

think of you in here, burrowing close to the fire, and with that fiery dressing-gown on. You will come down to lunch, won't you?"

"Surely. Come here, my child."

She came, and knelt down beside his chair. He gently turned her face, so that he could look full into the clear eyes.

"Are you very happy this morning?"

"Happy!—I? Dear uncle, what do you mean?"

"Were you pleased with your birthnight ball?"

"O yes!"

"And glad that Vaughan is at home again?"

She coloured vividly. He let her droop her face then, but she lifted it again the next minute, saying, but not quite so distinctly as before, "O yes, I am always glad of that."

"That is well." In quite a changed tone he went on:—"What do you think of Mr. Farquhar?"

"I did not like him at all, at first; but I do now."

"That is right. I like him—I have confidence in him. He is much what his father was at that age." Then, in a less thoughtful tone, "You are going to Crooksforth this morning, are you not?"

"Yes. How pleasant it will be, uncle! O, I wish you could come too. Do you think——"

"No, my pet. It would be pleasanter for me to rest quietly at home. I have some letters to write. By the way, tell Vaughan I will see him in the afternoon; he can come in to me after you return from your ride."

"But won't you come down-stairs by that time?"

"I think not, dear. I have letters to write."

"You look tired. Couldn't I write the letters, or Vaughan? Do let him."

The old gentleman shook his head, and smiled reassuringly, in reply to her half-anxious look. She busied herself about the room for a little while, put fresh water to the nosegay with which she constantly supplied his table, stirred his fire, drew the blinds to a convenient height, all with the officious tenderness which it is alike so pleasant to give and to receive. Then she kissed him, and went to dress for her ride.

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The ride proved a great pleasure. Part of the way lay along a broad ridge of road much elevated above the country on each side, and thereby commanding views at every turn both extensive and various. The sweet English valleys were smiling their loveliest; little nest-like villages clustered below the brown hills, or shone out from amidst soft foliage