

tones; betraying, however, that note of personal interest which had hitherto been entirely lacking in her brief converse with Jeanne.

"Did Aunt Marney—I mean Aunt Caroline—show it to you?"

"Yes, missy, she did."

"You have lived with her a long time, Mrs. Dunham, haven't you?"

"Yes, missy. You'll be wanting to look at your letter."

Jeanne opened it reluctantly.

She preferred reading those sacred epistles from her far-away soldier, in solitude; a page at a time, to eke out her delight.

But the first glance at the closely written sheets caused her to utter an incredulous sound of delight and surprise.

"Oh, Mrs. Dunham. His passage is booked. He is coming home! He will sail by the *Briton* early in January, or, at least, he *hopes* he will."

She forgot her desire for solitude in the joy of sharing the good news.

"I'm very glad, missy."

Dunham's voice was troubled.

"I don't know if I ought to take it on myself—but—if you could send him a cable, and ask him to start earlier?"

"Earlier! But I never expected him to come at all."

Dunham hesitated. Her small dim eyes peered anxiously out of her wrinkled face.

"Your auntie would like to see him."

"But she will see him."

Dunham shook her head sorrowfully.

"I am sure you are over anxious, Mrs. Dunham," said Jeanne, who now beheld all the world through rose-coloured spectacles. "Indeed, indeed, she does not seem to me so very ill."

Dunham evaded the subject.

"It might make a great difference, missy, to the young gentleman," she urged beneath her breath.