

He took firm hold of her wrist, and compelled her in at the open door.

"You hurt me, Vaughan," she cried, the tears starting to her eyes.

He looked intently on the pretty reddened mark his fingers had left on her wrist, then kissed it—once—twice. He glanced for a moment at her flushing face as he let the hand go.

"Is it well now?" he asked, audaciously. "Or shall I——"

"Be silent, Vaughan! I am hurt, grieved, angry enough with you for one morning. I thought my cousin—my friend—my old playmate, was at least a gentleman."

If he expected to be amused by her indignation, he was also involuntarily affected by it. The indescribable swagger was put off. In a subdued tone he addressed her.

"Sit down, then; I did not mean to offend you, Caroline. But you are very contrary this morning yourself; why couldn't you answer me just now at breakfast what I wanted to know? You are aware how keenly interested I am in anything that concerns your ancient *gouvernante*. Sanctimonious old soul, how comes she to write to you?"

"I dislike your way of speaking. Miss Kendal should be mentioned with respect at least."

"I have no reason either to respect or to like her. There was not any love lost between us, I believe. I am sure she always behaved most unpleasantly to me. I wish you would have nothing to say to her, either by personal or postal intercourse."

"It is unlucky for your wish," Caroline remarked, "that she is about to take up her residence so near Redwood. In a few weeks she is coming to live at Beacon's Cottage."

"The deuce she is! I fancied something of the kind," he added, with ire. "Miss Kendal was always famous for making differences between you and me. It reminds me of the old days of cricketing and boating, when you used to put me off because you had to 'go out with Miss Kendal.' I never had any patience with your affection for that woman. If I could have helped it, it shouldn't have been."

Caroline coloured, with many conflicting thoughts. The foremost of all was a highly sensible satisfaction that he did not know the real and effectual extent of his influence. She kept silence.

"What in the world brings her to his part of the country again?" he muttered. "I thought when she left us she was going abroad with some East Indian family. I hoped she was comfortably disposed of."

"But Mr. and Lady Camilla Blair are about returning to Madras for two years, and meanwhile leave their children under Miss Kendal's care. And she has chosen to come here. The house is already taken."