

lips that made his face look at once so handsome and so enigmatical. His reflections were doubtless highly satisfactory, not to say exultant; and he slowly quitted the room, saying to himself, "She loves me *desperately*. It is very pleasant. I had no idea that—well, she shall be happy. Beautiful—she *is* beautiful, young, sweet, and loving. Yes, I am quite satisfied."

So he entered the dining-room, and informed Mr. Hesketh of the fact of the betrothal.

The old gentleman was leaning back in his easy-chair; the disregarded newspaper lay on his knee, and he was evidently lost in serious, and probably not very pleasing thought. But when Vaughan spoke to him, and told him what he had to tell, his face relaxed, his smile was a satisfied one.

"I am glad, Vaughan. You are a happy fellow."

"I know it, sir," he answered fervently.

There was no time for more. The servants entered with dinner; the bell sounded, and presently Mr. Farquhar came into the room. Only a few minutes longer they had to wait for Caroline; then she came.

Poor girl! The ordeal of dinner is not the least trying that could be devised for a damsel under similar circumstances. However, she braved and came through it most creditably. She had a rare amount of spirit and resolution, which generally enabled her to achieve what she held to be very desirable. She determined that no outward show should exist of the wonderful new world she had but now entered: no bashfulness, no sentimental blushes or falterings, should, if she could help it, betray one iota of that which she held treasured so sacredly and tenderly. Therefore her demeanour, if not quite so frankly gay as usual, was very much farther removed from bearing any trace of agitation, past or present. Moreover, as the time went on, equanimity became easier, conversation less of an effort. By the time she rose to leave the dining-room, she had almost begun to understand, without first pausing to consider, the various remarks and questions that were circulating among the *partie quarrée*.

Her uncle rose to go with her to the drawing-room, declaring, in virtue of his being half an invalid, he would for that day assume the privileges of a lady. Vaughan closed the door after them. He appeared slightly discomposed, as he resumed his place opposite to his friend. Neither made any remark, and their talk was listless and disconnected, till Vaughan obeyed with alacrity the announcement that coffee was served, and led the way into the drawing-room.

There, Mr. Hesketh, as sofa had Caroline seated close beside him, as if they had been talking earnestly. But he loosed her hand when they