

"O, you do wrong to my cleverness," she averred. "No, indeed; I had my suspicions from the first, it was so natural a thing—so likely. And when you began to speak, c'est à dire *not* to speak of 'your cousin, Miss Maturin,' I was sure. And so, je vous fais mes compliments."

Silence. They were pacing the broad terrace-walk at rather a brisk rate. Vaughan's eye studied the ground with persistency. The lady, alert and gay as a bird, looked around her with airy grace. Suddenly, she turned to him with a question.

"And when—when shall you be married? It is not indiscreet to ask?"

"Yes, it is indiscreet for you to ask; it would be dangerous for me to answer," he returned, hoarsely. He looked up; he let her see his face, very pale, and with a lightning-like effluence in the eyes that fixed themselves on her. "I love you! You must know it—you must see it," he muttered, beneath his breath. Apparently his companion did not hear. "I cannot tell you more—now," he went on; "some day perhaps!" A passionate ejaculation, a call—how meaningless! how mocking!—on a Name that he had no right to invoke then, at least. And Vaughan Hesketh strode fiercely and quickly from her side. Only for a few minutes, to pluck, apparently, a spray of myrtle that grew near. He came back to her, and began to talk in a totally changed tone. Did she not like the gardens? Were not the evergreens cheerful, though the other trees were now almost leafless? The myrtle, too, it was flourishing yet, it grew in such a sheltered spot. Might he offer her the spray he had just gathered?

Madame de Vigny disliked *scenes*. She had been startled and somewhat annoyed by Vaughan's sudden air of tragedy, although she was quite prepared to understand its drift. But she preferred the lighter atmosphere, the superior *convenances* of comedy. She accepted his offering with the lightest grace, the sweetest smile in the world.

"Mille remerciemens. I hope nothing troubles you?—I should be very sorry."

"Would you?"

Something in his tone smote the heart of the woman; for she had one, though thickly incrustured with worldliness, love of admiration, and vanity in all forms. Perhaps, too, for the first time, the thought of Caroline in her relation to Vaughan came across her mind. Howbeit, she drew back, without looking at him; she flung away the myrtle.

"It is old and brown. Je ne l'aime pas. Do you think Miss Kendal is ready to go home?"

Not waiting for a reply, she slid past him, with something of stateli-