

How the door of Fern Villa ever opened to receive her, first as guest, afterwards as dweller, Marjorie never could tell; and yet, perhaps, she never penetrated far enough into the hidden life of its invalid owner to find reason for the good fortune that had opened its arms to receive her. Just to dwell within its portals as the chosen friend of the dignified white-haired woman, who with so much confidence and affection had taken the lonely orphan to be her companion and confidante, Marjorie felt to be the acme of happiness. How patiently Mrs. Graham listened to her daily trials, seeking by every means that luxury and wealth could devise to render the rough road more inviting and less wearisome! Gladly would she have freed Marjorie from the thankless drudgery of her present position, but the independence of that little maid, coupled with an under-estimate of her ability to return by her companionship alone so great a debt, kept Marjorie at her daily duties.

So time went by while the thread of destiny was being spun, and Marjorie, climbing the "shining stairs of Love and Hope," little