

"Undoubtedly," returned Mr. Farquhar, warmly, seeing that the words were uttered in a half-questioning tone; "I know few things that Vaughan Hesketh could not do, if he once resolved on doing them."

"Exactly; and he seems to have been setting to work in earnest of late. He tells me he has even brought his law-books down here, intending to study during his holidays."

"Indeed!"

The dancers were promenading round the room just now, and the speaker's eye had fallen, with a very odd glint in it, on the tall figure and handsome face of Vaughan Hesketh, who was bandying all sorts of lively nonsense with pretty Miss Windleton. But the next minute Mr. Farquhar's look changed. Miss Maturin passed, and as she went by smiled up brightly at Mr. Hesketh; the edge of the smile seemed lightly to touch the face of his companion, and that face looked disturbed for an instant, then it settled into a pleasanter expression than it had yet worn. The doubtful flicker left the dark eyes, the shade of irony and subdued bitterness went from the thin, expressive lips.

"Your niece looks thoroughly happy. What a pleasant thing to see is happiness?"

Mr. Hesketh assented, while his eyes proudly and admiringly followed the retreating figure of Caroline. But Mr. Farquhar meditatively fixed his regards on the polished oaken floor, and was silent for a while. Presently the host's attention was claimed, and he moved away to another part of the room. The mysterious, vague, but magical "sensation" which the initiated know to portend "supper" was commencing. Vaughan, still with Miss Windleton on his arms, passed his friend with a hasty nod. Then came Caroline, full of her duties as hostess, and busily engaged in "pairing off" all the ladies and gentlemen who had not performed that office for themselves. As she was arranging a last detachment, she perceived Mr. Farquhar, looking, as she thought, rather lonely, by the mantelpiece. She hesitated a minute, half blushing, and looking a very sweet picture of girlish shyness.

He came forward, and offered his arm with what seemed only a due amount of courteous eagerness. She accepted it, and they went into the supper-room. Mr. Farquhar appeared to revivify under her influence. His face brightened, his very voice changed; the atmosphere of her innocent, happy youth seemed to work a sort of enchantment upon him. Vaughan paused in the midst of his *petits soins* to the fair Bessy Windleton, and looked with amazement at his friend. He could hear his voice, distinct above the loud hum of the roomful of talkers, for George Farquhar's voice was a peculiar one—rich and clear, and with a certain