

a gleam upon her face. "I am all right now. Do you think I could go down to tea as I am?"

"Surely. Let me help you," said Janet, and with unusual kindness she quickly unfastened her cousin's wraps and laid them aside, then stooping down, took off her boots.

"I could sponge your face and hands if you like, Airlie. That always refreshes one."

"Oh, thanks, I can do that myself," said Airlie, rising. "Thank you, Cousin Janet." Then with a childish frankness she added, "How lovely you are! You are just like a picture."

"Oh, nonsense, Airlie!" laughed Janet, but a pleased colour stole into her fair cheek, telling that the unstudied compliment was not unappreciated.

Somewhat refreshed with the cold water, but still very pale and worn, Airlie was ready to go to the dining-room. They were all waiting for her there, and when she entered, leaning heavily on Janet's arm, they were struck by the great and almost painful contrast between them. They were almost of an age, but Janet's tall, straight, graceful figure, and clear, healthy-hued, beautiful face, made Airlie's shrinking figure and thin, sallow face, with its pathetic eyes and frame of short dark curls, look like those of a much older woman.

"Have I kept you waiting long, Aunt Marion. How very cold it is here," said Airlie, approaching the fire with unmistakable eagerness. "I feel as if I could shrink into myself."

"Take a chair, Airlie," said Jack with ready kindness, pulling a low basket lounge right up to the tiled hearth.

"Thank you; but aren't you waiting for me?" she said, with a glance at the table.

"Suppose you sit here, and I'll wait on you," said Errol, kindly.

"You look as if you were starving"

"So I am; but remember, I have

been accustomed all my life to the thermometer at 100," said Airlie, laughing. "May I sit here, as Errol suggests, Aunt Marion?"

"Surely, my dear; you look frightfully ill, now that I see you," said Mrs. Keith, hardly yet recovered from the shock of the girl's fragile appearance.

"Why, there is very little of you to look at. What a morsel you are."

"There was more of me when I left Tahai, I believe," said Airlie. "But if you had been jolted in a bullock-waggon, as I was, over seven hundred miles of rocky ground, where there is no road, and scarcely a track, you might have diminished too. Oh, it was a frightful journey."

"Jolly frightful, I should say," assented Jack with energy.

"But they were so kind to me; they saved me as much as possible," said Airlie, softly.

"Who, my dear?" asked Mrs. Keith.

"The natives, father's children. Half a dozen of them came all the way to the coast with me; and sometimes, when I was very tired with the rough riding, they carried me in their arms. That was such a rest."

"They must be good creatures. I didn't think these sort of heathens had so much feeling," said Mrs. Keith.

A little tremulous smile touched Airlie's lips, but they saw her eyes grow dim.

"I will tell you about them some day, Aunt Marion," she said. "I don't think anybody will ever love me as they did; at least not with such utter unselfishness. It nearly broke my heart to see their grief, first over father's death, and then over my leaving them. And there is no one left behind to comfort them, or to keep them in the right way. There is nobody to take up the work for which papa laid down his life."

"Don't fret about it, Airlie," said Mrs. Keith, fussily. "I daresay some