

"Oh, Marjorie, I'm so glad you've come; it seems such a long, long while; and how late you are! Was there an accident? How did you like the carriage? and—oh, Marjorie, how beautiful you have grown!"

She stopped suddenly and leaned back with a look of rapt admiration as she gazed into the beautiful face of her sister. Marjorie laughed softly, and stooped to kiss the fair, flushed face.

"And how tall you've grown, dear," she said, lovingly. "Oh, and nearly a long dress! Good gracious! And I have been calling up visions of a little girl in a pinafore and a pig-tail, waiting to see me."

"But I'm almost sure you've grown, too," responds Bessie, clinging to her as they enter the hall. "I'm sure you have! And oh, Marjorie, what do you think of it all?"

Marjorie Deane looked around curiously, and then down at the eager face, with a peculiar smile.

"It's all very grand, dear."

"Grand? I should think so," said Bessie, looking pleased for a moment, and then, turning her eyes on the bright face with a half-troubled expression. "What do you mean by grand, Marjorie? Don't—don't you like it, the avenue——"

"Oh, the avenue is beautiful. They are superb old trees; but, the house—isn't it rather—rather new, dear?"

"New, how could it be anything else?" expostulates Bessie, open-eyed. "Papa pulled down the old place to build this. It was such a poky old place, all corners and no windows. Not a decent room in it. Papa pulled it down, every brick. And, oh, Marjorie, I hope you will be pleased! And—and——"

"Well?" asks Marjorie, with a smile. They have reached the drawing-room by this time, and Marjorie pauses with her hand on the door-knob. "Well, dear?"

"Papa, he's very glad that you are coming, and—and—all that old affair will be forgotten; and—and—oh, Marjorie, you won't begin quarrelling directly, will you?"

Marjorie bends and kisses her for the twentieth time.

"No, dear," she says, with a little short laugh, and a curve of the full mobile lips; "we won't quarrel, papa and I. At least if we do, it shan't be my fault if I can help it. Where is he? In here?"

Bessie nods, and the two girls go into the room. Mr. Deane thrusts a bandanna into his hind pocket, from which it sticks out like a fiery tail, and receives his daughter with a calm, though noisy kiss.

"How are you, Marjorie? Late, ain't you? 'Ad your dinner? Ah I thought you wouldn't get much more than a snack on the road, so I've had something put ready for you in the dining-room."