

"By no means. Vaughan has been so much away, that he had hardly seen anything of Caroline since she was almost a child. But they were always excellent friends from the very first."

"O, I know," said Miss Kendal, biting her lip meditatively. "And so, under the new light of this happy state of things, you arranged——"

"Everything is left as before. Redwood, descending to Vaughan, descends to Caroline also. The old will may stand. There is no need to make a division of property between a man and his wife. Don't you see?" said the poor old gentleman, looking anxiously up at her, passing his hand with a weary gesture across his forehead. "Don't you understand?—it is all quite right now, and nobody will be wronged."

Miss Kendal glanced at the gray head, smiled kindly, then relapsed into thought again.

"And your old mistrust of Vaughan does not, of course, exist?" she asked, more hesitatingly than was her wont to speak; "you have had no cause for discontent respecting his conduct, since you paid his college debts, three years ago?"

"Let me see; we spoke about that. He said—he said he had been in no embarrassments since. He assured me so, solemnly, when I asked him. Because, you know, I could neither have my niece made miserable, nor Redwood ruined by a spendthrift," said the old gentleman, with something like fire flashing in his eyes. "No, no; if Vaughan were not worthy—if I were not entirely satisfied that Vaughan is worthy—he should have neither."

"When does Vaughan return from London?" was Miss Kendal's next, somewhat abrupt question; "and on what business has he gone?"

"On some affairs—I forget exactly what; but he told me—he told me, before he went. Some affairs——"

But Caroline entered, and the old man stopped precipitately, and looked at her fresh, girlish face, with embarrassment and fondness mingled very strangely, and even pathetically, in his worn, withered features.

"Come," cried Miss Kendal's cheerful voice, cleaving the mist of restraint like a west wind, clear, and blithe, and keen;—"come to your old place, Caroline, and let us have the old group round the fire. This is pleasant—this is comfortable! I need not go back for two hours yet, and at present I am at home."

"We only want the chess-board," said Caroline, half turning to fetch it.

But Miss Kendal detained her rather hastily. "Not to-night, my dear. We'll sit and talk, for to-night."

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