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SISTERS THREE.

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CHAPTER XXII.

It was a gloomy afternoon. The rain was falling in a persistent drizzle; the clouds were low and grey. It seemed as if nature itself shared in the depression which settled on the little party gathered together in the drawing-room at Cloudsdale. What merry times

they had spent in this room! What cosy chats round the fireside in winter; what refreshing hours of rest in summer, when the sun blinds were lowered, and the windows stood open to the green lawn! And now they were all over. A melancholy feeling of "last time" settled on each of the beholders as they looked at Lettice with the betrothal ring

sparkling on her finger; at Rex, so tall and man-like in his travelling suit of rough grey tweed. To make matters worse, the curate had taken this opportunity to pay a call, so that they were not even alone, and the rain prevented an adjournment to the garden. Norah sat at the extreme end of the room from Rex, trifling with her teacup and spoon,



"IT WAS ALWAYS A TREAT TO HEAR HER PLAY."

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