

Helen's face flushed, but she made no answer.

"You see," he went on, "this is a peculiar climate, and one must be a little careful, though I never imagined that there was anything wrong with you. Would you like to see Dr. Haldane? He is coming here to-day."

"No, thank you, sir. I am quite well, indeed. I do not feel the heat like Mrs. Lathom. She has complained very much lately."

Lathom nodded. Then he said, "She has had several fainting fits of late, she tells me. Why did you not let me know of this?"

Again the girl's face flushed deeply, and she felt an almost irresistible desire to cry out, "It is false. She is deceiving you, and asked me to help her in her deceit." But she bent her head, and said nothing.

"I am sorry you did not tell me," went on Lathom gravely, "for I never imagined that there was really anything wrong with Mrs. Lathom's health. Now I can see that there is, and as she thinks that she will get better in Sydney, I am sending her down there for a few months. You will, of course, accompany her. She tells me you are very anxious to go."

"I should like to be near the sea again, sir, although I do not like Sydney."

"Ah, yes; I remember now that you were very anxious to be assigned to Major Cartwright at Port Macquarie. Why did you wish to go there? It is a very pretty place, but the country round about still very unsettled. Do you know Major Cartwright's family?"

"No, sir," she replied, with such very evident constraint that, seeing his questions were causing her some distress, he pursued the subject no longer.

"Well, you must take good care of Mrs. Lathom,