

Janetta blushed, as if she were minded to say that it was not her carriage; but returned to the victoria, and was handed to her seat by the young man, who then raised his hat with an elaborate flourish which was not exactly English. Indeed, it occurred to Lady Caroline at once that there was something French about both the travelers. The lady with the frizzled grey hair, the black lace dress and mantel, the gaudy blue and scarlet fan, was quite foreign in appearance; the young man with the perfectly fitting frock-coat, the tall hat, the flower in his button-hole, was—in spite of his perfectly English accent—foreign too. Lady Caroline was cosmopolitan enough to feel an access of greater interest in the pair in consequence.

"They have sent to the nearest inn for a horse," said Janetta, as the carriage moved on; "and I dare say they will not have long to wait."

"Was the lady hurt?"

"No, only shaken. She is subject to fainting fits, and the accident quite upset her nerves, her son said."

"Her son?"

"The gentleman called her mother."

"Oh! You did not hear their name, I suppose?"

"No. There was a big B on their traveling bag."

"B—B—?" said Lady Caroline, thoughtfully. "I don't know any one in this neighborhood whose name begins with B, except the Bevans. They must have been merely passing through; and yet the young man's face seemed familiar to me."

Janetta shook her head. "I never saw them before," she said.

"He has a very bold and unpleasant expression," Lady Caroline remarked, decidedly. "It spoils him entirely: otherwise he is a handsome man."

The girl made no answer. She knew, as well as Lady Caroline, that she had been stared at in a manner that was not quite agreeable to her, and yet she did not like to endorse that lady's condemnation of the stranger. For he was certainly very nice-looking—and he had been so kind to his mother that he could not be entirely bad—and to her also his face was vaguely familiar. Could he belong to Beaminster?

As she sat and meditated, the tall spires of Beaminster Cathedral came into sight, and a few minutes brought the carriage across the grey stone bridge and down the principal street of the quaint old place which called itself a city, but was really neither more nor less than a quiet country town. Here Lady Caroline turned to her young guest with a question—"You live in Gwynne Street, I believe, my dear?"

