

"Do be sensible Lucy and let mamma know that Isabel has come," said Ada reprovingly.

"I go," answered Lucy with mock gravity, "to usher my illustrious mother to the presence of the noble Isabel of Leicester."

"Oh! Lucy, just the same nonsensical," laughed Isabel.

"Alas, I fear that it will be the same to the end of the chapter," sighed the incorrigible Lucy as she left the room. She soon returned bringing the other members of the family with her, and Isabel received a very warm welcome. She could not help shedding tears of happiness and gratitude, when Mrs. Mornington embracing her said, "ever look upon this as your home dear child, whenever you like to come you will always find us glad to see you," and Mr. Mornington added in his kindly tone "yes, yes, always remember Isabel my dear, that while I have a roof over my head, you have still a home, and kind friends to welcome you."

On being conducted to her room, she found the best was given her as of old; it was evident that her altered circumstances made no difference at Eastwood.

Happy days were these which Isabel spent with her dearest friends. Bob's party went off with great *clat*, and the perfect success of the Xmas trees was owing to Isabel's tasteful arrangement.

The Ashtons arrived on New Year's Eve, for Ada was to be married on twelfth day. Lady Ashton was very much surprised to find how very partial the Morningtons were to Isabel, they consulted her on all occasions, and her advice was almost invariably taken. This annoyed Lady Ashton extremely, and she often succeeded in vexing her, and making her feel very uncomfortable. But Lady Ashton's disagreeable behaviour did not annoy Isabel so much as at Ashton Park. Here among her best friends, she could even think of herself as a governess without experiencing the same degree of mortification as formerly, but she was still very sensitive upon that point.

Lady Ashton had noticed that her nephew, The Honorable Arthur Barrington was very attentive to Miss Leicester, this raised her ire, and she was determined to prevent it—she resolved to put a stop to it, so seeing him seated next Isabel at dinner, she asked her across the table how her little pupils were when she left them, and if Mrs. Arlington had granted extra holidays, as she could scarcely get back by the end of the usual Xmas vacation."