

clergyman who had followed in the doctor's footsteps, then Mr. Derringer rubbed his chin complacently and chuckled, as if he had got off a good joke, or had, at least, relieved his mind of a load.

"I had always intended to do the right thing by Estelle, if she is half Kew," he said, smiling blandly. "I'm going to send for her, and have her here for a while. She's been living with the Kew's since the death of her parents. They're a shabby set at best. She had better be removed from their charity, if she's going to inherit from a Derringer. I went to see her once out of curiosity, to know how they treated her. I got boarded in the house with her at Aunt Kew's. Bless you! if I hadn't been a gentleman I could have sworn roundly to see how they sneered at and abused my granddaughter, and she a Derringer! She went on all the shabby errands, and brought the dinner home in brown paper, and washed dishes, and wore their old duds, and sat in the dining-room when there were young fellows in the parlor. She didn't know me from Adam, and I had never laid eyes on her before; but I tell you it made my old blood boil as it has never done since I was a boy. I wonder how she had better come? I don't want to go and fetch her myself, because, you see, I might revenge her."

"Where does she live?" asked Denen, shaking the sand over the fresh signatures. "Are these wretches the Kews of Valeville?"

"Yes, the Kews of Valeville; they don't amount to a row of pins, but they resemble the pins in being sharp."

"Well, I was going to say that I have business calling me to Valeville next month. Suppose I bring Miss Estelle back with me?"

"Capital! I'll write her a letter for you to take."

"Perhaps she won't come."

"Tell her it's for her interest, if she's a mercenary Kew; tell her it's duty to an aged relative, if she's a Derringer."

"You're to be represented as alone, at the mercy of servants and strangers, and all that sort of thing, eh?"

"Yes; you know how to persuade the girls, I'll be bound."

"Not I."

Therefore, one morning early in the

summer, he surprised Miss Estelle sweeping off the steps of the Kew mansion.

"Dear me! who is that coming here, Mr. Carruth?" she said to a young man playing croquet on the grassplot with her cousins, but who had strayed away from them to exchange a word with her.

"I believe it is Lawyer Denen, of New York," said Carruth.

"And I am in my old wrapper!"

"Do I have the pleasure of addressing Miss Derringer?" asked Denen, advancing. "I bring you a message from your grandfather."

"Really? I thought he disowned my existence," she said, looking straight into Denen's face, as if she would fathom his purposes. But Denen was no such transparency. She saw, instead, a dark, handsome countenance, lighted by eyes full of admiration, and a firm, unwavering mouth that seldom smiled.

"I have come, at the request of your grandfather, to escort you back to him."

"Do you think he needs me?" she asked, after reading his letter of invitation.

"I do, Miss Derringer. He is an old man now, you know, with none but hirelings to look to for attention."

"But he has never seen me. How can he tell if I shall be pleasant to him?"

"I think there can be no doubt of that," he replied, with prompt gallantry.

"Do you?" she asked, quite seriously.

"Then I suppose—I must—go."

"You were to do nothing against your will, I believe."

"No, I don't mean to do anything against my will," she said with a charming simplicity. "If I don't like it, I can seek my fortunes elsewhere."

"You would not have far to seek. When shall I call for you? I leave a week from to-day. Will that be convenient?"

"All days are alike to me."

"Lucky Miss Derringer. And will they part from you willingly here?"

"They are not distractingly fond of me," shrugging her shoulders. "Who is fond of a dependent? An uncle's wife and some cousins are all my possessions here. I'm glad of a diversion in my favor. Nothing ever happened to me before."

"Something has happened to you now, with a vengeance," thought Denen.