

lived to enjoy for a few months. The father died first, and it was during a visit to England—her first for many years—that the widow, meeting her old friend, entreated him to take on himself the guardianship of her child when she should be left motherless.

These facts creeping out, the feminine part of the community, at least, found little difficulty in imagining the rest. "Poor Mr. Hesketh!" they used to say, sometimes, and take great interest in observing the old man's growing fondness for his charge—how he liked to walk about the park with her—how his face lighted up into a keener life when she was with him, and what evident delight was afforded him by her soon-aroused and rapidly-increasing affection for himself.

"Mr. Vaughan Hesketh must look after himself," observed the lookers-on; "this newcomer bids fair to supersede him in his uncle's favour."

But they judged superficially, as lookers-on, even the acutest, usually do. They supposed that Mr. Hesketh, having no children to whom to leave his lands and his wealth, had deliberately and advisedly adopted one out of his brother's large family to be his heir. Natural as this surmise appeared, it was not altogether correct. The old gentleman had simply taken the charge of his nephew's education since he was a child. Now he was a boy of sixteen, and at a large public school, from whence he only came to Redwood during alternate vacations. People wondered what he would say to the new member of the family he was to find there.

He came. To all appearance he was far from disapproving of the change in affairs. He liked society, perhaps, and was too much of a man to repudiate the companionship even of a little girl—particularly as the little girl in question was vivacious, intelligent, active, and clever, and practically sympathized with him in all his pursuits, and pretty nearly all his sports likewise. Decidedly, Vaughan Hesketh's vacations gained greatly in interest from the date of Caroline Matarin's introduction to Redwood. It was impossible to believe that there was any disaffection, any jealousy, on the boy's part. But then, after all, he was but a boy, and youth is proverbially thoughtless and unsuspecting, the much-interested gossips said among themselves. And they continued to say it until they were tired, as, day after day, week after week, the good understanding between the young people evidently increased and waxed strong, till at length "a body could see with half an eye," Sally the dairymaid said to Stockes the groom, "that Master Vaughan and Miss Caroline were as fond of one another as could be—quite like brother and sister, sure-ly." Stockes gravely shook his head at this last assertion, and took leave to doubt the continuance of the species of relationship named; and really, he remarked, the circumstances of the case and the