

and to Paris. Then in winter, to Italy—Florence, Venice, Rome. Oh,"—with a pretty smile—"I have seen a great deal of the world."

Hannington smiled too. But he was not going to pursue the subject of her travels.

"And now you are to settle down in Dundee. Your father's house is at the West End of the town, I believe? You will be out of the smoke there."

"Yes, I suppose so. I have not seen it. Papa removed to Thornbank when I was away. We had a dear, gloomy old house in the Nethergate before."

"And you will be mistress and queen of Thornbank, I suppose?" said Mr. Hannington, pensively.

Stella blushed a little. "My aunt lives there. I think she is queen of the house. Dear Aunt Jacky! I have not seen her either since I was sixteen."

"You will allow me, perhaps," said her companion, in a very formal tone, "to call and inquire how you have borne the fatigue of your long journey from Brussels, and to make acquaintance with Miss—Miss Raeburn?"

"Miss Raeburn? Miss Jacquetta Raeburn!" said Stella merrily. "You must remember that she is not Miss Raeburn; she is Miss Jacquetta; she is very particular about the title. I am sure she will be exceedingly pleased to see you."

"And you," said Hannington, dropping his voice almost to a whisper, "will you be pleased to see me too, Stella?"

She started and moved a step or two away from him. They had been standing still for the last few minutes. The man followed her closely. He was not going to let her escape.

"Forgive me if I have gone too far," he said. "But will you not give me one word of comfort? Will you not say that you will be glad to see me too?"

There was so much noise about them, so much talking, so much shouting of orders, dragging of chains, bumping of bales and boxes, creaking of machinery, that he had to approach her very closely to hear the faintly murmured "Yes" that fell from Stella's lips. Her slim, ungloved hand hung at her side. It was easy in the gathering twilight to take it unobserved in his own, and to hold it for a minute or two in a very tender clasp. To Stella's simple soul, the action seemed like a ceremony of betrothal.