

"O, Vaughan, we must show Madame de Vigny the new American plants in the greenhouse!" cried Caroline. "Let us go at once."

Her blitheness might have won some answering gaiety from a less apathetic spirit than Vaughan's appeared to be at present. He accompanied them, however, opened doors, and shut gates, with all due attention: but still the conversation was chiefly supported by the ladies. Caroline, eager in her search after the choicest flowers to enrich the bouquet she was forming, ran to another greenhouse, leaving the others gazing on the lingering glories of some gorgeous tropical plant. Then Madame de Vigny turned her swift glance from the flower, and, looking up in her companion's face, "*Qu' elle est joyeuse, your cousin!*" When she first came, she looked so sad and tired; and she is pale still."

She watched her, with evident curiosity and some interest. Vaughan, in turn, looked at the watcher. From her he glanced at Caroline. The contrast was striking. Now that she was no longer talking—now that the brief flush of change and pleasurable excitement had passed from her face as from her mind, a gray and heavy shade subdued her—body and spirit. The old care re-asserted its dominion, and weighed her down. She stood, arranging her flowers, under the drooping branches of the silver-birch, with the sombre line of firs rising behind, and above them the autumn clouds, ponderous, and of a dull purple color, that fitly harmonized with the rest of the picture. Poor Carry! her very step, as she came towards them again, had lost its temporarily-recovered buoyancy. It was time for her to go in again. Some particular medicine had to be administered to the patient, who loved best to receive it from her hands; and, the stable clock striking the hour, had brought back to her, as by magic, all the atmosphere of weariness and gloom, which for awhile she had almost forgotten. She could only stay to bestow her bouquet, to shake hands with the radiant Blanche, and with a parting smile, very sweet, and as cheerful as she could make it, to Vaughan, she left them.

"O, I am so sorry she is gone," said Madame de Vigny, turning to her companion. He made no reply; and presently, with a smile and a half bow, sufficiently expressive, she added, "*I like her very much. She is fair, she is sweet, she is bien gracieuse. Je vous en felicite, Mr. Hesketh.*"

Mr. Hesketh retained presence of mind enough to bow in acknowledgment. But his companion laughed gaily and archly in his face.

"You are very retenu. You never said a word, but you see I have divined your secret. Do you know how? Can you guess?"

He could not guess. He presumed, in a very deep, and rather sullen tone, that she had been informed.