

golden ; straight handsome features, the jaw a little heavy. The only fault an ill-conditioned critic could point out was that the quiet resolute eyes, eyebrows and lashes wanted colour. Her dress was of rich soft black silk and lace, and a small buckle of brilliant clasped a band of black velvet round her throat. Marjory stood very still, gazing at this handsome apparition. "You are a little before your time, my dear," said Mrs. Acland, advancing with outstretched hand and a pleasant smile ; "you cannot have taken the train I told you ; I am sorry you had no one to meet you." She bent forward to kiss her step-daughter as she spoke. Marjory did not refuse the salutation, but she turned her cheek to it.

"Well," continued Mrs. Acland, "I hope you have returned quite a reformed character, Marjory !—no more sulks, eh ? or angry scenes, but submission, cheerful submission to proper authority, and no more attempts to thrust yourself where you are not wanted ! I assure you, dear, both your father and I were *very* sorry to keep you so long away from home ; but now you are older and wiser, you will no doubt recognize the sincere regard for your real interests which actuates me. I am always willing to be your friend."

As Marjory listened to the soft measured accents in which Mrs. Acland habitually spoke, the good resolutions of a moment before melted away—as ice might before a fierce fire. She paused a moment, and then said shortly, "Thank you, I hope I am wiser."

"You will be hungry after your journey ? I have told Cutler to put your supper in the school-room. There is a fire there. Will you take off your cloak first ?"

"Yes ; but I am not hungry. I will wait and see my father."

"By all means ; but don't be too effusive—don't bedew his fresh shirt front with tears of joy."

Marjory flushed up, but resolutely refrained from words, and almost immediately the door opened to admit Mr. Acland, a good-looking, well-dressed, eminently respectable professional man. "Ha ! Marjory, glad to see you my dear," he exclaimed. Not too warm a reception for a daughter after more than a year's absence, but enough to stir Marjory's heart with an impulse to throw her arms round his neck and tell him her joy at seeing him again. The consciousness that her step-mother's eyes were upon her, however, chilled her into undemonstrativeness. She took his hand coldly and scarcely returned his kiss. "Very pleased to come home, Marge, eh ?"

"I was very happy at school," said Marjory in a low tone ; "but of course I am glad to be with you."

"And not with me ?" said Mrs. Acland, smiling playfully. Without waiting for an answer she went on, "There is the carriage, we must go ; it is quite twenty minutes drive to the Pearsons'." She wrapped herself up in a light-blue Indian shawl, embroidered in silvery white silk. "I told cook to give you tea in the school-

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