

A MYSTERIOUS INHERITANCE

CHAPTER I

Disappointment

JESSICA sounded the gong for breakfast with a flourish. This gong was one of the few relics of better-off days, and the little Frenchwoman on the floor below was properly impressed every morning when she heard the noise, deciding in her own mind that the Amoyne girls must be really aristocratic, despite their very evident poverty.

Then the door of the bedroom opened, and Gertrude came out. She was dressed for the street, except for her gloves, which she carried in her hand, and she crossed the floor with the brisk tread that was characteristic of her.

"Any letters this morning?" she asked, as she took the head of the table. Then, catching sight of an envelope beside her plate which bore the Liverpool postmark, she cried out, with a catch in her breath that was almost a sob: "Oh, oh, there is a letter from Uncle Joseph at last!"

"Eat your porridge while it is hot; the letter will keep, and perhaps it is not worth having after all," said practical Marion, who was secretly worried lest Gertrude's break-