

"In the study; she is busy, and would rather not be disturbed at present."

"Did she say so?"

"I say so; and I tell no lies at any time, or for any sake. You behave strangely, young man. Do you suppose I attach such high importance to the fact of your seeing or not seeing my visitor before she leaves me?"

"Then I can see her?"

"If and when she chooses—not before. It was she, not I, who objected to your request for an interview. I come as her ambassador, not as her jailor, as you appear to imagine."

In fact Vaughan perceived that his impetuosity was needless, and somewhat foolish. He had been in so great a hurry to put into practice his new theory of reckless boldness, it had never struck him that it might be unnecessary—that Miss Kendal had not even said, though he had taken it for granted, that he was not to be allowed to see Madame de Vigny. The consciousness of his mistake incensed him. He was perplexed, also, as to what he should do. He paused, biting his lip. Contending passions were lashing him almost into frenzy. The dark face worked turbulently. He flung himself into a chair, and clenched his hands together in a kind of impotent desperation. He chanced to catch Miss Kendall's look; it was a curious one—a certain pity softened its uncompromising rigidity. He had never seen her look thus at him before. It suggested a new chance, and he snatched at it.

"I am almost mad, I think," he muttered.

She made no reply.

He looked up into her face earnestly and inquiringly. Anon that expression gave place to a certain impatient determination to overcome the feeling of cowardice that weighed him down. What was there in her—a woman—that she should thus quell and daunt him, with her steadfast look and firm-set mouth?

"I beg your pardon, madam," he said, with an effort at a *déagé* air—

"I beg your pardon for the haste with which I spoke."

He rose, and walked to the window.

"I can excuse you," Miss Kendall replied, drily; "I expected little less. I am aware that you are in a very critical and perplexing position."

He turned and looked at her with a look of defiance glittering in his eyes—curling about his mouth.

"Yes, I am aware of the fact," she pursued, quite unaffected by his glance; "Madame de Vigny acquainted me with what she deemed your very unjustifiable behaviour."

"What do you mean?"