

are walking along? I beg your pardon; go on with what you were saying."

"I was only going to say that I may not have a chance of talking to you alone again, and when I am gone I shall hope soon to hear that you are comfortably settled in a home of your own. I hope you will always look back to our friendship with pleasure, and believe that, although I may sometimes have seemed to you prosy and didactic, I have not consulted my own pleasure so much as I have endeavoured earnestly to consider both your highest welfare and my own."

She looked at me with eyes wide open in, as it seemed, unaffected astonishment. I think her surprise was real, although I cannot tell exactly what caused it. She was startled at last out of her indifference, and stood facing me, apparently thinking of what I had said. Then, suddenly, as some thought struck her, the flame of an internal fire leaped to her cheeks, and she left me, and went into the house. Dear girl! There was a sort of divine pity in the glance she gave. Was it for me, or for herself, or both? If she