

## CHAPTER I

“**P**ATTY,” said Miss Cordelia one morning, “have you noticed Josiah lately?”

“Yes,” nodded Miss Patricia, her eyes a little brighter than they should have been.

“Do you know,” continued the other, her voice dropping to a whisper, “I’m afraid—if he keeps on—the way he is—”

“Oh, no, Cordelia! You know as well as I do—there has never been anything like that in our family.”

Nevertheless the two sisters looked at each other with awe-stricken eyes, and then their arms went around each other and they eased their hearts in the immemorial manner.

“You know, he worries because we are the last of the Spencers,” said Cordelia, “and the family dies with us. Even if you or I had children, I don’t think he would take it so hard—”

A wistful look passed over their faces, such as you might expect to see on those who had repented too late and stood looking through St. Peter’s gate at scenes in which they knew they could never take a part.

“But I am forty-eight,” sighed Cordelia.