

love for the blue lochs and wild mountains of her mother's land.

Thus she became Miss Stewart of Rossmore when she was a girl of about twenty-two, and Mr. Cust had also left her a moderate fortune. She was not rich, but still very far from poor. Her father's cousin, Mrs. Conway-Hope, a widow of small means, had proposed to live with her when she came into the Scotch property, but Leonora had declined.

"I shall always be pleased to see you, to stay with me, Cousin Margaret," she had answered with a smile, "but as a visitor."

"But the world, Nora ;" said Mrs. Conway-Hope, with much gravity, for she was disappointed at not securing a permanent home.

"So I do consider it."

"Then, are you not too young, dear, not to have a chaperon constantly living under your roof?"

"I shall always have friends with me."

"Yes ; but mere friends are not to be depended on, Nora. I never knew, until poor Conway left me, how sad and dreary it is to have no one to love and cling to. We could be so happy together, I am sure."

Nevertheless, Leonora did not accept her relation's proposal ; but Mrs. Conway-Hope was a frequent visitor both at Rossmore and Leonora's small house in town. And she was staying at Rossmore when Miss Stewart received the strange message that had so greatly disturbed her. But Leonora did not make a confidante of her father's cousin on the subject.

And as she entered her drawing-room to receive her expected guests, she found Mrs. Conway-Hope already seated there.

A gaunt, gray woman this, with a tall shapeless form, and a manner that jarred on your nerves somehow like a discordant sound.

"Well, dear," she said, rising as Leonora appeared, and looking at her scrutinizingly with her short-sighted eyes, "and are you ready? So you've got on your new red plush. Well, it's a handsome material, but I am afraid the color does not quite become you. It makes you look so pale."

"I am sorry you don't like it, Cousin Margaret," answered Leonora, feeling as we all do when we are told that we are not looking well.