

Mrs. Wingate was one of the grandest ladies in the town. Her husband, a gentle, meek, little man, had been partner in the firm of Lorton and Wingate, the principal drapers in the place, but he had retired now, and had built himself a villa just on the "edge of the country," where his wife managed her servants and kept her pony carriage.

"One must keep up one's position," said Mrs. Wingate.

"Yes, I suppose so," replied her niece, Mary Maine, in a puzzled and rather weary tone. "But you see, aunt, you require a good income to do that, and Frank and I——"

"What about Frank?" cried a cheerful voice, as a tall, well-built young fellow entered the room, and coming up to Mary, leaned over her chair. "What are you two talking about?"

Mrs. Wingate turned towards him. "I want Mary to understand," she said, "that because she is going to marry you, and settle in a strange place where no one knows anything of the style to which she has been accustomed"—and here Mrs. Wingate glanced with complacency around the well-furnished room—"that because she is going amongst entire strangers, she must assert herself a bit, and keep her head up, and make the most of herself. Don't you agree with me, Frank?"

The young man looked at Mary's downcast face with some amusement.

"How do you mean to set about it, Mary? Buy a peacock, and try to copy its airs and graces, eh?"

"Now you are laughing, Frank," said Mrs. Wingate, half offended. "And I am sure I only speak for Mary's own good."

"Laughing, ma'am? By no means. If I was smiling, it was because I was thinking of the kings of Siam."

"Kings of Siam!"

"Ah. Didn't I ever tell you about the kings of Siam? There are a pair of them, both living and reigning at this present time. When I was on board the *Thistle*, we were