman! Dresses quiet enough."

"She played the organ! It was she, then! An organist! Is there anything approaching to gentility in her appearance?"

"I—really I'm no judge," said Wilfrid. "You had better ask Laura Tinley. She was talking to her when I went up."

The sisters exchanged looks. Presently they stood together in consultation. Then they spoke with their aunt, Mrs. Lupin, and went to their papa. The rapacity of those Tinleys for anything extraordinary was known to them, but they would not have conceived that their own discovery, their own treasure, could have been caught up so quickly. If the Tinleys got possession of her, the defection of Mr. Pericles might be counted on, and the display of a phenomenon would be lost to them. They decided to go down to Wilson's farm that very day, and forestall their rivals by having her up to Brookfield. The idea of doing this had been in a corner of their minds all the morning; it seemed now the most sensible plan in the world. It was patronage, in its right sense. And they might be of great service to her, by giving a proper elevation and tone to her genius; while she might amuse them, and their guests, and be let off, in fact, as a firework for the nonce. Among the queenly cases of women who are designing to become the heads of a circle (if I may use the term), an accurate admeasurement of reciprocal advantages can scarcely be expected to rank; but the knowledge that an act, depending upon us for execution, is capable of benefiting both sides, will make the proceeding appear so unselfish, that its wisdom is overlooked as well as its motives. The sisters felt they were the patronesses of the little obscure genius whom they longed for to illumine their household, before they knew her name. Cornet Wilfrid Pole must have chuckled mightily to see them depart on their mission. These ladies, who managed everybody, had themselves been very cleverly managed. It is doubtful whether the scheme to surprise and delight Mr. Pericles would have actuated the step they took, but for the dread of seeing the rapacious Tinleys snatch up their lawful prey. The Tinleys were known to be quite capable of doing so. They