

said, "You are mine!—you are *mine*!" whilst he strove coherently to introduce the white-haired stranger who accompanied him as his "best friend, Mr. Greville." Mr. Greville regarded his blushing hostess with greater earnestness than is usually accorded on a first introduction, and it made her blush the more.

"Forgive me, my dear young lady," he said, as he observed her embarrassment, "if I gaze at your features with more interest than is consistent with our slight acquaintanceship. But I have heard so much and so often of Miss Rayne of Mount Eden, from this boy here," laying his hand on Philip's shoulder, "that I feel as if I already were your friend. Will you be vexed if I say that he has told me *everything*, and that I have come down prepared to offer you both my heartiest congratulations?"

"Thank you," she said softly; "we feel that they are due."

"More so than you think for now, Miss Rayne. I have known Philip ever since he was in knickerbockers; I have watched his career during the period he has served at Mount Eden, and he is worthy of your highest esteem. I can say no more."

"And that is too much, Mr. Greville," cried Captain Philip laughing. "Hold hard, do! You are making *me* blush now."

"Well, I will say no more at present, but before Miss Rayne wishes me good-night, she will acknowledge I have said less than the truth."

But here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. and Mrs. Lyle, further introductions were gone through, Jasper scowled when he saw that the overseer was to be one of the dinner guests, and his manner towards that gentleman was hardly civil, but Captain Philip took no notice of it. Evelyn perceived, from the keen glance which he threw at her cousin, that Mr. Greville had been made acquainted with the family history, and she wondered what decision he and her future husband had arrived at concerning Jasper, and what measures they intended to take with regard to him. But she made up her mind that she must possess her soul in patience until the morning. Dinner was on the table. This was no time for business, and, indeed, she felt glad to think that poor Jasper would have a few hours' respite. The disappointment would be hard