



CHAPTER III.

ON THE DOWN GRADE.

A SHORT time after their marriage Richard inherited the business and property of his father, whose health had been failing for years, and who died quite unexpectedly. His mother never recovered from the shock, but in a short time followed her loved husband to the grave. So the son was left with a good business and ample means, seeming to be on the road to opulence.

As the years rolled on business prospered, and the prattle of children's voices gladdened their home. First a boy came, with the fair hair and large dreamy eyes of the mother; then, two years later, a girl with the dark eyes and the raven black hair of the father, and their cup of bliss seemed full to overflowing.

Circumstances, however, had already occurred which caused Ruth very much uneasiness of mind, and sometimes when a friend called she had to absent herself