

He placed his arm round her. She had stood erect and still till then, but *then* she began to tremble much and uncontrollably.

"Tell me; tell me!" he murmured, urgently—"tell me that you are my own, own Carry—now and always!"

There was a pause. She could not answer, it seemed. But presently the lip quivered, unclosed, and "Now and always," she repeated, at last, very softly.

He kissed the downcast brow, and then strove to turn her face towards him.

"Look at me, dearest." And shyly, yet very proudly, too she looked up at him for an instant—only for an instant. Her bedewed eyes met the gaze of his, then she broke away from him. But at the door he caught her hand.

"Don't run from me so soon—I have so much to say."

Again he imprisoned her in his arms, and bent over her, uttering low words—soothing, tender, and fond. For her, she hid her face in her two hands, and let the tears have way that *would* not now be forced back. He watched the while.

"You are happy—say you are happy, in spite of these tears," he whispered.

Faintly came her reply, but it contented him.

"And I may tell my uncle that all is as he wishes—may I?"

She bowed her head.

"And you will let him see—that—that his great desire is fulfilled? You are not ashamed of loving me, Caroline?"

"Ashamed!" She looked into his face in a very radiance of triumph and joy.

"And we are betrothed? Say again that you are happy—say again that you love me."

"I am happy; I am happy!" She paused, caught his smiling, expectant look fixed upon her. "And—and I love—O, Vaughan! you are the whole—whole world to me!"

Shyness and shame were crushed, and yielded for the moment to the sudden impulse. For a moment she clung to him, as though indeed in him she found her home, her hope, her all. For a moment the strong full soul overflowed.

Vaughan Hesketh was conscious of a revelation. So far as he might he understood and was somewhat dazzled with the intense new light that flashed before him.

Then she fled, and this time he did not seek to detain her. He stood musing, his hands clasped before him, and the peculiar smile upon his